

QUESTIONS FROM MR HARWIN

Departmental Motor Vehicles

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 1) How many cars at 30 June 2006 were:
 - a. leased from a Government Finance Entity;
 - b. leased from State Fleet
 - c. leased from a Government Finance Entity and provided for the use of one individual; and
 - d. leased from State Fleet and provided for the use of one individual;

- 2) How many new cars were purchased in the following years:
 - a. FY2005-06
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2003-04
 - d. FY2002-03

Please provide details of the make, size and horsepower of the cars acquired in each year.

- 3) How many new cars were leased in the following years:
 - a. FY2005-06
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2003-04
 - d. FY2002-03

Please provide details of the make, size and horsepower of the cars leased in each year and when the lease expires.

- 4) How many cars owned and/or leased were powered by liquid petroleum gas (LPG) as at:
 - a. 30 June 2006
 - b. 30 June 2005
 - c. 30 June 2004
 - d. 30 June 2003

Please provide details of the make, size and horsepower of the cars if available.

- 5) How many cars owned and/or leased were powered by compressed natural gas (CNG) as at:
 - a. 30 June 2006
 - b. 30 June 2005
 - c. 30 June 2004
 - d. 30 June 2003

Please provide details of the make, size and horsepower of the cars if available.

- 6) How many cars owned and/or leased have been modified for ethanol as at:
 - a. 30 June 2006
 - b. 30 June 2005
 - c. 30 June 2004
 - d. 30 June 2003

Please provide details of the make, size and horsepower of the cars if available.

- 7) How many cars owned and/or leased were powered by petrol as at:
- 30 June 2006
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2003

Please provide details of the make, size and horsepower of the cars if available.

- 8) How many cars owned and/or leased were powered by diesel as at:
- 30 June 2006
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2003

Please provide details of the make, size and horsepower of the cars if available.

- 9) How many refuelling stations does the Department operate as at:
- 30 June 2006
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2003

Please provide details of the location of the station and availability of different fuel types at each station

- 10) Does the Department have a policy or strategy to reduce the fuel consumption of its car fleet, if so, can details be provided?
- 11) What is the departments position on the use of ethanol fuel?
- 12) What is the fuel efficiency rating of all the cars provided to the Department and/or departmental staff under the arrangement described above?
- 13) How does the actual fuel consumption and mileage compare with that rating?
- 14) Statewide, what operating savings would have been achieved for FY2005-06 if all cars provided to the Department and/or departmental staff under the arrangement described above were run on:
- LPG
 - CNG
 - ethanol?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

At 30 June 2006, the number of passenger vehicles in the New South Wales Government motor vehicle fleet was 17,140.

There were also 8,732 other vehicles including commercial vehicles, Ambulances, buses and other specialised vehicles such as handicapped transporters in the fleet.

The composition of the passenger fleet has changed significantly over the past twelve months with small and medium now comprising the largest segment of the fleet at 38% whilst large passenger vehicle numbers have reduced by 14% to now represent only 36%.

In 2005 new guidelines were announced committing the Government to the use of biofuels and other alternative fuels as part of the Government's overall *Cleaner NSW Government Fleet Policy*.

From 1 July 2006, all government owned vehicles are required to use E10 blends (or other alternative fuels) where this is practicable, available and cost effective. This coincides with the commencement of a new whole-of-government fuel contract that includes biofuels.

Vehicles managed by the Department of Commerce's StateFleet are being issued with fuel cards specifically providing for the consumption of E10, where it is available.

Public sector officials who currently have Government owned vehicles as part of their remuneration package are also able to replace existing vehicles with hybrid vehicles when they are due for replacement.

Despite a change in the federal Department of Transport and Regional Services green vehicle guide rating system on 1 January 2006 the whole of government environmental performance score has increased from 9.55 at 1 July 2005 to 9.96 at 30 June 2006 against a target of 10. Without the change, the score would have been 10.

Diversity reporting

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 15) Did the Department include in its annual report a report on outcomes achieved for clients from multicultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds for each of the following financial years:
- a. FY2000-01
 - b. FY2001-02
 - c. FY2002-03
 - d. FY2003-04
 - e. FY2004-05
 - f. FY2005-06?

If not, did the Department otherwise publish a report on outcomes achieved for clients from multicultural and linguistically diverse backgrounds for each of the following financial years:

- g. FY2000-01
- h. FY2001-02
- i. FY2002-03
- j. FY2003-04
- k. FY2004-05
- l. FY2005-06?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

NSW Government agencies are required to implement the principles of multiculturalism in conducting their affairs. Public sector agencies incorporate these principles and objectives part in their core business through the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) Standard Framework.

EAPS provides a framework for agencies to address the needs of a culturally diverse society according to their charter and integrate these needs into the agency's core business and services.

Agencies are required to prepare EAPS plans and review them on an annual basis.

All agencies are required to report on the progress made in implementing EAPS in the past year and the key ethnic affairs strategies proposed for the following year/s.

The *Community Relations Report 2005* provides an account of the programs and initiatives pursued by NSW Government agencies in implementing the Principles of Multiculturalism.

The reports contains a selection of initiatives that have been submitted to the Commission as examples of how public sector agencies are providing services to our culturally diverse society. The report is publicly available from the Community Relations Commission website at www.crc.nsw.gov.au.

Diversity costs

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 16) What were the costs associated to the Department of providing culturally responsive and accessible services for each of the following financial years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 17) What was the budget at the start of the financial year for the estimated costs associated to the department of providing culturally responsive and accessible services for each of the following financial years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 18) How much did the Department budget for this purpose for FY2006-07?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The NSW Government is committed to the Principles of Multiculturalism and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). The government recognises the benefits in employing staff from Non English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB).

New South Wales is one of the most culturally diverse communities in Australia with people from around 140 birthplaces and around 26% of the population speak a language other than English at home.

Through the EAPS Framework, the government is committed to responding to needs of a culturally diverse community when delivering programs and services.

The government recognises that a culturally diverse workplace can promote equity and enhances staff skills and agency success.

Community language skills and cultural competencies are valuable assets to an agency. Service delivery can improve when agency staff understand and can communicate skilfully with clients from a range of backgrounds.

The percentage of NESB employees is publicly reported in agency annual reports.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Public information

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 19) Which publications are being published, as at today, for public information purposes?
- 20) Which publications produced for public information purposes have had their publication suspended since 1 July 2003? Please provide details of when the last issue was published.
- 21) For the list of publications published for general public information purposes?
- 22) Which publications were produced in languages other than English and what languages were the publications published in?
- 23) From the above list, how many copies were printed?
- 24) From the above list, what was the total cost of the publication (i.e. translation, printing and distribution) of each of these documents?
- 25) For the period 1 July 2006 to date what are the details of all publications produced by agencies for which the Minister has responsibility, indicating in each case the:
 - a. title;
 - b. date of issue/distribution;
 - c. cost of production;
 - d. number printed;
 - e. name of printer; and
 - f. details of distribution, including numbers and cost and the purpose of production.
- 26) For the period 1 July 2005 to 30 June 2006 what are the details of all publications produced by agencies for which the Minister has responsibility, indicating in each case the:
 - a. title;
 - b. date of issue/distribution;
 - c. cost of production;
 - d. number printed;
 - e. name of printer; and
 - f. details of distribution, including numbers, cost and the purpose of production.
- 27) For the period 1 July 2004 to 30 June 2005 what are the details of all publications produced by agencies for which the Minister has responsibility, indicating in each case the:
 - a. title;
 - b. date of issue/distribution;
 - c. cost of production;
 - d. number printed;
 - e. name of printer; and
 - f. details of distribution, including numbers, cost and the purpose of production.
- 28) For the period 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2004 what are the details of all publications produced by agencies for which the Minister has responsibility, indicating in each case the:
 - a. title;
 - b. date of issue/distribution;
 - c. cost of production;
 - d. number printed;
 - e. name of printer; and
 - f. details of distribution, including numbers, cost and the purpose of production.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Under section 14 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* agencies publish a list of publications and other promotional materials in a six monthly summary of affairs which appears in the Government Gazette and in an annual statement of affairs which are usually contained in publicly available annual reports.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Staff with Non-English Speaking Backgrounds

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 29) What proportion of employees as at 30 June 2006 have a non-English speaking background?
- 30) What efforts has the Department made to identify employees from non-English speaking backgrounds and the languages in which they are fluent?
- 31) For each language other than English that the Department has identified employees with language skills, please indicate as at 30 June 2006 how many were identified as being:
 - a. Fluent in the respective language;
 - b. Proficient in the respective language?
- 32) Of the personnel with skills in languages other than English as at 30 June 2006:
 - a. How many have been identified as possessing accredited language skills to either translator or interpreter standard?
 - b. For each language, how many were identified as having accreditation as a translator and what was their respective level of accreditation?
 - c. For each language, how many were identified as having accreditation as an interpreter and what was their respective level of accreditation?
- 33) What was the cost of language training paid for by the Department in the following periods:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

Please provide details of number of employees who received language training and in what language.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The NSW Government is committed to the Principles of Multiculturalism and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). The government recognises the significant benefits in employing staff from Non English Speaking Backgrounds (NESB).

New South Wales is one of the most culturally diverse communities in Australia with people from around 140 birthplaces and around 26% of the population speak a language other than English at home.

Through the EAPS Framework, the government is committed to responding to needs of a culturally diverse community when delivering programs and services.

The government recognises that a culturally diverse workplace promotes equity and can enhance staff skills and agency success.

Community language skills and cultural competencies are valuable assets to an agency. Service delivery can improve when agency staff understand and can communicate skilfully with clients from a range of backgrounds.

The percentage of NESB employees is publicly available in agency annual reports.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – Community Language Allowance scheme

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 34) Did any Departmental staff members receive an allowance under the Community Allowance Scheme in:
 - a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06
- 35) Of the Department's personnel who were in receipt of an allowance under the Community Allowance Scheme how many received the base level of allowance in:
 - a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06
- 36) Of the Department's personnel who were in receipt of an allowance under the Community Allowance Scheme how many received the highest level of allowance in:
 - a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06

ANSWER

I'm advised:

As part of the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) Standard Framework, agencies are required to employ strategies to ensure services are equitable and accessible to all sections of the community.

An agency's service delivery can improve when staff understand and can communicate skilfully with clients from a range of backgrounds. The community may also identify with and relate to agencies that reflect its level of diversity.

Community language skills and cultural competencies are valuable assets to an agency. The Personnel Handbook which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au makes provision for the payment of a Community Language Allowance Scheme (CLA).

To be eligible for the CLA, employees must pass one or both of two examinations and be nominated by their department.

They must also be:

- public contact staff, counter staff or other clerical staff who, owing to their language skills, are required to deal with public enquiries;
- prepared to be identified as possessing a non-English language skill for the purpose of the work of their department;
- available to use the language skill as required by the department; and
- recognised by their department as occasional or regular users of their language skill as an adjunct to their normal duties.

Further details on the policy is contained in the Personnel Handbook.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Use of translators and interpreters

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 37) How much was spent by each entity the Minister was responsible for on engaging language translators in each of the following periods:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

- 38) How much was spent by each entity the Minister was responsible for on engaging language interpreters in each of the following periods:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

- 39) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for engaging:
 - a. language translators
 - b. language interpreters?

- 40) For each language in which a translator was engaged, how many engagements occurred in each of the following years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

- 41) For each language in which an interpreter was engaged, how many engagements occurred in each of the following years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

- 42) What was the total cost (broken down according to language) of the engagement of translators in each of the following years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06

- 43) What was the total cost (broken down according to language) of the engagement of translators in each of the following years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

As part of the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) Standard Framework, agencies are required to employ strategies to ensure services are equitable and accessible to all sections of the community.

These strategies may include the use of interpreters to communicate with agency clients. Service delivery can improve when agency staff understand and can communicate skilfully with clients from a range of backgrounds.

The Language Services Division of the Community Relations Commission provides an interpreter and translation service that is available to NSW public sector agencies. The Division works with government agencies to provide opportunities for the professional development of interpreters and translators and to improve availability of language services in Sydney metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Print advertising

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 44) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial in the ethnic print media during each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 45) Please provide details of the name of the publication used in each instance, the language in which it is printed, the average circulation achieved by the publication and the Department's total annual spend on advertising and advertorial in each publication in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 46) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for expenditure on advertising or advertorial in ethnic print media?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across NSW Government and issued new advertising requirements that came into effect on 1 July 2005.

These requirements applied to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

Changes to the Government's advertising policy were announced in *Premier's Circular 2006-26 : Changes to Government Advertising Policy*.

To achieve savings, all advertisements will now be consolidated in a single government advertisement under the masthead NSW Government Noticeboard.

Those changes include:

- Improving access to details of job vacancies by publishing the Government's composite recruitment advertisement in both The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph each Saturday; and
- consolidating all important public information and statutory notices into a single government advertisement that appears each Wednesday in The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph.

In 2005/2006, advertising expenditure by budget dependent and self-funded was \$55.3 million and comprised of Community Awareness advertising of \$39.3 million and Public Notices/Information advertising of \$16 million.

I'm further advised the Howard Government has allocated at least \$250m in the 2006/07 Budget for 13 advertising campaigns including:

- \$52.1m Private Health Insurance Campaign claiming to increase consumer awareness of the incentives and benefits associated with private health insurance;
- \$47.3m Smartcard Awareness Campaign claiming to ensure all Australians are aware of the processes for registering for the card;
- \$36.1m Child Support Reforms to increase awareness of the changes; and
- \$15m Independent Contractors (AWA) communications campaign.

The \$250m is in addition to the \$130m advertising placement spent for the current financial year making a combined total of \$380 million.

The Howard Government has spent over \$1.1 billion on advertising since it came to office in 1996.

Radio advertising

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 47) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial on ethnic radio in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 48) Please provide details of which radio station was used in each instance, the language in which it was broadcast and the Department's total annual spend on advertising and advertorial in each language at each radio station in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 49) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for expenditure on advertising or advertorial on ethnic radio?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across NSW Government and issued new advertising requirements that came into effect on 1 July 2005.

Those requirements applied to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

Changes to the Government's advertising policy were announced in *Premier's Circular 2006-26 : Changes to Government Advertising Policy*.

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The Howard Government has spent over \$1.1 billion on advertising since it came to office in 1996.

Intermediary Service Providers – Expenditure

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 50) How much was spent on the services of an intermediary service provider, such as another level of government or a non-government organization, for delivery of Departmental programs or services in each of the following years:
- a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - a. FY2004-05
 - b. FY2005-06?
- 51) Please provide details why the intermediary service provider was used in each instance and the nature of the services provided in each of the following years:
- a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 52) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for expenditure on the services of an intermediary service provider, such as another level of government or a non-government organization, for delivery of Departmental programs or services?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Each year the NSW Government acquires and builds significant assets, goods and services including computer and communication technology infrastructure and systems.

The Department of Commerce (Commerce) works with government agencies to develop significant strategies and plans to deliver value, minimise costs and manage risk in the construction and management of assets, procurement and management of information and communication technology and the procurement of goods and services.

Commerce also provides, as part of a broader government network, services to project manage emergency incidences and to deliver projects of state significance.

Key procurement services provided include establishing and administering aggregated goods and services, standing period contracts, design and delivery of efficient and effective procurement systems and best practice guidelines, online procurement tools and services and the review of projects across their procurement lifecycle.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Intermediary Service Providers - Accountability

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 53) How many Departmental programs or services were delivered using an intermediary service provider, such as another level of government or a non-government organization, in each of the following years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 54) Did contracts with intermediary service providers used for delivering the Departmental programs or services identified above specify access and equity accountabilities (eg. collection and reporting of information on client characteristics) as part of their funding conditions?
- 55) For each of these, is the condition a standard clause? If so, can the Department supply a copy of the standard clause used in the contracts?
- 56) If the Department does not use a standard clause in these contracts, can the Department provide a copy of the various conditions used in its service contracts with intermediary service providers used for delivering the Departmental programs or services?
- 57) Does the Department audit its contracts with intermediary service providers used for delivering the Departmental programs or services to ensure compliance with any funding conditions specifying access and equity accountabilities (standard clauses or otherwise)? If so, please supply details of the results of these audits.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Auditor General audits the expenditure of agencies as provided in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*. The audit process provides an independent assessment of agencies financial situation. Internal audit procedures are guided by information supplied by NSW Treasury which is publicly available at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au, in particular Treasury Policy and Guideline Papers TPP95a (Statement of Best Practice – Internal Control and Audit) and TPP95b (Internal Control and Assessment) and Treasurer's Directions 720.01-.03 (Internal Control and Internal Audit).

Shared Corporate Services are leading practice for corporate services delivery, through the benefits of economies of scale, access to expert advice, better customer service, transparency of information and on-line access for users and clients.

The NSW Government has endorsed a Shared Corporate Services Strategy to enable public sector agencies to significantly improve corporate services delivery, realise the benefits of technologies and reduce costs.

The Shared Corporate Services concept capitalises on recent developments in corporate IT applications, which eliminate much of the routine manual transactions and make remote provision of services an efficient and effective option.

Prospective Providers need to demonstrate that they are able to provide an efficient, effective and appropriate service without compromising their core business. Providers need to demonstrate their commitment to providing services over a period of time and in accordance with criteria developed to assist the transparent assessment of potential providers by central agencies, potential clients and the providers themselves.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Engagement of contractors by the Department – need identification

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 58) Please provide the following information concerning those occasions during FY2005-06 when the need for a contractor was established within the Department, thereby necessitating the engagement of a contractor or contractors to undertake and/or execute any project or task:
- a. the name or names of the contractor or contractors engaged in each instance;
 - b. the project or task the contractor or contractors were engaged to perform in each instance;
 - c. the actual amount paid to the contractor or contractors in each instance, indicating where relevant the extent to which this amount exceeded the projected cost for the contract.
 - d. Please provide the following information concerning those occasions during FY2005-06 to date when the need for a contractor has been established within the Department thereby necessitating the engagement of a contractor or contractors to undertake and/or execute any project or task:
 - e. the name or names of the contractor or contractors engaged in each instance;
 - f. the project or task the contractor or contractors were engaged to perform in each instance;
 - g. the actual amount paid to the contractor or contractors in each instance.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The use of contractors is limited to areas in which the agency does not have the necessary skills or specific expertise to effectively and efficiently undertake a required project or task. As well as establishing a need, it is standard practise to forecast contractor costs in order to conduct a cost-benefit analysis prior to making a decision of engagement. Contractors' work is monitored and evaluated to ensure that objectives and milestones specific to the project are met within the agreed budget and time-frame.

The Auditor General audits of agencies expenditure as required by the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 and this audit process provides an independent assessment of agencies financial situation. Internal audit procedures are guided by information supplied by NSW Treasury which is publicly available at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au, in particular Treasury Policy and Guideline Papers TPP95a (Statement of Best Practice – Internal Control and Audit) and TPP95b (Internal Control and Assessment) and Treasurer's Directions 720.01-.03 (Internal Control and Internal Audit).

Providing additional specific information in response to this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Engagement of contractors by the Department – cost forecasting

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 59) During FY2005-06, was a cost-benefit analysis prepared within the Department prior to making a decision to engage a contractor or contractors in every instance?
- 60) In every instance during FY 2005-06 when a cost-benefit analysis was prepared within the Department prior to making a decision to engage a contractor or contractors, please provide the following information:
- the estimated or forecast cost of engaging a contractor or contractors to undertake and/or execute the relevant project or task and a description of the project or task involved;
 - the name or names of the contractor or contractors engaged to undertake and/or execute the project or task and whether the work performed by the contractor or contractors met the objectives and milestones specific to the project within the agreed budget and time-frame
 - the extent to which the amount the contractor or contractors received exceeded the agreed budget and time-frame and/or any estimated or forecast cost in the cost benefit analysis prepared by the Department.
- 61) During FY2005-06, has a cost-benefit analysis been prepared within the Department prior to making a decision to engage a contractor or contractors in every instance?
- 62) In every instance during FY 2005-06 to date when a cost-benefit analysis has been prepared within the Department prior to making a decision to engage a contractor or contractors, please provide the following information:
- the estimated or forecast cost of engaging a contractor or contractors to undertake and/or execute the relevant project or task and a description of the project or task involved;
 - the name or names of the contractor or contractors engaged to undertake and/or execute the project or task and whether the work performed by the contractor or contractors has met the objectives and milestones specific to the project within the agreed budget and time-frame
 - the extent to which the amount the contractor or contractors received exceeded the agreed budget and time-frame and/or any estimated or forecast cost in the cost benefit analysis prepared by the Department.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The use of contractors is limited to areas in which the agency does not have the necessary skills or specific expertise to effectively and efficiently undertake a required project or task. As well as establishing a need, it is standard practise to forecast contractor costs in order to conduct a cost-benefit analysis prior to making a decision of engagement. Contractors' work is monitored and evaluated to ensure that objectives and milestones specific to the project are met within the agreed budget and time-frame.

The Auditor General audits of agencies expenditure as required by the Public Finance and Audit Act 1983 and this audit process provides an independent assessment of agencies financial situation. Internal audit procedures are guided by information supplied by NSW Treasury which is publicly available at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au, in particular Treasury Policy and Guideline Papers TPP95a (Statement of Best Practice – Internal Control and Audit) and TPP95b (Internal Control and Assessment) and Treasurer's Directions 720.01-.03 (Internal Control and Internal Audit).

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Credit Card Use

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 63) How many employees/staff carry, use or have been issued with a Departmental/Agency credit cards as at
 - a. 30 June 2006
 - b. 30 June 2005
 - c. 30 June 2004
 - d. 30 June 2003

- 64) What was the total amount of expenditure by staff on credit cards used within the Department/Agency in each of the following years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

- 65) Please provide a breakdown on the credit limits for credit cards issued by the department/agency as at:
 - a. 30 June 2006
 - b. 30 June 2005
 - c. 30 June 2004
 - d. 30 June 2003

- 66) Provide details of the total amount of interest and fees paid by the Department/Agency in respect of the credit cards used within the Department/Agency in each of the following years:
 - a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

- 67) Provide a breakdown of the amount spent by Departmental/Agency staff using credit cards:
 - a. Reimbursement of meals and food related expenses
 - b. Reimbursement of accommodation expenses
 - c. Reimbursement of taxi and hire car expenses

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Credit cards for Ministers and public sector employees are issued and used in accordance with Directions to all government agencies. Credit cards are used for business purposes only and may be used to meet the costs of official out-of-pocket expenses from time to time in accordance with the Premier's policy guidelines. Credit cards are generally used for the purchase of low value goods and services.

Authorities must establish a business case for the use of credit cards including a cost benefit analysis for their agency.

Payment of expenses and or purchase of approved stores and services by credit card requires the normal procedures of acquiring approval to incur expenditure. Credit card accounts require the normal examination, certification and authorisation.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

68) Please provide data on the number of staff in the Department in each salary band?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002 provides for a Department Head to establish or abolish any branch or part of the Department. Internal branch/unit structures of Departments are designed to ensure the most efficient and effective service is provided to the Minister and the people of New South Wales.

Under the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Reports) Act 1984*, agencies are required to set out their structure and business units in their annual report.

Accordingly information relating to staff and salary groups is publicly available in annual reports.

Ministerial staff

With respect to both the Department and the agencies constituted under it:

- 69) How many departmental employees were seconded/assigned to work in Offices of Ministers and of Parliamentary Secretaries as at:
- 30 June 2002
 - 30 June 2003
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2006
- 70) To what Minister or Parliamentary Secretary outlined in part i) were they assigned?
- 71) What was the total cost of seconding/assigning department employees to work in Offices of Ministers and of Parliamentary Secretaries for the following periods:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 72) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for seconding/assigning department employees to work in Offices of Ministers and of Parliamentary Secretaries?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Ministers' office staff are employed by the Director-General of the Premier's Department under the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002.

Departmental staff may be assigned to Ministers' Offices from agencies within the Minister's portfolio to assist the Minister's Office deal more efficiently with agency matters.

Conditions of employment and entitlements are regulated by the provisions of the Public Sector Act. Salary costs are included in the employee-related expenses of the home agencies.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental support for the Minister

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 73) As at 30 June 2006, does the Department have a staff members and/or a Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit whose duties involve any of the following:
- Coordinating and processing correspondence,
 - Briefings,
 - Freedom of Information requests,
 - Reports to Parliament,
 - Answers to Questions of Notice,
 - Estimates briefings?
- 74) What is the official name of the unit or the section to which employees who are assigned who are involved in any of the following:
- Coordinating and processing correspondence,
 - Briefings,
 - Freedom of Information requests,
 - Reports to Parliament,
 - Answers to Questions of Notice,
 - Estimates briefings?
- 75) How many employees are currently in the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit (whose duties are outlined in part i) as at:
- 30 June 2003
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2006
- 76) Please provide details of salaries & job titles/descriptions of the employees counted above.
- 77) As at 30 June 2006, who in the Ministerial/Parliamentary Offices is able to authorise requests or commission work from the Department and/or Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit?
- 78) As at 30 June 2006, to whom does the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit report to within the department?
- 79) As at 30 June 2006 and to whom in the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit?
- 80) What was the total cost of the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit (whose duties are outlined in part i) for the following periods:
- FY 2002/03
 - FY 2003/04
 - FY 2004/05
 - FY 2005/06
- 81) How much has been budgeted by the Department for the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit for FY2006-07?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002 provides for a Department Head to establish or abolish any branch or part of the Department. Internal branch/unit structures of Departments are designed to ensure the most efficient and effective service is provided to the Minister and the people of New South Wales.

Under the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Reports) Act 1984*, agencies are required to set out their structure and business units in their annual report.

This includes units that assist the Department and Minister in performing their roles. Accordingly this information is publicly available.

Professional development

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 82) What was the total expenditure on professional development for senior staff in the following periods:
- FY 2002/03
 - FY 2003/04
 - FY 2004/05
 - FY 2005/06
- 83) Please provide a breakdown of the aggregate spent on professional development of senior staff over the last three years according to their classification as SES (Senior Executive Service) or Senior Officers other than SES.
- 84) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 to be spent on professional development of senior staff?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government's policy document *The NSW Public Sector Workforce Planning Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2004 – 2006* which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au, outlines key workforce issues across the NSW public sector.

A major focus of the plan is to align skill gaps with resources for training and development. The Government's Action plan outlines initiatives for building workforce capability including entry level and graduate recruitment and retention, leadership development and core public sector skill development.

The Government has established initiatives for developing leadership across the sector including the Executive Development Program, the Public Sector Management Program and study assistance scheme.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Staff training & development

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 85) What was the total expenditure on in-house job-related training for the following periods:
 - a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06?
- 86) How many hours did staff spend on in-house job-related training for the following periods:
 - a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06?
- 87) What was the total budgeted expenditure on in-house job-related training for the FY2006-07?
- 88) What was the total expenditure on external job-related training for the following periods:
 - a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06?
- 89) How many hours did staff spend on external job-related training for the following periods:
 - a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06?
- 90) What was the total budgeted expenditure on external job-related training for the FY2006-07?
- 91) What are the specific areas of focus for staff training due to be undertaken in this financial year and how does this differ from training programs undertaken in the previous two financial years?
- 92) Please provide a breakdown of the aggregate spend on in-house and external job-related training for staff over the last three years according to their classification and/or level.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government's policy document The NSW Public Sector Workforce Planning Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2004 – 2006, which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au outlines key workforce issues across the NSW public sector.

A key focus is to align any skill gaps with resources for training and development. The plan outlines initiatives for building workforce capability including entry level and graduate recruitment and retention, leadership development and core public sector skill development.

The Government has established initiatives for the delivery of training across the sector including the Aboriginal Employment Framework, which provides agencies with direction and guidance on planning, development and implementation of Aboriginal employment initiatives.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Work practices

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 93) Has the Department implemented any new policies or practices to assist employees to balance work and family responsibilities during FY2005- 06 and the financial year to date? If so, what are those policies and or practices?
- 94) Does the Department have any benchmarks against which it assesses the efficacy of new policies or practices introduced by it to assist employees to balance work and family responsibilities? If so what are those precise benchmarks?
- 95) If the Department has implemented any new policies or practices to assist employees to balance work and family responsibilities during the last four financial years:
 - a. has it sought employee feedback to evaluate the effectiveness of these initiatives?
 - b. has there been any cost/benefit analysis performed to assess the effectiveness of such initiatives and, if so, what did that analysis indicate?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The NSW Government is committed to providing family friendly working conditions for staff. Employees under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2006* are covered by NSW public service wide initiatives such as:

1. The Public Employment Office (PEO) Premier's Department, Flexible Work Practices - Policy and Guidelines, provides a framework for implementing initiatives that assist employees to balance work and family responsibilities. This includes policies relating to part-time work and part-time leave without pay, job sharing and short-term absences for family and community service responsibilities. Other options include career break schemes, part year employment and varying hours.
2. Policy and Guidelines on employee sponsored childcare are an important part of the Government's commitment to a family friendly workplace.
3. The Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2006 also provides a range of entitlements to assist employees to meet their work and family responsibilities. In 2005/06 the PEO and the Public Service Association (PSA) agreed to include express provisions within the Award to provide greater certainty about entitlements for part time employees. Other entitlements include:
 - Flexible working hours
 - Paid maternity, adoption and parental leave
 - Part-time maternity, adoption and parental leave
 - Family and community services leave
 - Access to personal sick leave to care for an ill family member
 - Where leave entitlements are exhausted flexible access to leave without pay to meet caring responsibilities

Employment of people with a disability

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 96) How many people with a disability are employed by the Department in each NSW electoral divisions?
- 97) Please provide a breakdown of the Department's disabled workforce listing their employment status (permanent, casual, temporary), average remuneration rate by gender, age, gender and occupational group.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government has completed a program of strategic partnerships with the Motor Accidents Authority, the Public Trustee and the Department of Education and Training to offer public sector traineeships for job seekers with a disability.

This Traineeship Program provided on-the-job training in NSW Government agencies together with tertiary study opportunities for people with a disability. These opportunities lead to nationally accredited qualifications. On completion successful trainees have a nationally accredited qualification.

The three year traineeships program 2002-04 outcomes include 71 participants having completed the program. Twenty nine public sector agencies participated in the program and fifty successful trainees found permanent positions with these agencies.

Many agencies include high level information relating to the employment of people with a disability in annual reports, which are publicly available.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Employment of mature age staff

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

Sic (1) what is the total number of male staff aged over 65 years and the total number of female staff aged over 60 years as at:

- a. FY 2003-04
- b. FY 2004-05
- c. FY 2005-06?

- 98) As at 30 June 2006, how many men over 65 years and women over 60 years are employed by the Department in each NSW electoral division?
- 99) As at 30 June 2006, please provide a breakdown of roles and salaries of all men over 65 years and women over 60 years are employed by the Department?
- 100) What policies are in place within the Department to encourage employment of staff older than retirement age?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government's policy document *The NSW Public Sector Workforce Planning Strategic Framework and Action Plan 2004 – 2006* outlines key workforce issues across the NSW public sector.

The Government is committed to ensuring that it attracts and retains skilled and valuable employees to meet changing policy and service delivery needs. The Government is keenly aware of the impact that an aging population will have on the labour market in terms of skills shortages and the recruitment and retention of staff. The Government's Action Plan outlines a range of initiatives to improve the retention of older public sector employees.

The recently released *Retirement Intentions Survey: Report and Findings* will help the Government plan and manage the ageing Public Sector workforce to ensure that experience and expertise is retained by agencies.

All employment decisions within the NSW public sector must satisfy the principles of merit selection including fair practices that are free from discrimination and value and deliver diversity in the workplace.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

State Government funded programs

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 101) Does the Department administer any State funded programs for which community organisations or businesses can apply for funding? If so, what are these programs?
- 102) Does the Department advertise these funding opportunities?
- 103) For each of the programs listed in part i) above, please provide a breakdown of the following by electoral division and year (that is, for each of FY2003-04, FY2004-05 and FY2005-06 to date):
 - a. the name and postal address of each organisation that sought funding from the State;
 - b. the purpose of the funding sought in each case; and
 - c. for successful applications, the level of funding provided.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Lists of grants are provided in agency annual reports which are publicly available.

I'm further advised NSW Government grants programs are listed on the Government's Community Builders website at www.communitybuilders.nsw.gov.au. The website contains all the NSW Government grants programs together with some Commonwealth Government and corporate philanthropic programs. All NSW Government grants are currently being added to this site.

Departmental public relations and media staff

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 104) How many media and/or communications advisers were employed by the Department in accordance with the provisions of the Public Sector Employment & Management Act 2002 during FY2005-06?
- 105) What was the total cost to the Department in FY2005-06 of media and/or communications advisers employed by the Department in accordance with the provisions of the Public Sector Employment & Management Act 2002?
- 106) How many media and/or communications advisers are currently employed by the Department?
- 107) What is the estimated total cost to the Department in FY2006-07 of media and/or communications advisers employed by the Department?
- 108) How many media and/or communications advisers were employed as contractors by the Director General of the Department during FY2005-06?
- 109) What was the total cost to the Department in FY2005-06 of media and/or communications advisers employed as contractors by the Department?
- 110) How many media and/or communications advisers are currently employed as contractors by the Department?
- 111) What is the estimated total cost to the Department in FY2006-07 of media and/or communications advisers employed as contractors by the Director General of the Department?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Governments are required to communicate a wide variety of information to the public including public health, community welfare and safety, public education and training, environmental and rural support, arts, tourism and business development.

Governments use a variety of channels and media to communicate this information including print, radio and television media, advertising, marketing and promotional activities, publications, website and community liaison.

Agencies may employ staff to carry out media and/or communication functions to communicate important information including the department's activities to members of the public. Section 9 (2) of the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002 (PSEM Act 2002) provides for department heads to create, abolish or otherwise deal with any positions in their department other than the position of department head.

Under the *Annual Reports (Departments) Act 1985* and the *Annual Reports (Statutory Reports) Act 1984*, agencies are required to set out their structure and business units in their annual report. This includes units that provide communications services to the public.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental advertising

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 112) Did the Department submit any campaign advertising plans to the Advertising Peer Review during FY2005-06?
- 113) Please provide a detail of all campaign advertising plans submitted by the Department to the Advertising Peer Review during FY2005-06.
- 114) How many and which campaign advertising plans submitted to the Advertising Peer Review during FY2005-06 were:
 - a. Rejected;
 - b. Sent back for further work;
 - c. Forwarded onto Cabinet Sub-Committee;
 - d. Approved by the Cabinet Sub-Committee;
- 115) What was the total actual advertising expenditure by the Department in FY2005-06?
- 116) How has the total advertising expenditure by the Department varied over the last three financial years?
- 117) Please provide a monthly breakdown of total actual advertising expenditure by the Department in FY2005-06.
- 118) Please provide a breakdown of total actual advertising expenditure by the Department in FY2005-06 on the following categories of advertising
 - a. community awareness
 - b. public notice
 - c. public information
 - d. employment related advertising
 - e. non-employment related advertising.
- 119) In relation to actual advertising by the Department in FY2005-06, please provide a list of each campaign cost, which firms were involved and the actual amount spent by the Department on "media buy" and advertising agency fees.
- 120) What has been the actual total advertising expenditure by the Department during FY2006-07 to date.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across government and issued new advertising guidelines on 1 July 2005.

These requirements apply to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

Further amendments to the Government's advertising policy were made in *Premier's Circular 2006-26: Changes to Government Advertising Policy* which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

To achieve savings, all advertisements will now be consolidated in a single government advertisement under the masthead NSW Government Noticeboard.

Changes include:

- Improving access to details of job vacancies by publishing the Government's composite recruitment advertisement in both The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph each Saturday and,

- Consolidating all important public information and statutory notices into a single government advertisement that appears each Wednesday in The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph.

In 2005/2006, advertising expenditure by budget dependent and self-funded was \$55.3 million and comprised of Community Awareness advertising of \$39.3 million and Public Notices/Information advertising of \$16 million.

I'm further advised the Howard Government has allocated at least \$250m in the 2006/07 Budget for 13 advertising campaigns including:

- \$52.1m Private Health Insurance Campaign claiming to increase consumer awareness of the incentives and benefits associated with private health insurance;
- \$47.3m Smartcard Awareness Campaign claiming to ensure all Australians are aware of the processes for registering for the card;
- \$36.1m Child Support Reforms to increase awareness of the changes; and
- \$15m Independent Contractors (AWA) communications campaign.

The \$250m is in addition to the \$130m advertising placement spent for the current financial year making a combined total of \$380 million.

The Howard Government has spent over \$1.1 billion on advertising since it came to office in 1996.

Departmental advertising & public information

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 121) Please list all advertising or public information projects currently being undertaken or expected to be undertaken in FY2006-07 where the cost of the project is estimated or contracted to be \$10,000 or more and indicate:
- a) The purpose and nature of the project;
 - b) The intended recipients of the information to be communicated by the project;
 - c) Who authorised or is to authorise the project;
 - d) The manner in which the project is to be carried out;
 - e) Who is to carry out the project;
 - f) Whether the project is to be carried out under a contract or contracts;
 - g) Whether such contract or contract was or is to be let by tender;
 - h) The estimated or contracted cost of the project.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across government and issued new advertising guidelines on 1 July 2005.

These requirements apply to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

Further amendments to the Government's advertising policy were made in *Premier's Circular 2006-26: Changes to Government Advertising Policy* which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

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Changes include:

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- \$15m Independent Contractors (AWA) communications campaign.

The \$250m is in addition to the \$130m advertising placement spent for the current financial year making a combined total of \$380 million.

The Howard Government has spent over \$1.1 billion on advertising since it came to office in 1996.

Departmental advertising & public information – effectiveness tracking mechanisms

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 122) How does the Department evaluate the effectiveness of the advertising and/or public information projects being undertaken during FY2006-07 where the cost of the project is estimated or contracted to be \$10,000?
- 123) What are the precise benchmarks against which the projects are being assessed?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across government and issued new advertising guidelines on 1 July 2005.

These requirements apply to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

Further amendments to the Government's advertising policy were made in *Premier's Circular 2006-26: Changes to Government Advertising Policy* which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

To achieve savings, all advertisements will now be consolidated in a single government advertisement under the masthead NSW Government Noticeboard.

Changes include:

- Improving access to details of job vacancies by publishing the Government's composite recruitment advertisement in both The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph each Saturday and,
- consolidating all important public information and statutory notices into a single government advertisement that appears each Wednesday in The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph.

All departmental expenditure is subject to annual audits by the Auditor-General who tables those reports in Parliament.

Departmental research projects

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 124) Please provide a list of all research projects currently being undertaken or expected to be undertaken by the Department or agency in the course of FY2006-07?
- 125) How many of these research projects are expected to be completed by the end of this financial year?
- 126) What are the specific areas of focus for projects due to be completed in this financial year and how does this differ from projects undertaken in the previous three financial years (ie. FY2003-04, FY2004-05, FY2005-05)?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Agency research and development initiatives are provided in annual reports, which are publicly available, as part of the general reporting on programs and initiatives.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental break-ins

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 127) How many break-ins did the Department report to the NSW Police in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 128) How many break-ins did the Department not report to the NSW Police in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 129) For each incident:
- What was the location and cost of the damage associated with each break-in?
 - What was the cost of damage incurred because of the break-in?
 - What was the subject of theft in each break-in?
 - What was the cost of any theft associated with each break-in?
 - Was anyone apprehended and charged in relation to the break-in (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?
 - Was anyone convicted in relation to the break-in (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

These matters are reported to NSW Police and are dealt with accordingly.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental property theft

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

130) How many thefts of Departmental property occurred in each of the following years:

- a. FY2002-03
- b. FY2003-04
- c. FY2004-05
- d. FY2005-06

131) For each incident:

- a. What was stolen in each instance?
- b. What was the value of the stolen item/s?
- c. From where were the relevant items stolen?
- d. Was anyone apprehended and charged in relation to the theft (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?
- e. Was anyone convicted in relation to the break-in (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?
- f. Were any of the items recovered?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

These matters are reported to NSW Police and are dealt with accordingly.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental fraud

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 132) How many incidents of fraud were detected against the Department in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
- 133) For each incident:
- What was the subject of the fraud in each instance?
 - What was the value of the fraud?
 - Which administrative unit was the subject of the fraud?
 - Was anyone charged in relation to the fraud (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?
 - Was anyone convicted in relation to the fraud (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?
 - Were any of the defrauded items recovered or was any of the defrauded money recovered?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

These matters are reported to NSW Police and are dealt with accordingly.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental property loss

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 134) How many incidents of loss (excluding theft, accident, breakage and vandalism) of Departmental property were reported to the Department in each of the following years:
- a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 135) For each incident:
- a. What was the loss in each instance?
 - b. What was the value of the loss?
 - c. Which administrative unit lost the property?
 - d. Were any of the lost item/s recovered?
 - e. Was anyone disciplined over the loss?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Details of insurance claims are provided in agency annual reports which are publicly available.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Computer equipment & security

- 136) Have there been any desktop computers, laptop computers or any other item of computer hardware, lost or stolen from the possession of any staff member during the FY2005-06 and the current financial year to date; if so:
- what and how many have been lost;
 - what and how many have been stolen;
 - what is the total value of these items;
 - what was the replacement value per item; and
 - were these items been recovered or replaced.
- 137) Were the police been requested to investigate any of these incidents? If so: how many were the subject of police investigation;
- how many police investigations have been concluded;
 - in how many cases has legal action commenced; and
 - in how many cases has this action been concluded and with what result?
- 138) How many of these lost or stolen items had departmental documents, content or information other than operating software on their hard disc drives, floppy disc, CD Rom or any other storage device?
- 139) How many of the documents or files in (iii) were:
- confidential, classified for security or for limited distribution for any other purpose;
 - if any, what was the security classification involved and how many have been recovered?
- 140) What Departmental disciplinary or other actions have been taken in regard to the items in (i) or in relation to the documents or files in (iii) or (iv)?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Most government agencies have appropriate insurance arrangements through the Self Insurance Corporation (SIC) or other appropriate insurance arrangements.

Thefts are referred to NSW Police according to particular fund manager requirements and agency policy.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Motor vehicle accidents

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 141) How many Department motor vehicle accidents were involved in accidents in each of the following years:
- a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 142) For each incident:
- a. What was the value of the damage?
 - b. To which administrative unit was the vehicle attached?
 - c. Was anyone charged over the incident (please specify the charges involved)?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Most government agencies have appropriate insurance arrangements through the Self Insurance Corporation (SIC) or other appropriate insurance arrangements.

The number of insurance claims for motor vehicles for government agencies is published in agency annual reports which are publicly available.

The details and cost of damage and theft of motor vehicles for the public sector was released to *The Daily Telegraph* under the Freedom of Information Act 1989 and published on 4 September 2006, which noted the total number of claims for 2005-2006 was 8,708 at a cost of \$24.43 million.

Departmental transport costs

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 143) What was the total expenditure by the Department on taxi, limousine and hire car services (including Cabcharge) for the following periods:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?
- 144) What is the budget for expenditure by the Department on taxi, limousine and hire car services (including Cabcharge) for the FY 2006-07?
- 145) Please provide a breakdown of the aggregate spend by staff on taxi, limousine and hire car services (including Cabcharge) according to their classification as SES (Senior Executive Service), Senior Officers other than SES and the remaining staff classifications.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The policy established by the Greiner Government is contained in Information Sheet No. 91-13 which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

The policy prescribes the circumstances under which taxi fares may be reimbursed and cabcharge vouchers may be issued.

Expenditure on taxi fares is either for official travel to ensure staff can attend meetings or to return home after late or shift work.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental function costs

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 146) What was the total expenditure by the Department on functions (such as staff training, "in-services" and entertainment related functions) held at external venues (including hotels and public venues) for the following periods
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?
- 147) In relation to each of the functions held by the Department at an external venue during FY2005-06, please provide the following information:
- a. The purpose and nature of the function;
 - b. The intended audience for the function and the number of people actually in attendance at the function;
 - c. Who authorised the function;
 - d. Whether food or refreshments were supplied at the function and the amount of the final total cost of the function indicating the cost of venue or room hire and the costs of catering food and beverage for the function.
 - e. Whether alcoholic beverages were served at the function;
 - f. Whether the provision of services (venue, catering etc) was carried out under a contract or contracts;
 - g. Whether such contract or contract was let by tender.
- 148) What is the amount budgeted for this purpose (that is, spend by the Department on functions such as staff training, "in-services" and entertainment related functions) in FY2006-07?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Employees may attend training courses and professional development courses in line with the policy contained in the Personnel Handbook. These courses and activities must be of benefit to the agency and may also benefit employee career development within the Public Service.

With regard to entertainment expenses, Premier's Memorandum M2005-12 outlines sector-wide requirements, prohibiting the expenditure of State funds on any event that could provide predominantly personal benefit to NSW public sector employees.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Conference or training attendance by Departmental staff

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 149) How many fee-paying conferences did staff members attend in
- a. FY 2003-04
 - b. FY 2004-05
 - c. FY 2005-06?
- 150) Please provide the following information concerning each occasion during FY2005-06 when attendance by a staff member or staff members at a conference was approved:
- a. the name of the conference and where it was held;
 - b. the number, title and name of the employees who attended the conference;
 - c. the amount of the conference fees;
 - d. the total cost to the Department of the attendance at the conference of the staff member or members.
- 151) How many fee-paying conferences have staff members attended in FY2006-07 to date?
- 152) Please provide the following information concerning each occasion during FY2006-07 to date when attendance by a staff member or staff members at a conference has been approved:
- a. the name of the conference and where it was/will be held;
 - b. the number, title and name of the employees who attended/will attend the conference;
 - c. the amount of the conference fees;
 - d. the total cost/total estimated cost to the Department of the attendance at the conference of the staff member or members.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Attendance at conferences is recognised as a training and development activity with benefits for employees and agency's effectiveness in delivering services. Conference attendance is determined on a case by case basis depending on the relevance to the agency.

The policy is contained in the Personnel Handbook which is available on the Premier's Department Website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Business Consultations

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 153) How many business consultations and/or information sessions directed to the business community did the Department conduct in:
- FY 2003-04
 - FY 2004-05
 - FY 2005-06?
- 154) Please give an indication of the broad industries that the Department consults.
- 155) Please give an indication of the specific business sectors and/or industries from which, as a matter of course, the Department seeks input on policy and legislative initiatives.
- 156) Were any consultations made outside the Sydney Metropolitan area in:
- FY 2003-04
 - FY 2004-05
 - FY 2005-06?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government cooperates closely with all stakeholders, including for example business and farming communities to develop appropriate policies and programs for the people of NSW.

In rural and regional NSW, the Government has established a range of mechanisms to encourage participation and develop a collaborative approach to policy making and service delivery.

In 1996, the Government established the Regional Communities Consultative Council to ensure the Government is informed on the issues facing people in rural and regional NSW. In 1997, the Government appointed a Minister for Regional Development and a Minister for Rural Affairs to give rural and regional communities a stronger voice in Government decision making.

Another key component of these efforts is the Regional Coordination Program. The Program has placed 10 Regional Coordinators across metropolitan and regional New South Wales, providing Government and communities with a strong network for the strategic management of projects and issues.

The Government has relocated several government agencies and numerous staff into rural and regional NSW to improve services in these areas and increase employment opportunities.

Extensive consultation has also been undertaken by the Government in the development of the State Plan launched on 8 August 2006.

Up to 2,500 members of the public were invited to attend Community Forums across NSW attended by the Premier, Ministers and senior public servants.

The Community Forums provide valuable feedback on important challenges and priorities across NSW. Full analysis of the detailed outcomes from the Community and other regional stakeholder forums will inform the development of the final State Plan.

The people of NSW also have an opportunity to provide comment and submissions on the Draft State Plan through the website at www.nsw.gov.au/stateplan.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Regional NSW - print advertising

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 157) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial in the print media in regional NSW in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 158) Please provide details of the name of the publication used in each instance, the subject matter of the advertising or advertorial concerned and the total annual spend on advertising and advertorial in each publication in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 159) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for expenditure on advertising or advertorial in the print media in regional NSW?

ANSWER:

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across government and issued new advertising guidelines on 1 July 2005.

These requirements apply to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

Further amendments to the Government's advertising policy were made in *Premier's Circular 2006-26: Changes to Government Advertising Policy* which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

To achieve savings, all advertisements will now be consolidated in a single government advertisement under the masthead NSW Government Noticeboard.

Changes include:

- Improving access to details of job vacancies by publishing the Government's composite recruitment advertisement in both The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph each Saturday and,
- Consolidating all important public information and statutory notices into a single government advertisement that appears each Wednesday in The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph.

In 2005/2006, advertising expenditure by budget dependent and self-funded was \$55.3 million and comprised of Community Awareness advertising of \$39.3 million and Public Notices/Information advertising of \$16 million.

I'm further advised the Howard Government has allocated at least \$250m in the 2006/07 Budget for 13 advertising campaigns including:

- \$52.1m Private Health Insurance Campaign claiming to increase consumer awareness of the incentives and benefits associated with private health insurance;
- \$47.3m Smartcard Awareness Campaign claiming to ensure all Australians are aware of the processes for registering for the card;
- \$36.1m Child Support Reforms to increase awareness of the changes; and
- \$15m Independent Contractors (AWA) communications campaign.

The \$250m is in addition to the \$130m advertising placement spent for the current financial year making a combined total of \$380 million.

The Howard Government has spent over \$1.1 billion on advertising since it came to office in 1996.

Regional NSW - radio advertising

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 160) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial on radio in regional NSW in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 161) Please provide details of which radio station was used in each instance, the subject matter of the advertising or advertorial concerned and the total annual spend on advertising and advertorial at each radio station in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 162) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for expenditure on advertising or advertorial on radio in regional NSW?

ANSWER:

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across government and issued new advertising guidelines on 1 July 2005.

These requirements apply to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

Further amendments to the Government's advertising policy were made in *Premier's Circular 2006-26: Changes to Government Advertising Policy* which is publicly available at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

To achieve savings, all advertisements will now be consolidated in a single government advertisement under the masthead NSW Government Noticeboard.

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- \$15m Independent Contractors (AWA) communications campaign.

The \$250m is in addition to the \$130m advertising placement spent for the current financial year making a combined total of \$380 million.

The Howard Government has spent over \$1.1 billion on advertising since it came to office in 1996.

Freedom of Information – Departmental Procedures

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 163) When did the Department last update its policies and/or procedures for dealing with Freedom of Information applications received by the Department?
- 164) Who has responsibility within the Department for dealing with Freedom of Information applications received by the Department?
- 165) Please provide details of the policies and/or procedures followed within the Department for dealing with Freedom of Information applications received from the public?
- 166) Please outline the step-by-step process (giving details of the consultation between members of Departmental staff and external agencies, where applicable) which, in practice, is followed by the Department upon receipt of a Freedom of Information applications received from the members and staff of the NSW Opposition?
- 167) Has the Department sought to ascertain whether the staff member or staff members tasked with handling with FOI applications received by the Department is or has previously been a member of any political party/organization?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The policy and procedures on the processing of Freedom of Information applications are detailed in the publication *FOI Procedure Manual* which is available on the Premier's Department website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au. The web site contains other useful information for agencies and the public including:

- application forms;
- Guidelines for Using FOI in NSW;
- Summary of Affairs;
- Statement of Affairs;
- The Freedom of Information Act 1989;
- Information on Review and Appeals.

In collaboration with the Office of the Ombudsman and The Cabinet Office, Premier's Department is in the process of finalising a new FOI Manual.

Section 14 of the *Freedom of Information Act 1989* prescribes the information that must be published by an agency in its Statement of Affairs and its Summary of Affairs. This specifically includes the procedures and contact officers for FOI requests in the agency for members of the public. The Statement of Affairs is usually published in an agencies annual report.

The Premier's Department Personnel Handbook, which is publicly available provides that public servants may be members of political parties as long as this position does not conflict with their primary duty. The Handbook also ensures appointments to positions within the public sector adhere to a competitive merit selection process.

Sick leave

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 168) Did any Departmental staff member make sick leave applications relating to a workers compensation claim citing stress as an element or reason for their leave application in the following periods
- FY2003-04,
 - FY2004-05 and
 - FY2005-06,
- 169) How many sick leave applications relating to a workers compensation claim citing stress as an element or reason for their leave application were made by staff of the Department in the following periods
- FY2003-04,
 - FY2004-05 and
 - FY2005-06,
- 170) In each of FY2003-04, FY2004-05 and FY2005-06, how many Departmental staff members took sick leave relating to a workers compensation claim citing stress as an element or reason for their leave application where the period of sick leave was:
- less than one month;
 - greater than one month but less than three months;
 - greater than three months but less than six months;
 - greater than six month but less than 12 months;
 - greater than 12 months?
- 171) Please provide the following information concerning each occasion during FY2003-04, FY2004-05 and FY2005-06, when a staff member has been granted sick leave relating to a workers compensation where stress was an element or reason for the sick leave application:
- the total cost, in terms of wages etc, of the leave taken by the employee;
 - the total amount of leave taken by the employee in terms of full-time equivalent days.
- 172) In FY2006-07 to date, have any Departmental staff members made sick leave applications relating to a workers compensation claim citing stress as an element or reason for their leave application?
- 173) In FY2006-07 to date, how many sick leave applications relating to a workers compensation claim citing stress as an element or reason for their leave application were made by staff of the Department?
- 174) In FY2006-07 to date, how many Departmental staff members have taken sick leave relating to a workers compensation claim citing stress as an element or reason for their leave application where the period of sick leave was:
- less than one month;
 - greater than one month but less than three months;
 - greater than three months but less than six months;
 - greater than six month but less than 12 months;
 - greater than 12 months?
- 175) Please provide the following information concerning each occasion during FY2006-07 to date when a staff member has been granted sick leave relating to a workers compensation where stress was an element or reason for the sick leave application:
- the total cost or cost to date, in terms of wages etc, of the leave taken by the employee;
 - the total amount of sick leave or the amount of sick leave taken to date by the employee in terms of full-time equivalent days.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of people at work, by providing general requirements to be met at every place of work in NSW. The Act covers employees as well as employers and self-employed people.

NSW government agencies are required to identify the causes of work related injury and illness affecting their employees, conduct a risk assessment of the workplace hazards, work practices or other identified causes of workplace injury and illness and develop and implement the appropriate prevention and control policies dealing with work-related injury and illness.

The Government has released its *Working Together – The Public Sector OHS and Injury Management Strategy for 2005-2008*, which is a three year strategy to secure improvements in the public sector's health and safety performance with a specific focus on injury management. It builds on the progress made since the release of the Government's OHS and injury management policy and guidelines *Taking Safety Seriously*.

The Personnel Handbook, which is publicly available, outlines the policy for managing absences due to sickness to ensure that absences are for genuine illness and employees are allowed the necessary time to properly recover before returning to work. The Policy requires managers to regularly monitor and review absences due to illness within the agency.

To check each leave application form would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – compensation for private property

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 176) Did any Departmental personnel receive compensation for damage to or loss of personal property in the course of employment under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002*, clause 50, Compensation for Damage to or Loss of Employee's Private Property during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 177) How many claims for damage to or loss of personal property in the course of employment under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002*, clause 50, Compensation for Damage to or Loss of Employee's Private Property were made by Departmental personnel during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 178) What was the total value of claims for damage to or loss of personal property in the course of employment under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002*, clause 50, Compensation for Damage to or Loss of Employee's Private Property were made Departmental personnel during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 179) Please provide the following information concerning each claim for damage to or loss of personal property in the course of employment made by Departmental personnel in FY2003-04, FY2004-05, FY2005-06 and FY2006-07 to date:
- the item of personal property in respect of which the claim was made;
 - the nature of the loss or damage to the item of personal property which the staff member claimed;
 - the amount of the compensation claimed for loss or damage to the item of personal property by the staff member;
 - whether a claim was lodged under the Injury Management & Worker's Compensation Act 1998 and/or under any insurance policy of the Department covering the damage to or loss of personal property of the employee and whether the relevant claim was accepted or rejected by the insurer; and
 - if the claim was rejected by the insurer, whether the compensation paid to the employee was the amount necessary to repair the item or an amount for replacement of the item.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The policy on compensation for loss or damage to private property is contained in the Personnel Handbook which is available on the Premier's Department Website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

If damage to or loss of the employee's private property occurs in the course of employment, a claim may be lodged under the Injury Management and Workers Compensation Act 1998, or under any

insurance policy of the department covering the damage to or loss of the personal property of the employee, or both of the above.

If the claim is rejected by the insurer, the department head may compensate an employee for the damage to or loss of private property, if such damage or loss:

- is due to the negligence of the department, another employee, or both, in the performance of their duties; or
- is caused by a defect in the employee's material or equipment; or
- results from an employee's protection of or attempt to protect departmental property from loss or damage.

Compensation is limited to the amount necessary to repair the damaged item. If the item cannot be repaired or is lost, the department head may pay the cost of a replacement item, provided the item is identical to or only marginally different from the damaged or lost item and the claim is supported by satisfactory evidence as to the price of the replacement item.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – private vehicles damaged on official business or other approved travel

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 180) Did any Departmental personnel receive reimbursement of an insurance policy excess in respect of a private vehicle damaged while being used for work during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 181) How many claims for reimbursement of an insurance policy excess in respect of a private vehicle damaged while being used for work were made by Departmental personnel during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 182) What was the total value of claims for reimbursement of an insurance policy excess in respect of a private vehicle damaged while being used for work were made by Departmental personnel during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 183) How has the number and total value of claims for reimbursement of an insurance policy excess in respect of a private vehicle damaged while being used for work were made by Departmental personnel varied over the last four financial years?
- 184) Please provide the following information concerning reimbursements made by the Department for the cost of repairs to a broken windscreen on private vehicles used for official business or other approved travel:
- how many times was such a reimbursement made in each of FY2003-04, FY2004-05, FY2005-06 and FY2006-07 to date;
 - what was the total value of such reimbursements in each of FY2003-04, FY2004-05, FY2005-06 and FY2006-07 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Personnel Handbook, which is publicly available on the Premier's Department Website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au, provides that if a private vehicle is damaged while being used for work any normal excess insurance charges prescribed by the insurer must be reimbursed by the department, provided that:

- the damage is not due to the negligence by the employee; and
- the charges claimed by the employee are not charges prescribed by the insurer as punitive excess charges.

Motor Vehicle insurance claims are also reported in agency annual reports.

Departmental staff – cost of travel to and from work

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 185) Did any Departmental personnel receive assistance for the cost of travel to and from work under *the Public Sector Employment & Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 186) How many applications for assistance to Departmental personnel for the cost of travel to and from work under *the Public Sector Employment & Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6* were made by Departmental personnel during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 187) What was the total value of assistance provided to Departmental personnel for the cost of travel to and from work under *the Public Sector Employment & Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 188) How has the number of staff in receipt of assistance and the total value of assistance provided to Departmental personnel for the cost of travel to and from work varied over the last three financial years?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *Public Sector Employment and Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6* provides that an employee must bear the cost of travel to and from work, unless the department head otherwise determines or the following provisions apply:

- If the employee is directed to report for duty at a locality other than the locality at which the employee reported for duty at the beginning of the day; or
- if the employee is directed to report for duty on any day or days at a locality other than the locality at which the employee is normally required to report for duty; and
- if the employee has already incurred expenditure in relation to travel on that day or those days to the locality at which the employee is normally required to report for duty, then
- the cost of travel on that day or those days - up to five days - to the locality at which the employee is directed to report for duty is to be borne by the department.

If the department head is satisfied that special circumstances exist, the department head may approve a period of assistance longer than the 5 days specified.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – first aid allowance

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 189) Did any Departmental personnel receive a first aid allowance under the *Crown Employees Public Sector Employment & Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 190) How many Departmental personnel received a first aid allowance under the *Crown Employees Public Sector Employment & Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 191) What was the total value of the first aid allowance provided to Departmental personnel under the *Crown Employees Public Sector Employment & Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 192) How has the number of staff in receipt of and total value of first aid allowances provided to Departmental personnel varied over the last four financial years?
- 193) Of the Department's personnel receiving first aid allowances provided to Departmental personnel under the *Crown Employees Public Sector Employment & Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 6*, how many has the Department funded in whole or in part in order to receive training for appointment as a First Aid Officer?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 2001 requires that adequate first aid equipment be available in reach workplace. If no medical or paramedical employees are employed, a first aid service must be provided by a person qualified to undertake that task.

Clause 54 of the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award currently regulates the payment of an allowance to a First Aid Officer.

First Aid Officers should hold a St John's Ambulance Certificate or equivalent qualifications (such as the Civil Defence or the Red Cross Society's First Aid Certificates) issued within the previous three years. First Aid Officers in charge of a first aid room in larger workplaces should hold an Occupational First-Aid Certificate issued within the previous three years.

The costs of training employees who do not already possess qualifications and who need to be trained to meet departmental needs, and the cost of retraining First Aid Officers, are to be met by Departments. (NSW Government Personnel Handbook chapter 7-7)

Allowances are published in the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – flying allowance

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 194) Did any Departmental personnel receive an allowance when required to work in flight under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 47 Flying Allowance* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY 2005-06 to date?
- 195) How many members of Departmental personnel receive an allowance when required to work in flight under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 47 Flying Allowance* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 196) What was the total value of allowances provided to Departmental personnel required to work in flight under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 47 Flying Allowance* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Employees, other than those employed to fly aircraft, receive an allowance when required to work in flight. Allowances are published in the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002*.

Mobile Phone Use

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 197) How many employees/staff carry or use Departmental/Agency mobile telephones as at:
- 30 June 2003
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2006
- 198) What was the total amount of expenditure by staff on calls and charges involving Departmental/Agency mobile telephones in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 199) Provide an analysis by classification and seniority level of staff issued with mobile telephones by the Department/Agency and the amount spent by the Department on mobile telephone handsets, call charges and other usage fees according to the staff members' classification and seniority level in each of the following years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date.

ANSWER:

I'm advised:

Mobile telephones are issued to staff on the basis of need. The guidelines for mobile telephone use are set out in Premier's Department Circular 99-09. Mobile telephones are made available for business use. A business case has to be made for an officer to be provided with a telephone. This can involve the need to be able to contact the officer at irregular times or to seek specific advice on particular issues.

Officers are required to pay for private calls made on mobile telephones.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental Website

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 200) Did the Department budget for costs associated with developing and maintaining a Departmental website in each of the following financial years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 201) How much did the Department budget for costs associated with developing and maintaining a Departmental website in each of the following financial years:
- FY2002-03
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06?
- 202) How much has the Department actually spent developing and maintaining the Departmental website in FY2005-06 to date?
- 203) How many times was the Departmental website updated in each of the following financial years:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *People First – NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* sets the strategic framework for a coordinated government – wide approach to ICT planning and expenditure.

The Plan implements commitments in the Premier's February 2006 *Economic and Financial Statement*.

The Plan aims to ensure the cost to deliver e-government is met from within the current levels of ICT expenditure. An *ICT Investment Framework* will align expenditure with government service delivery priorities including community expectations for electronic service delivery. ICT Procurement Policy and ICT Governance arrangements will ensure the *NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* steers government ICT expenditure.

The Plan's key priorities include front-line service delivery and customer service (e-government), followed by a line of business (core agency systems) that support e-government.

The plan will address the need for major upgrades and replacement of front-line and line of business (core) systems

The NSW Government Chief Information Office provides strategic direction to the NSW public sector for ICT development and coordinates with the Office of Procurement the purchasing of ICT infrastructure, systems, goods and services.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental Website – Feedback management

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 204) Who has responsibility within the Department for dealing with comments or feedback from the public regarding the website and/or Departmental services which are received by the Department via the Departmental web portal?
- 205) Does the Department have a designated unit or “Feedback desk” responsible for dealing with comments or feedback from the public regarding the website and/or Departmental services received by the Department via the Departmental web portal? If so, what is the name of this unit within the Department and how many staff members are employed to fulfil this function?
- 206) Please provide details of any policies and/or procedures the Department has for dealing with comments or feedback from the public regarding the website and/or Departmental services received by the Department via the Departmental web portal?
- 207) How much did the Department budget for costs associated with dealing with comments or feedback from the public regarding the website and/or Departmental services received by the Department via the Departmental web portal in each of the following financial years:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?
- 208) How much has the Department actually spent dealing with comments or feedback from the public regarding the website and/or Departmental services received by the Department via the Departmental web portal in FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I’m advised:

The *People First – NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* sets the strategic framework for a coordinated government – wide approach to ICT planning and expenditure.

The Plan implements commitments in the Premier’s February 2006 *Economic and Financial Statement*.

The Plan aims to ensure the cost to deliver e-government is met from within the current levels of ICT expenditure. An *ICT Investment Framework* will align expenditure with government service delivery priorities including community expectations for electronic service delivery. ICT Procurement Policy and ICT Governance arrangements will ensure the *NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* steers government ICT expenditure.

The Plan’s key priorities include front-line service delivery and customer service (e-government), followed by a line of business (core agency systems) that support e-government.

The plan will address the need for major upgrades and replacement of front-line and line of business (core) systems

The guidelines on quality assurance are contained in “Web Usability and Accessibility Guide”, a publication by the NSW Government Chief Information Office and is available at the Office website (www.oict.nsw.gov.au).

NSW Treasury publishes a range of guides to assist agencies in evaluating their performance and effectiveness, available on its website.

Providing additional specific information in response to this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental website – Effectiveness tracking

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 209) How does the Department evaluate the effectiveness of information delivery to the public via the Departmental website?
- 210) What are the precise benchmarks against which the modifications to the Departmental website are assessed and how often is such assessment conducted in each financial year?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *People First – NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* sets the strategic framework for a coordinated government – wide approach to ICT planning and expenditure.

The Plan implements commitments in the Premier's February 2006 *Economic and Financial Statement*.

The Plan aims to ensure the cost to deliver e-government is met from within the current levels of ICT expenditure. An *ICT Investment Framework* will align expenditure with government service delivery priorities including community expectations for electronic service delivery. ICT Procurement Policy and ICT Governance arrangements will ensure the *NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* steers government ICT expenditure.

The Plan's key priorities include front-line service delivery and customer service (e-government), followed by a line of business (core agency systems) that support e-government.

The plan will address the need for major upgrades and replacement of front-line and line of business (core) systems

The guidelines on quality assurance are contained in "Web Usability and Accessibility Guide", a publication by the NSW Government Chief Information Office and is available at the Office website (www.oict.nsw.gov.au).

NSW Treasury publishes a range of guides to assist agencies in evaluating their performance and effectiveness, available on its website.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental website - Feedback

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 211) Does the Department's website contain a section where it invites comments or feedback from the public regarding the website and/or Departmental services?
- 212) How many emails were received by Department from the public via the Department's website during:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *People First – NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* sets the strategic framework for a coordinated government – wide approach to ICT planning and expenditure.

The Plan implements commitments in the Premier's February 2006 *Economic and Financial Statement*.

The Plan aims to ensure the cost to deliver e-government is met from within the current levels of ICT expenditure. An *ICT Investment Framework* will align expenditure with government service delivery priorities including community expectations for electronic service delivery. ICT Procurement Policy and ICT Governance arrangements will ensure the *NSW Government ICT Strategic Plan* steers government ICT expenditure.

The Plan's key priorities include front-line service delivery and customer service (e-government), followed by a line of business (core agency systems) that support e-government.

The plan will address the need for major upgrades and replacement of front-line and line of business (core) systems

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NSW Treasury publishes a range of guides to assist agencies in evaluating their performance and effectiveness, available on its website.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – Garage and carport allowance

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 215) Did any Departmental personnel receive a garage and carport allowance under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 51 Garage and Carport Allowance* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 216) How many Departmental personnel received a garage and carport allowance under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 51 Garage and Carport Allowance* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 217) What was the total value of the garage and carport allowances provided to Departmental personnel under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 51 Garage and Carport Allowance* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 218) Of the Department's personnel receiving garage and carport allowances provided under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 51 Garage and Carport Allowance* what was the total amount paid to employees for the garaging of departmental vehicles while the employee/s were absent from their usual place of work during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Employees received garage and carport vehicle allowances in accordance with the provisions of the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002*.

Further details are available in the Personnel Handbook which is available on the Premier's Department website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – Use of private motor vehicle in conjunction with air travel

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 219) Did any Departmental personnel receive an allowance for use of a private motor vehicle in conjunction with air travel under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 37* during:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06 to date?
- 220) How many Departmental personnel received an allowance for use of a private motor vehicle in conjunction with air travel under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 37* and what was the aggregate amount of allowance paid to staff in each of the following:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Personnel Handbook provides that the Department head may approve the payment of an allowance at the casual rate if an employee uses their private motor vehicle to travel to and from an airport for approved travel.

Travelling and related allowances are reviewed on a regular basis and variations to the rate published in the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2006*.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – Overseas travelling allowance

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 221) Did any Departmental personnel receive an overseas travelling allowance under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 42 Overseas Travel* and/or relevant *Premier's Department Circulars* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY 2005-06 to date?
- 222) How many members of Departmental personnel received an overseas travelling allowance under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 42 Overseas Travel* and/or relevant *Premier's Department Circulars* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 223) What was the total value of overseas travelling allowances (please include spend on daily meal and incidental allowances) provided to Departmental personnel under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 42 Overseas Travel* and/or relevant *Premier's Department Circulars* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 224) What was the duration of the overseas travel (please indicate duration in terms of months and days overseas in each instance) taken by each staff member who received an overseas travel allowance under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 42 Overseas Travel* and/or relevant *Premier's Department Circulars* in each of:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 225) In addition to overseas travel allowances provided to Departmental personnel, what was the total value of payments met separately by the Department in respect of overseas travel by Departmental personnel (see *NSW Premiers Department Personnel Handbook – March 2003, Chapter 7-13.5 in version of handbook updated Dec 2004*) during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 226) Please provide a breakdown according to the recipient staff members' classification (that is, as Senior Executive Service – SES, Senior Officers other than SES and the remaining staff classifications) of the Department's aggregate spend in each of the last four financial years on overseas travel allowances.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

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 agency annual reports which are publicly available.

Departmental Staff – Travelling Compensation

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 227) Did any Departmental personnel receive travelling compensation under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clauses 25 to 34* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY 2005-06 to date?
- 228) How many members of Departmental personnel received travelling compensation under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clauses 25 to 34* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 229) What was the total value of travelling compensation (please include spend on accommodation & related allowances, meal & incidental allowances and any adjustments to these which may have been approved) provided to Departmental personnel under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clauses 25 to 34* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 230) What was the average duration of travel undertaken by staff members to whom the Department paid travelling compensation under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clauses 25 to 34* in each of:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 231) Please provide a breakdown according to the recipient staff members' classification (that is, as Senior Executive Service – SES, Senior Officers other than SES and the remaining staff classifications) of the Department's aggregate spend in each of the last four financial years on travelling compensation.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The policy on eligibility and calculation of travelling compensation is contained in the Personnel Handbook which is available on the Premier's Department website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

Overseas travel undertaken by Departmental staff for each financial year is published in the agency annual reports which are publicly available.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – Remote areas allowances

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 232) Did any Departmental personnel receive an allowance for living in a remote area pursuant to the *Public Sector Employment and Management (General) Regulation 1996, Part 5, Division 4* and/or *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 40* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 233) How many Departmental personnel received an allowance for living in a remote area and what was the aggregate amount of such allowance paid to staff in each of the following:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 234) What was the aggregate amount of allowance paid to Departmental personnel living in a remote area in respect of travel on recreation leave (see *NSW Premiers Department Personnel Handbook – March 2003, Chapter 7-14.5 in version of handbook updated Dec 2004*) in each of the following:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 235) What was the aggregate amount of dependant allowance paid to Departmental personnel living in a remote area (see *NSW Premiers Department Personnel Handbook – March 2003, Chapter 7-14.2 & 14.3 in version of handbook updated Dec 2004*) in each of the following:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Employees may be entitled to a Remote Area Allowance in accordance with provisions in the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002. This allowance is part of the Government's commitment to ensure services are provided to the people of NSW in remote areas.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – Home office allowance

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 236) Did any Departmental personnel receive an allowance for the use of a room at home as an office under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 44 Room at Home Used as an Office* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 237) How many Departmental personnel received an allowance for the use of a room at home as an office under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 44 Room at Home Used as an Office* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 238) What was the total value of the home office allowances provided to Departmental personnel under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 44 Room at Home Used as an Office* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 239) Please provide a breakdown according to the recipient staff members' classification (that is, as Senior Executive Service – SES, Senior Officers other than SES and the remaining staff classifications) of the Department's aggregate spend in each of the last four financial years on home office allowances.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Employees may be entitled to a Home Office Allowance in accordance with provisions in the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2006.

The NSW Government is committed to providing family friendly working conditions to its employees through sector wide initiatives such as the Flexible Work Practices - Policy and Guidelines, October 1995, which provides the sector with a framework for implementing initiatives that assist employees to balance work and family responsibilities. This includes policies relating to part-time work and part-time leave without pay, job sharing, working from home and short-term absences for family and community service responsibilities. Other options open to employees include career break schemes, part year employment, variable year employment and varying hours.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff – Semi-official telephone subsidy

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 240) Did any Departmental personnel receive a subsidy in respect of their private telephone service at their principal place of residence under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 45 Semi-official Telephones* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 241) How many Departmental personnel received a subsidy in respect of their private telephone service at their principal place of residence under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 45 Semi-official Telephones* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 242) What was the total value of semi-official telephone subsidies (including subsidies for telephone installation, line connection and rental, call costs) provided to Departmental personnel under the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clause 45 Semi-official Telephones* during:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 243) Please provide a breakdown according to the recipient staff members' classification (that is, as Senior Executive Service - SES, Senior Officers other than SES and the remaining staff classifications) of the Department's aggregate spend in each of the last four financial years on semi-official telephone subsidies.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Personnel Handbook provides that employees who, as part of their duties, are required

- to give decisions, supply information or provide emergency services; or
- to be able to be contacted by the public outside normal office hours for reasons of safety or security

are entitled to be reimbursed for some of the costs of their private telephone service. The service must be located in the employee's principal place of residence, and the telephone number communicated to everyone entitled to have out of hours contact with the employee. The claim for reimbursement must be certified by the employee and state the reasons for each official call.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental staff management

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 244) How many staff resigned in:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?
- 245) How many staff retired in:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?
- 246) How many staff were medically discharged in:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?
- 247) How many staff were terminated in:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?
- 248) How many staff were recruited in:
- a. FY2003-04
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2005-06?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Aggregated data on resignations and recruitment for the NSW Public Sector is available in the Workforce Profile Overview Report. Individual agency level data is not published.

The Workforce Profile collects data from agencies in accordance with the provisions of the Privacy Code of Practice for the NSW Public Sector Workforce Profile. The Code intends to satisfy the requirements of under Part 3 Division 1 of the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (PPIP Act) to the extent that the collection, storage and use of personal data for the purposes of the Workforce Profile involve departures from the Information Protection Principles in Part 2 of the PPIP Act.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Departmental asset management & identification

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 249) Does the Department have any asset management strategy, policies and/or procedures in place to facilitate the effective management of Departmental assets? If so, what is the name or official designation of this Departmental strategy, policy and/or procedure?
- 250) When did the Department last update its strategy, policies and/or procedures for facilitating the effective management of Departmental assets?
- 251) Does the Department's asset management strategy, policies and/or procedures identified in response to i) above deal with asset acquisition, asset maintenance and asset disposal?
- 252) Who has responsibility within the Department for managing the Department's strategy, policies and/or procedures for effective management of Departmental assets (Please provide details of such as the designation of the relevant officer, Departmental unit or staff grouping)?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Responsibility for the whole-of-government Total Asset Management (TAM) Policy, together with the role and functions of the Government Asset Management Committee (GAMC) Secretariat, were transferred to NSW Treasury from the Department of Commerce in June 2003.

Treasury Circular 04/09 – *Total Asset Management (TAM) Policy – Reconfirmation* confirms the Government's commitment to the implementation of TAM policy.

An agency's Asset Strategy Plan is an overarching strategy that links to the agency's corporate plan, service delivery strategy, resource levels and asset base.

An agency's size, function, existing and future requirements will determine the number of staff and resources it allocates to asset management and planning.

Agencies are required to prepare an updated Asset Strategy and submit to NSW Treasury each year. The Asset Strategy encompasses planning for capital investment, asset maintenance, asset disposal and office accommodation.

Departmental asset maintenance

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 253) Does the Department have any document such as a Schedule of Assets which identifies all the assets or groupings of assets of the Department? If so, what is the name or official designation of this document?
- 254) Does the Department have any document such as Schedule of Assets and/or an Asset Maintenance Plan which sets out a maintenance program for each asset or grouping of assets? If so, what is the name or official designation of this document?
- 255) Does the document identified in response to ii) above deal with timing issues and/or provide a timeline or schedule in relation to the maintenance requirements of Departmental assets or asset groupings?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Treasury Circular 04/09 – *Total Asset Management (TAM) Policy – Reconfirmation* confirms the Government's commitment to the implementation of TAM policy.

Agencies are required to prepare an updated Asset Strategy Plan and submit to NSW Treasury each year. The Asset Strategy includes planning for capital investment, asset maintenance, asset disposal and office accommodation for the forthcoming year and over the longer term. As with any plan, circumstances and priorities may change in the course of its implementation.

A template has been prepared for agencies to provide a disciplined structure upon which to develop their TAM strategies. The template cover the agency's corporate and service goals, likely resource levels, alternative service delivery strategies, risks to service delivery, performance measures and the asset strategies to achieve its service delivery goals.

The TAM Manual for agencies is publicly available on the NSW Treasury website at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au.

Departmental asset maintenance costs and scheduling

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 256) Does the Department budget include provision for funding Departmental asset maintenance? If so, how does the Department determine what level of funding is needed each year in relation to its asset maintenance requirements?
- 257) Does the Department have any document such as Funding Plan for asset maintenance in which it sets out the level of funding needed each year to achieve the Department's asset maintenance requirements? If so, what is the name or official designation of this document?
- 258) How much did the Department budget for costs associated with maintenance of Department assets in each of the following financial years:
- a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 259) How much was actually spent on maintenance of Department/Agency/Entity assets in each of the following years:
- a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?
- 260) How much has the Department/Agency/Entity actually spent on maintenance of Department/Agency/Entity assets in FY2006-07 to date?
- 261) What was the value of the backlog maintenance program and/or deferred asset maintenance requirements deferred in each of the following periods:
- a. FY2002-03
 - b. FY2003-04
 - c. FY2004-05
 - d. FY2005-06?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Treasury Circular 04/09 – *Total Asset Management (TAM) Policy – Reconfirmation* confirms the Government's commitment to the implementation of TAM policy.

Budget Paper No. 4 Infrastructure Statement provides the value of each agency's physical assets and their capital expenditure program. The value of each agency's physical assets is subdivided into land and buildings, plant and equipment and infrastructure systems.

The asset management policy for each agency is integrated with the budget process.

Budget sector agencies are advised to prepare TAM Strategies based on the agency continuing to provide agreed services within current resource limits. Agencies may also submit specific proposals for enhanced levels of service.

TAM strategies outline the long term maintenance strategies for each asset type or risk category, a costed program of proposed investment and maintenance works and a program of disposals.

Providing additional specific information in response to this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Unfilled Public Service Positions

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 262) Provide details of the number of full time equivalent staff positions in non-urban areas of the NSW which the Department/Agency/Entity currently has unfilled?
- 263) Please provide a breakdown of positions by staff classification and location?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Agency relocations to rural and regional parts of New South Wales have been an important part of the Government's clear policy of encouraging employment opportunities and economic activity outside Sydney.

Over 1500 positions have been relocated since January 2000, bringing over \$50 million annually in salaries alone into their communities. In the four agency relocations reviewed by the Auditor-General (Local Government, WorkCover, Mineral Resources, State Debt Recovery Office), almost 75% of positions were filled via local recruitment. Transfers of other staff from Sydney contributed to local population growth.

The overall economic impact on regions over and above the staff employed can be very significant. It has been estimated that, for the 200 positions relocated to Maitland with the Division of Mineral Resources, Department of Primary Industries, there is an annual economic impact of approximately \$15 million, including supporting a further 130 jobs in the local community.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Unfilled Public Service Positions

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 264) How many permanent, temporary and casual vacancies within the Department/Agency/Entity were filled by using the services of employment and placement agencies or companies?
- 265) Please provide details of the employment and placement agencies used by the Department/Agency/Entity in the following periods:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 266) What was the total cost to the Department/Agency/Entity of the services of employment and placement agencies used in each of the following periods:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 267) Which employment and placement agencies received payments from the Department/Agency/Entity for the placement of staff in each of the following periods:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06
 - FY2006-07 to date?
- 268) Which employment and placement agencies received payments from the Department/Agency/Entity for temporary or contract staff in each of the following financial years:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?
- 269) What was the total amount paid to employment and placement agencies by the Department/Agency/Entity for temporary or contract staff in each of the following financial years:
- FY2003-04
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2005-06 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Decisions on engaging and managing recruitment service providers are the responsibility of department heads, having regard to Government policies on efficient corporate services.

In filling vacancies, department heads are legally responsible for choosing the person with the greatest merit from among applicants. That responsibility applies when using recruitment service providers. Department heads also remain responsible for compliance with Government policies on equity, equal employment opportunity for target groups, and cultural diversity.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Procurement Policy

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 270) When did the Department last update its procurement policy documentation?
- 271) What mechanisms does the Department have in place to ensure its procurement guidelines reflect current policy in relation to government contracting?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Premier's *Memorandum 2006-11 on NSW Procurement Reforms* outlines initiatives to further improve procurement outcomes, get better value for taxpayers and reduce the operating costs of government.

The Memorandum supports the announcements on improving procurement outcomes made in the February 2006 *Economic and Financial Statement*.

Other key policy documents are the Treasury Circular *TC 04/07 Procurement Policy Reform* and Premier's *Memorandum 2001-16 NSW Government Electronic Procurement Reform Implementation Strategy*.

The Department of Commerce is responsible for co-ordinating the implementation of the procurement reform initiatives.

The reforms announced in Premier's Memorandum 2006-11 include:

- All agencies required to utilise the State Contracts Control Board (SCCB) for whole-of-government contracts, effective immediately
- Development and introduction of an agency accreditation scheme for goods and services by July 2007
- All major agencies to implement electronic procurement of their goods and services by June 2007, with smartbuy® being the Government's default electronic procurement system
- All agencies to make their Requests for Tender documentation and tenders available to be lodged through www.tenders.nsw.gov.au.

The requirements outlined in the memorandum apply to all Government agencies, including Statutory Authorities, Trusts and other government entities, except for State Owned Corporations.

Recruitment Agencies

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 272) What sum was spent on recruitment agencies for the following financial years:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 273) Will the Minister provide a list of recruitment agencies which were used for the following financial years:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Decisions on engaging and managing recruitment service providers are the responsibility of department heads, having regard to Government policies on efficient corporate services and avoiding unnecessary spending on consultancies.

In filling vacancies, department heads are legally responsible for choosing the person with the greatest merit from among applicants. That responsibility applies when using recruitment service providers. Department heads also remain responsible for compliance with Government policies on equity, equal employment opportunity for target groups, and cultural diversity.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Chartering Aircraft

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 274) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what sum was spent on chartering aircraft for the following financial years:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 275) Will the Minister provide a list of aircraft chartering firms which were used for the following financial years:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 276) Will the Minister provide a reason for each charter undertaken, the date of the charter, where the aircraft flew to and who was on board the aircraft during each charter for the following financial years:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Air travel undertaken is for official government business only. Travel by Ministers and public sector employees are determined on the basis of value to the tax-payer and public sector development. Minister's travel is governed by the guidelines contained in the Ministers' Office Administration Handbook and travel by public sector employees is governed by various Premier's Memoranda and Circulars which are publicly available.

Overseas travel by agency staff is reported in the Annual Report of each agency.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Domestic & Overseas Travel

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 277) What sum was spent by the Minister's department on domestic and international air travel for the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 278) What proportion of domestic air travel by employees of the Minister's department was provided by (a) Qantas, (b) Regional Express, and (c) Virgin Blue for the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 279) What sum was spent by the Minister's department on domestic air travel provided by (i) Qantas, (ii) Regional Express, and (iii) Virgin Blue for the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 280) What sum was spent by the Minister's department on (a) economy and (b) business class travel on (i) domestic routes and (ii) international routes for the following periods
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 281) How many employees of the Minister's department had membership of the (a) Qantas Chairman's Lounge, (b) Qantas Club, (c) Regional Express Membership Lounge, and (d) Virgin Blue's Blue Room paid for by the department for the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 282) Which company provides travel management services to the Minister's department for the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04

ANSWER

I'm advised:

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.

Overseas travel by agency staff is reported in agency annual reports which are publicly available.

Messages

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 283) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what sum was spent on massages for staff for the following financial years:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 284) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what how many staff made use of massage services provided:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *New South Wales Government Expenses* policy outlines sector-wide requirements, prohibiting the expenditure of State funds on any event that could provide predominantly personal benefit to New South Wales public sector employees.

The Auditor General audits the expenditure of agencies as provided in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*. The audit process provides an independent assessment of agencies financial situation. Internal audit procedures are guided by information supplied by NSW Treasury which is publicly available at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au, in particular Treasury Policy and Guideline Papers TPP95a (Statement of Best Practice – Internal Control and Audit) and TPP95b (Internal Control and Assessment) and Treasurer's Directions 720.01-.03 (Internal Control and Internal Audit).

Overtime

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 285) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what sum was spent on overtime for the following financial years:
- a. FY2005-06
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2003-04
 - d. FY2002-03?
- 286) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what was the total number of TOIL (Taken of in Lie) hours taken by staff for the following financial years and the total cost of these hours:
- a. FY2005-06
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2003-04
 - d. FY2002-03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Employees covered by the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2006* may receive the payment of overtime or time-in-lieu.

A staff member may be directed by the Department Head to work overtime, provided it is reasonable for the staff member to be required to do so. A staff member may refuse to work overtime in circumstances where the working of such overtime would result in the staff member working unreasonable hours. Separate provisions apply for overtime worked by shift workers and overtime worked by day workers.

Payment for overtime shall be made only where the staff member works directed overtime.

The Department Head shall grant compensation for directed overtime worked either by payment at the appropriate rate or, if the staff member so elects, by the grant of leave in lieu in accordance with the provisions provided under the *Section 97 – Payment for Overtime or Leave in Lieu* of the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2006*.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Media Training

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 287) Did any agency, entity or department in the Minister's portfolio employ the services of a media training company in the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 288) How many individuals in each agency and department the Minister was responsible for received media training in the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 289) What was the cost for each agency and department the Minister was responsible for media training in the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 290) Which entities were hired by each agency and department the Minister was responsible to provide media training for staff in the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Governments are required to communicate a wide variety of information to the public ranging from matters such as public health, community welfare and safety, public education and training, environmental and rural support, arts, tourism and business development.

The role and responsibilities of an employee's position may require for them to communicate important information including the department's activities to the public.

The Government is committed to building workforce capability of the public sector including leadership development and core public sector skill development.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Barristers

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 291) What sum did the Minister's department spend on external barristers for the following periods :
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 292) What sum did the Minister's department spend on solicitors for the following periods
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 293) What sum did the Minister's department spend on internal legal services for the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 294) What is the Minister's department's projected expenditure on legal services for 2006-07?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

NSW public sector agencies may engage the Crown Solicitors Office or private legal professionals to engage in non core (general) legal work for government agencies.

The Crown Solicitor acts for

- The State of NSW;
- Persons suing or being sued on behalf of the State;
- Ministers of the Crown;
- A body established by a law of the State
- An officer or an employee of the Public Service or any other service of the State or of a body established by a law of the State;
- A person holding office under a law of the State or because of appointment to that office by the Governor or any Minister of the Crown; and
- Any other person or body approved by the Attorney General.

Agencies must engage the Crown Solicitor to perform core legal services in respect of matters which:

- Have implications for Government beyond an individual Minister's portfolio;
- Involve the constitutional powers and privileges of the State and/or the Commonwealth;
- Raise issues which are fundamental to the responsibilities of Government; and
- Arise from, or relate to, matters falling within the Attorney General's area of responsibility.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Coaching

- 295) Has the Minister received any training, coaching or assistance in public speaking or voice projection at public expense since the Minister took office; if so, what was the cost of this training?
- 296) What is the name and postal address of the individual or organisation(s) which provided the training?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *New South Wales Government Expenses* policy outlines sector-wide requirements, prohibiting the expenditure of State funds on any event that could provide predominantly personal benefit to New South Wales public sector employees.

Lettable Area

Sic 297) With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 298) What properties, or lettable floor areas at partially occupied properties, owned by the NSW Government and in the possession of the department and each agency in the Minister's portfolio, are currently not utilised by the department or agency in question, and are not let out?
- 299) For how long has each property, or part of a property, identified in part (1) been vacant and why has it been left vacant?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The NSW Government occupies 1.2 million square metres of office accommodation in over 1,000 buildings across the State.

As at 31 August 2006, the total amount of vacant space was approximately 5,380 square metres, which is only 0.44% of the total space occupied by Government, that is, less than half of one per cent.

This is a marked improvement on the vacancy rate of 2.23% that existed at 31 January 1995 under the Coalition: five times the Government's current vacancy rate.

The Government's current vacancy rate also compares more than favourably to the office market vacancy rate of 9.4% in the Sydney CBD at July 2006. (Figure supplied by the Property Council of Australia).

Translation Services

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 300) What was the total cost of translating documents for the following periods
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 301) Will the Minister provide details of the cost of translation into Arabic, Indonesian, Cantonese, French, Greek, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish, Tamil, Thai Urdu, and Vietnamese for the following periods
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 302) Will the Minister provide details of who received payment and the value of payments for the translation of the languages outlined above

ANSWER

I'm advised:

As part of the Ethnic Affairs Priorities Statement (EAPS) Standard Framework, agencies are required to employ strategies to ensure services are equitable and accessible to all sections of the community.

These strategies may include the use of interpreters to communicate with agency clients. Service delivery can improve when agency staff understand and can communicate skilfully with clients from a range of backgrounds.

The Language Services Division of the Community Relations Commission provides an interpreter and translation service that is available to NSW public sector agencies. The Division works with government agencies to provide opportunities for the professional development of interpreters and translators and to improve availability of language services in Sydney metropolitan, regional and rural areas.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Pianos

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 303) How many pianos does his department
 - a. own and
 - b. lease?
- 304) How many grand pianos does his department
 - a. own and
 - b. lease?
- 305) In respect of each piano, where is it and what is its value?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Auditor General audits the expenditure of agencies as provided in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*. The audit process provides an independent assessment of agencies financial situation. Internal audit procedures are guided by information supplied by NSW Treasury which is publicly available at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au, in particular Treasury Policy and Guideline Papers TPP95a (Statement of Best Practice – Internal Control and Audit) and TPP95b (Internal Control and Assessment) and Treasurer's Directions 720.01-.03 (Internal Control and Internal Audit).

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Coffee Machines

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

306) How many coffee machines does his department
a. own and
b. lease?

307) In respect of each coffee machine, where is it and what is its value?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Auditor General audits the expenditure of agencies as provided in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*. The audit process provides an independent assessment of agencies financial situation. Internal audit procedures are guided by information supplied by NSW Treasury which is publicly available at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au, in particular Treasury Policy and Guideline Papers TPP95a (Statement of Best Practice – Internal Control and Audit) and TPP95b (Internal Control and Assessment) and Treasurer's Directions 720.01-.03 (Internal Control and Internal Audit).

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Non-Australians

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 308) How many non-Australian citizens worked in each department and agency you were responsible as at the end of the:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 309) How many non-Australian citizens working in each department and agency you were responsible for were sponsored by the department as at the end of the:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The New South Wales Government's policy is contained in the Personnel Handbook which clearly states:

A person is eligible to be appointed to a permanent position only if they are:

- an Australian citizen; or
- a permanent Australian resident.

People who are not Australian citizens or permanent residents are only eligible for appointment to temporary vacancies. People who claim to possess Australian citizenship should produce their birth certificate, current Australian passport, certificate of naturalisation or other relevant documentation.

Recruiting officers should require documentary proof of either Australian citizenship or permission to reside permanently in Australia *before an offer of employment is made*. Temporary residents of Australia may only be employed in certain circumstances and are ineligible for appointment as officers.

Only people who are *permanent residents* satisfy the citizenship requirements for appointment.

People with temporary entry permits *not* marked 'EMPLOYMENT PROHIBITED' may be employed in certain circumstances. People with authorisation to work from the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs fit into this category. In all other cases, the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs (Sponsored Entry Section) should be contacted to find out if employment is permitted.

Reservists

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 310) How many employees in each Department and agency the Minister is responsible are currently members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Reserves as at:
- 30 June 2000
 - 30 June 2001
 - 30 June 2002
 - 30 June 2003
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2006
- 311) How many employees in each Department and agency the Minister is responsible are currently members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) Reserves and are on active duty as at:
- 30 June 2000
 - 30 June 2001
 - 30 June 2002
 - 30 June 2003
 - 30 June 2004
 - 30 June 2005
 - 30 June 2006
- 312) What was the total value of compensation from the Commonwealth Government under the employee support payment scheme for employees who have been called up for active duty for the following periods:
- FY2000/01
 - FY2001/02
 - FY2002/03
 - FY2003/04
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2005/06

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Circular 2006-25 sets out the Government's policy on leave requirements for members of Australia's Defence Force Personnel which is captured in the *Defence Reserve Service (Protection) Act 2001*. Top up pay is also available for personnel on leave for military purposes.

Circular 2004-38 provides that, for leave in excess of the current military leave entitlement of up to 24 days for army and naval reservists and 28 days for air force reservists, public service employees will receive top up pay. This being the difference between their Reservist pay paid by the Commonwealth Department of Defence, and what they would ordinarily have received if they were at work. During periods of *Top up pay* the Government will maintain Reservist's superannuation, and Reservists will continue to accrue sick leave and extended leave entitlements.

The cost of the *top up pay* scheme will be offset, in part, by the operation of the Commonwealth's Employer Support Payment (ESP) Scheme, which is designed to compensate employers for releasing their employees for Defence Force service. The ESP Scheme only applies once an employee has been on military leave for at least 3 weeks per financial year.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Behaviour Complaints

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 313) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for sexual offences in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 314) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for general harassment in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 315) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for discrimination in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 316) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for abuse of power in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 317) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for bullying in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?
- 318) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for inappropriate workplace relations in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
 - FY2002-03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Model Code of Conduct for NSW Public Agencies sets out the guidelines for the conduct of public servants and establishes principles for a code for all public agencies. Specifically:

Employees are to treat members of the public and their colleagues fairly and consistently, in a non-discriminatory manner with proper regard for their rights and obligations. In this regard, they should perform their duties in a professional and responsible manner.

They should also ensure that their decisions and actions are reasonable, fair and appropriate to the circumstances, based on a consideration of all the relevant facts, and supported by adequate documentation.

Employees are to promote confidence in the integrity of public administration and always act in the public interest and not in their private interest. Employees should protect the reputation of public employers. They should not engage in activities, at work or outside work, that would bring the public service into disrepute.

Employees are to provide a relevant and responsive service to their clients and customers, providing all necessary and appropriate assistance and fulfill the department's service performance standards.

Further details of the Code are publicly available on the Premier's Department website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

The Personnel Handbook also sets out the procedures and arrangements for dealing with the conduct of employees in a fair and equitable manner based on the provisions of the Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption may also inquire into any allegations of corrupt conduct that occur in the public service.

Opinion Polls

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 319) Did the department or any agency under the Minister's portfolio conduct or commission an opinion poll, focus group or market research and; if so, what was the (a) purpose and (b) cost of each opinion poll, focus group or market research survey conducted for the following periods:
- a. FY2005-06
 - b. FY2004-05
 - c. FY2003-04
 - d. FY2002-03?
- 320) What was the name and postal address of each company engaged to conduct the poll, focus group or research for the above periods?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

All surveys of Government clients and NSW citizens are carried out in accordance with standard probity requirements in NSW Government policy guidelines.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Opinion Polls

With respect to each Department and Agency the Minister is responsible for can the following information be provided for each financial year from 2003/4 to date:

- 321) how many consultants were engaged by the department and/or its agencies to conduct surveys of community attitudes to departmental programs?
- 322) What was the total costs of consultants that were engaged by the department and/or its agencies to conduct surveys of community attitudes to departmental programs?
 - a. For each consultancy engaged by the department and/or its agencies to conduct surveys of community attitudes to departmental programs
 - b. what was the cost,
 - c. who was the consultant,
 - d. was this consultant selected by tender; if so, was the tender select or open; if not, why not?
- 323) Were any of the surveys produced by consultants released publicly; if so, in each case, when was the material released; if not, in each case, what was the basis for not releasing the material publicly?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

All surveys of Government clients and NSW citizens are carried out in accordance to NSW Government policy guidelines.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Photographs

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

324) For each department and agency the Minister was responsible for what was the total cost of photography undertaken for the following periods:

- a. FY2005-06
- b. FY2004-05
- c. FY2003-04

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Auditor General audits the expenditure of agencies as provided in the *Public Finance and Audit Act 1983*. The audit process provides an independent assessment of agencies financial situation. Internal audit procedures are guided by information supplied by NSW Treasury which is publicly available at www.treasury.nsw.gov.au, in particular Treasury Policy and Guideline Papers TPP95a (Statement of Best Practice – Internal Control and Audit) and TPP95b (Internal Control and Assessment) and Treasurer's Directions 720.01-.03 (Internal Control and Internal Audit).

Providing additional specific information in response to this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Office Space

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

325) What was the total value and location of new office space purchased in the following periods:

- a. FY2005-06
- b. FY2004-05
- c. FY2003-04

326) What was the total value and location of new office space leased in the following periods:

- a. FY2005-06
- b. FY2004-05
- c. FY2003-04

327) What was the total value and location of office space refurbished in the following periods:

- a. FY2005-06
- b. FY2004-05
- c. FY2003-04

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The NSW Government occupies 1.2 million square metres of office accommodation in over 1,000 buildings across the State.

As at 31 August 2006, the total amount of vacant space was approximately 5,380 square metres, which is only 0.44% of the total space occupied by Government, that is, less than half of one per cent.

This is a marked improvement on the vacancy rate of 2.23% that existed at 31 January 1995 under the Coalition: five times the Government's current vacancy rate.

The Government's current vacancy rate also compares more than favourably to the office market vacancy rate of 9.4% in the Sydney CBD at July 2006. (Figure supplied by the Property Council of Australia).

Drug Testing

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 328) How many random drug tests have been administered to each departmental and agency employees personnel in the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 329) How many employees had positive results to drug testing for the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 330) How many employees have had their employment terminated for testing positive for drugs in the following periods:
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 331) How many employees have been disciplined for testing positive for drugs in the following periods
- FY2005-06
 - FY2004-05
 - FY2003-04
- 332) At what locations and dates were random drug tests undertaken at from 1 July 2003 to date?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The New South Wales Government is committed to providing a safe, healthy and productive work environment for all employees. To support this commitment, public sector organisations are encouraged to develop programs aimed at the prevention, reduction and/or elimination of problems associated with the misuse or abuse of alcohol and other drugs which affect employees' work performance, conduct or safety.

The Personnel Handbook outlines procedures for managing conduct and performance in the workplace. Other legislation and policies including the Premier's Department documents "*Alcohol and Other Drugs: Policy and Guidelines*" and "*Assistance Services for Employees: Policy and Guidelines*" are available for guidance in relation to managing some of these issues.

Traffic Infringements

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 333) How many penalty notices did each department/agency receive for traffic infringements for the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04?
- 334) Will Minister inform us of the breakdown of number of each type of infringement incurred for the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04?
- 335) What was the total value of fines for traffic infringements incurred in department/agency vehicles for the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04?
- 336) What was the total value of fines for traffic infringements incurred in department/agency vehicles paid for by the department/agency for the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04?
- 337) What was the total value of fines for traffic infringements incurred in department/agency vehicles paid for by the employee responsible for the infringement for the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Memorandum 90-50 issued by former NSW Premier Nick Greiner set out the policy on the payment of traffic infringements incurred by public sector vehicles. It states in part:

Payment of Parking Infringement Notices by Government bodies must be met from normal operating funds.

The Government does not pay parking infringements for public sector vehicles unless they are incurred in the course of and because of their duties as provided for in Memorandum 90-53 and it does not pay for traffic infringements.

Providing additional specific information in response to these matters would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

New Positions

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 338) How many new positions were authorized to be created in each department and each agency the Minister was responsible for in the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04
 - FY2002/03?
- 339) How many new positions were authorized to be created in each department and each agency the Minister was responsible for which had a salary greater than \$120,000 in the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04
 - FY2002/03?
- 340) How many positions were abolished in each department and each agency the Minister was responsible for in the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04
 - FY2002/03?
- 341) How many positions were abolished in each department and each agency the Minister was responsible for which had a salary greater than \$120,000 in the following periods:
- FY2005/06
 - FY2004/05
 - FY2003/04
 - FY2002/03?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *Public Sector Employment and Management Act 2002* provides that a Department/Division Head may create, abolish or otherwise deal with any positions in their department other than the position of department head. Internal branch/unit structures of Departments are designed to ensure the most efficient and effective service is provided to the Minister and the people of New South Wales.

Mobile Phone Telephone Services

342) What has been the cost of providing mobile telephone services to the Minister's staff since 1 July 2003 on a yearly and year to date basis?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Mobile telephones are issued to staff on the basis of need. The guidelines for mobile telephone use are set out in Premier's Department Circular 99-09. As is the case in the public sector generally, in Ministers' offices mobile telephones are made available for business use. A business case has to be made for an officer to be provided with a telephone. This can involve the need to be able to contact the officer at irregular times or to seek specific advice on particular issues.

Officers are required to pay for private calls made on mobile telephones.

The cost of mobile telephones for the Premier and 20 Ministers' offices supported by Premier's Department and funded from the Department's allocation in 2005-06 was \$478,283 (net of money reimbursed by employees for private calls). This is an average of about \$22,800 per office.

By way of comparison, the mobile telephone costs for the Leaders of the Opposition were \$24,552.

Fees, Levies & Charges

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 343) What are all the fees, fines, levies, charges and taxes that fall under your portfolio responsibility?
- 344) What was the level/rate of each of these at:
- a. 1 September 2006
 - b. 31 March 2006
 - c. 31 March 2005
 - d. 31 March 2004
 - e. 31 March 2003
 - f. 31 March 1999
 - g. 31 March 1995?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

Fees and fines are determined either by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal which consults widely with stakeholders and the public before making a determination or by statutory regulation which is reviewed and may be disallowed by Parliament.

These are both transparent processes that allow the public and the Parliament to be consulted prior to implementation. Levels of fees, fines and charges are contained in the relevant act, regulation or statutory rule.

Bullying

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 345) How many cases of bullying in the workplace have been reported to each department or agency under the aegis of the Minister for each year and year to date since 1 January 2003?
- 346) How many of these claims resulted in WorkCover cases being established for each year and year to date since 1 January 2003?
- 347) What was the total cost of these claims for each year and year to date since 1 January 2003?
- 348) What has been the dollar increase in premiums for each individual department or agency due to claims for bullying in the workplace for each year and year to date since 1 January 2003?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Model Code of Conduct for NSW Public Agencies sets out the guidelines for the conduct of public servants and establishes principles for a code for all public agencies.

Employees are to treat members of the public and their colleagues fairly and consistently, in a non-discriminatory manner with proper regard for their rights and obligations. In this regard, they should perform their duties in a professional and responsible manner.

They should also ensure that their decisions and actions are reasonable, fair and appropriate to the circumstances, based on a consideration of all the relevant facts, and supported by adequate documentation.

Employees are to promote confidence in the integrity of public administration and always act in the public interest and not in their private interest. Employees should protect the reputation of public employers. They should not engage in activities, at work or outside work, that would bring the Public Service into disrepute.

Employees are to provide a relevant and responsive service to their clients and customers, providing all necessary and appropriate assistance and fulfil the department's service performance standards.

Further details of the Code are available on the Premier's Department website at www.premiers.nsw.gov.au.

In addition the Independent Commission Against Corruption may inquire into any allegations of corrupt conduct that occur in the public service.

Stress Leave

With respect to each Department, Agency and Entity that the Minister is responsible for:

- 349) In relation to staff members for each department and agency the Minister is responsible for the period 1 July 2002 to date on a yearly basis what was the on stress
- a. Number of days of stress leave taken;
 - b. The estimated cost of stress leave taken;
 - c. Total number of staff who took stress leave; and
 - d. Average number of stress days leave taken per employee.

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The *NSW Occupational Health and Safety Act 2000* aims to protect the health, safety and welfare of people at work by providing general requirements to be met at every place of work in NSW. The Act covers employees as well as employers and self-employed people.

Employees covered by the *Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Reviewed Award 2006* are entitled to various forms of leave including: sick leave, recreation leave, annual leave, family and community services leave, personal carers' leave, maternity, adoption and parental leave, and special leave.

The Personnel Handbook outlines the policy for managing absences due to sickness to ensure that absences are for genuine illness and employees are allowed the necessary time to properly recover before returning to work. The Policy requires managers to regularly monitor and review absences due to illness within the agency.

To check each leave application form would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

Advertising

With respect to each Department and Agency the Minister is responsible for can the following information with regards to advertising be provided for each financial year from 2003/4 to date:

- 350) What advertising campaigns were commenced? And for what programs?
- 351) In relation to each campaign:
- a. what was its total cost, including a breakdown of advertising costs for:
 - i. television placements,
 - ii. radio placements,
 - iii. newspaper placements,
 - iv. mail outs with brochures, and
 - v. research on advertising;
 - b. what was the commencement and cessation date for each aspect of the campaign placement.
- 352) For each campaign:
- a. on which television stations did the advertising campaign screen;
 - b. on which radio stations did the advertising campaign feature; and
 - c. in which newspapers did the advertising campaign feature.
- 353) Which:
- a. creative agency or agencies; and
 - b. research agency or agencies, were engaged for the campaign.
- 354) In the event of a mail out, what database was used to select addresses – the Australian Taxation Office database, the electoral database or other?

ANSWER

I'm advised:

The Government completed a review of advertising practices across government and issued new advertising requirements on 1 July 2005.

Those requirements applied to the advertising of recruitment, tenders, statutory and regulatory notices, important public information and campaign advertising.

The policies for campaign advertising were also revised with agencies to align planning with the budget process, and the introduction of an independent advertising peer review process for all campaigns with a budget of \$50,000 or more.

The process of advertising tenders is coordinated by the Government Advertising Agency (GAA) which closely monitors advertisements and rejects those that do not meet the stipulated requirements.

Further changes to the Government's advertising policy were introduced in *Premier's Circular 2006-26: Changes to Government Advertising Policy*.

To achieve savings, all advertisements will now be consolidated in a single government advertisement under the masthead NSW Government Noticeboard.

Changes include:

- Improving access to details of job vacancies by publishing the Government's composite recruitment advertisement in both The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph each Saturday and,

- Consolidating all important public information and statutory notices into a single government advertisement that appears each Wednesday in The Sydney Morning Herald and The Daily Telegraph.

QUESTIONS FROM MR COHEN

Bushland In Western Sydney

- 355) Is the Minister aware that there are bushland remnants in outer Western Sydney that form a massive conservation corridor?

There are significant areas of remnant bushland in Western Sydney, many of which are connected by vegetated corridors.

- 356) What is the Minister doing about ensuring this corridor is identified by DEC and that the bushland remnants are acquired or leased so that they can be included in the National Parks Reserve System?

The NSW Government is acting on a number of fronts to ensure the protection of these bushland remnants. First and foremost, there have been significant additions to the conservation reserve system in Western Sydney since 1995. Other ways to conserve such bushland include identifying the large areas providing the best opportunity for long term conservation, securing environmental protection zoning of the Shane's Park site as part of the Growth Centre's SEPP, negotiation with the Commonwealth about the disposal and management of their lands and setting up the Western Sydney Parklands. The Government is also exploring options to secure significant remnants to offset the effects of future development in Western Sydney. The proposed biobanking scheme will result in improved conservation outcomes for a number of other areas.

- 357) What funds are available to the Minister to acquire or lease these lands for such a conservation initiative?

As land values in Western Sydney are high, and there are competing conservation priorities across the State, outright purchase of land is not always the best way to achieve an appropriate conservation outcome. The Government is therefore exploring a range of approaches, including biobanking, to secure the longer term conservation future of these lands.

- 358) Is the Minister aware that the Deerubbin Local Aboriginal Land Council has successfully claimed massive areas of Castlereagh Scribbly Gum Forest, north of Penrith, formally owned by the Crown?

Yes.

- 359) Is the Minister aware that the Land Council now owns much of the land required to formally protect this conservation corridor?

Yes.

- 360) What action will the Minister take with regard to protecting these remnants?

See response to Question 356.

North Coast

- 361) Given that the koala population on the north coast is currently at a critically low level and urgent action is needed, will the government provide extra funding to wildlife rescue and carer groups on the North Coast?

Funding has been committed to the NSW Wildlife Council to support rehabilitation groups across NSW. \$15,000 has already been committed in 2005/06 and discussions are under way about further support.

- 362) Will the government allocate funds for the full rehabilitation of all inactive dip-sites within the Northern Rives catchment area? Such a move should include steps towards the removal and rehabilitation of all active dip-sites as an on-going process.

The NSW Government has operated a program of rehabilitating unwanted cattle tick dip sites since 1996. Over \$5.4 million has been spent and more than 600 dip sites taken out of service, including a number of sites within the Northern Rivers catchment area. The program also includes removal and rehabilitation of active dip sites, when requested by the owner.

- 363) Will the government establish a program to financially assist Land-care groups and land holders to protect all riparian zones within all catchments in N.S.W.?

The NSW Environment Trust supports a range of environmental programs that Landcare groups and landholders across the state may apply to for funding to protect and rehabilitate riparian zones. Funding may also be available through Catchment Management Authorities.

Kangaroos

- 364) What is the total revenue received by NPWS from commercial shooters licences and tags and fauna dealers & processors licences for the Financial year 2005 to 2006?

\$991,930.82

- 365) What is the current cost of the Kangaroo Management Program in terms of yearly annual aerial surveys, overseeing of the operations of the commercial kangaroo industry and related staff costs?

\$1,125,330.24

- 366) Has the request for non commercial tags increased?

No.

- 367) What percentage of these requests would now be going into the commercial "special" quota?

No special quota has been utilised in 2006.

368) What is the current number of registered commercial shooters in NSW?

850.

369) What is the current price paid for skins and kangaroo meat per kilo for human and pet meat sales?

I am advised as follows: Wholesale prices: Skins approximately \$10.50 per skin. Meat \$0.90 to \$1.00 per kilo of field-dressed carcass (bone in) for both pet food and human consumption.

370) What is the current average weight of carcasses? ie. for red and grey kangaroos.

I am advised as follows: Average carcass weights vary regionally. For the year to 31/8/06, for Eastern Grey Kangaroos, average carcass weights for males ranged from 20 to 29 kgs (23 kgs overall), and for females 16 to 18 kgs (17 kgs overall). For western grey kangaroos, males averaged 20 to 23 kgs (22 kgs overall) and females 15-17 kgs (17 kgs overall). For red kangaroos, males averaged 21 to 25 kgs (23 kgs overall) and females 16 to 18 kgs (17 kgs overall).

371) When will the aerial survey figures be available for all commercially hunted species of macropods in NSW? These surveys were conducted in July of this year.

Data has been analysed and population estimates are now available for the Western Plains of NSW.

372) Is it true that several scientists regard a population of kangaroos down to two per square kilometre as quasi-extinction?

Two animals per square kilometre is an economic and aesthetic threshold, not an ecological threshold.

373) Why do you then approve commercial quotas when kangaroo populations have dropped to that figure and below?

Quotas are proportional. When populations are low, quotas are low.

374) Is there no lower limit at which you will not approve commercial quotas?

Refer to Question 373.

375) Would you approve quotas if populations fell to one per square kilometre or less?

Refer to Question 373.

376) Minister, are you aware that the inspections of chillers undertaken by the team of three people included microbiological tests of swabs taken from carcasses destined for human consumption and that these tests showed high levels of faecal coliform contamination?

This is an issue for the NSW Food Authority. DEC has no authority under the food safety legislation.

377) What official testing is being undertaken on carcasses, if any, by AQIS of the Department of Health?

This is an issue for the NSW Food Authority. DEC has no authority under the food safety legislation.

378) Do you have confidence that meat destined for both the domestic and export markets is safe for human consumption?

This is an issue for the NSW Food Authority. DEC has no authority under the food safety legislation.

379) Has the National Parks and Wildlife Service undertaken any studies to estimate the impact of global warming, with increasing drought and hotter temperatures, on kangaroo populations?

The proportional quota is designed to ensure that the harvest remains sustainable even when kangaroo populations fluctuate in response to seasonal conditions, such as in times of drought.

380) Have these estimated been taken into account when approving commercial quotas?

See Question 379.

381) Is the kangaroo industry still subsidised out of the taxpayers' purse or are all the costs incurred by the National Parks and Wildlife Service on behalf of the industry now paid for by the industry?

The Kangaroo Management Program has been funded entirely by industry fees since 2000. The difference between revenue and expenditure this year was funded by retained funds from previous years.

382) Does the Service recoup the costs of aerial surveys and staff associated with serving the industry?

Yes.

383) If not, will tag and licences fees be increased to cover all costs?

Not applicable.

384) Have aerial surveys of kangaroo populations for 2006 now been completed?

Yes.

385) Do these surveys show yet another steep fall in kangaroo numbers, in particular Grey kangaroos?

Populations vary regionally. I am advised that across the entire Western Plains area, there has been a slight increase in populations of grey kangaroos since the 2005 surveys.

386) When will this new population data be available to the public and the media?

Data analysis is now complete and results are available.

387) Will you stop approving commercial quotas in areas where the populations have shown further substantial falls?

The scientific literature supports the sustainability of a proportional harvest strategy. DEC's responsibility is to ensure the conservation of the species, and the proportional harvest strategy does not jeopardise this goal. DEC has in the past and may again reduce harvest quotas mid-year on the basis of new population surveys if it is considered appropriate.

Mining company fines

388a). Given that the Regional manager of DEC admitted last year (*Newcastle Herald*, 25/9/05) that fines for breaching pollution laws and conditions of consent were too small to act as a deterrent to mining companies, have you considered enhancing the system for monitoring and fining mining companies? Has this been reviewed? By Whom?

The Government has already considered whether the fines for breaching the pollution laws provide a sufficient deterrent as part of its statutory review of the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*. This resulted in a significant increase in fines as outlined in Question 389.

388) What is the largest fine that you know of for a mining company that breached its conditions or caused pollution?

The largest recorded fine against a mining company in a prosecution brought by DEC was in 1999 when *Emerald Peat Pty Limited* was found guilty of polluting waters. The company was fined \$217,000.

389) In October 2000 the SCA introduced a regional environmental plan with fines of up to \$1 million for businesses polluting the catchment. How do fines for mining breaches compare with this? Is there an equivalent upper limit?

The primary legislation administered by DEC in relation to pollution offences is the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* (the Act). On 1 May 2006 the Act was amended and maximum penalties were increased significantly.

Maximum penalties for Tier 2 offences, the most commonly prosecuted offences under the Act, are:

- \$1 million for a corporation with a further maximum penalty of \$120,000 for each day the offence continues; and
- \$250,000 for an individual with a further maximum penalty of \$60,000 for each day the offence continues.

For Tier 1 offences, the most serious offences under the Act, the maximum penalties are:

- for offences committed by corporations, \$2 million for offences committed negligently and \$5 million for offences committed willfully;
- for offences committed by individuals, \$500,000 and/or 4 years imprisonment for offences committed negligently and \$1 million and/or 7 years imprisonment for offences committed willfully.

390) How many mining companies have been issued with fines in the past year? What proportion of fines were for:

- noise pollution
- air pollution
- water pollution
- damage to environment
- other (pls specify)

All information concerning prosecutions is contained within DEC's publicly available Annual Reports. DEC issued three mining companies with fines in the past year.

While some licensees in the mining sector have had licence non-compliance issues, the nature of these non-compliances have not been significant enough to warrant a Penalty Notice. DEC has worked, or is working with, these licensees and has required them to address the non-compliance issues.

391) How many mines have received more than one penalty fine?

Camberwell Coal Singleton - 2 fines. Boral Wentworthville - 3 fines.

392) Is it true that the EPA does not have enough staff to inspect mines when members of the public report pollution or breaches of conditions of consent? Various people have told our office that they have reported this year the death of parts of Long Swamp near Lithgow, which has been undermined in the past, and the EPA have never investigated.

DEC has a policy for Environmental Incident Reporting Response based on the following objectives:

- having all environmental incident reports handled according to risk to the environment or to human health;
- providing a consistent recording, tracking and response approach to environmental incidents across NSW; and
- providing callers to DEC's Environment Line with a reference number for all pollution reports made.

Using this approach, DEC has sufficient personnel to respond to serious incidents reported by members of the public or licensees. At the same time, as there are several agencies and local government with approval roles, it is the responsibility of the relevant consent authority to enforce their conditions of consent.

DEC is aware of concerns about the condition of Long Swamp and receives repeated requests for inspection of the Swamp. On 22 November 2005, the EPA inspected Long Swamp, and found that it was in good condition in the lower reaches despite the prolonged dry conditions. There was no visual evidence that the Swamp was being adversely impacted by pollution discharges from local mining activity (eg subsidence or leachate).

I understand that DEC will inspect the site again when weather conditions change so that the swamp can be observed under wet conditions.

393) How many mining related inspections did the EPA carry out in the past year? Have any reports of these inspections been made public?

DEC has undertaken over 1,000 inspections of licensed premises in the past year. DEC also carries out a formal environmental audit program and undertook a comprehensive audit of the mining industry in 2003/04, which involved 16 detailed environmental inspections of licensed coal mines. DEC published the Compliance Performance Report of Coal Mines in 2004.

394) Has the EPA ever given advice to the Minister for Mineral Resources about problems with enforcing mining conditions of consent?

DEC has provided advice to the Department of Primary Industries, and previously to the Department of Mineral Resources, regarding how some environmental issues can be more effectively addressed through planning processes, and participates regularly on working groups to address mining issues that may affect the environment.

Development and biodiversity

395) Are you aware that members of the Biobanking Focus Groups represent land development companies who have donated tens of thousands of dollars to the current State Government?

Representatives from all relevant stakeholder groups – representing a range of interests, including conservation and development – have been involved in providing advice on the design of the scheme.

The BioBanking Focus Groups benefit from the expertise of a broad range individuals with expertise in ecology, market-based instruments, property development, financial services, legislation, systems operations and processes, agriculture, state and local government planning.

396) Hardie Holdings, a development and land speculation company based in the Lower Hunter, infamously claimed an existing National Park as a conservation offset to get approval to build an industrial park in an area near Cessnock dominated by Endangered Ecological

Communities. Are you aware that Hardie Holdings claim that they share responsibility with the DEC for development of the Biobanking scheme?

In February 2006, DEC established five focus groups to assist with the detailed design of the scheme as well as a review group. These groups are made up of over 200 stakeholders. The development industry is just one of the many stakeholder groups providing advice on the design of the scheme.

I tabled the Bill in the Legislative Assembly at the end of the Budget session to allow for a period of stakeholder consultation. My aim was to enable all interested parties and stakeholders to advise the Government of their concerns and opinions, and to recommend ways to improve the Bill.

I have received many suggestions on how best to improve the scheme. After considering these submissions, a number of refinements will now be made to the legislation. Changes will also be made to the way the Government intends to introduce the scheme. The Honourable Member has been separately advised of these changes.

I will be seeking input from a wide range of stakeholders, including industry, community and environment groups, to help finalise the assessment methodology. There will also be extensive public consultation on the draft regulations *before* the Scheme commences.

397) Are you aware that Hardie Holdings is still claiming credit for the declaration of Werakata National Park, misrepresenting it as part of their land holdings, and that they have bought grazing leases in Pokolbin Corrabare State Forests (much of which is under protected Forest Management Zones) and are passing them off as potential offset sites?

I am not personally aware of this issue, but I am advised that DEC will make relevant enquiries.

398) What role is the Department of Environment and Conservation playing in negotiated land trade-offs with major landholders in the Lower Hunter and against what criteria are these proposals being assessed?

DEC has assessed the conservation values of some of the areas currently under consideration in the development of the regional strategy for the Hunter and for the Regional Conservation Plan.

The conservation value of these areas has been assessed against a range of criteria including the conservation status of flora and fauna, connectivity within the broader landscape, the level of threat to the sites biodiversity, the JANIS criteria, conservation reserve design principles, and the future condition/viability of the vegetation.

399) Your colleague, Frank Sartor, Minister for Planning, has been meeting with large landholders in the Lower Hunter, particularly Coal and Allied and Hardie Holdings to discuss giving them approval for major development proposals in exchange for gifts of land to the Government. What role is the Department of Environment and Conservation playing in negotiated land trade-offs with major landholders in the Lower Hunter and against what criteria are these proposals being assessed?

See Question 398.

400) Are you aware of negotiations underway between the government and private landholders to give away public land in the Lower Hunter in exchange either for development approval or as a land swap?

This is a matter that should be referred to the Minister for Planning.

401) Is any of the land in question subject to a Cabinet minute identifying it as high conservation value vacant crown land earmarked for transferral to the National Parks estate?

For obvious reasons, it is inappropriate to comment on the content of a Cabinet Minute.

National Parks - Goolawah

402) What are the obstacles to finalising National Parks tenure over vacant crown land south of Crescent Head, around Goolawah?

The Minister for Lands has indicated that Kempsey Shire Council wishes to retain management responsibilities for the reserves at Goolawah and Grassy Head.

403) When will the transfer to DEC be finalised?

Refer to the response to question 402.

Evans Head

404) I would like to clarify the situation regarding The Evans Head Sewage Treatment Plant. The DEC informed Richmond Valley Council in November last year that it had exceeded capacity and recommended a moratorium on development. Is this STP still overloaded?

In a letter to Richmond Valley Council on 8 November 2005 DEC stated that the plant operates at or close to design capacity, exceeding design capacity during summer/holiday periods. For this reason DEC had required Council to upgrade the treatment facility. Steps are being taken to reduce the load until the new sewage treatment plant is completed. I am advised that the new plant is on track to be completed by the end of 2007.

(a) If yes, are you aware of Council subsequently implementing a moratorium on development?

I am advised that no moratorium has been implemented by Council.

(b) Does this mean the Council is breaching its EPA licence?

A moratorium was not a condition of the EPA licence. The EPA licence is directed at improving the performance of the treatment plant.

- (c) If the STP was overloaded in November last year and has remained so ever since, do you have any idea why the Department of Planning told my office in May of this year that the STP had 'some identified spare capacity'?

This is a question for the Minister for Planning.

If no,

- (a) When did that situation change, who identified the spare capacity and what evidence has been produced to support this?

Not applicable.

- 405) What plans have been released by Richmond Valley Council concerning the proposed upgrade to the Evans Head STP & when is it expected to be operational?

Following a lengthy planning and public consultation process, detailed plans for the STP upgrade were prepared in late 2005, tenders have been let and the successful contractor is undertaking preconstruction work with a new STP to be completed by the end of 2007.

- 406) What information can you give the committee concerning the health of Salty Lagoon, which has been badly affected by this overflowing STP, and what plans do you have for its remediation?

The Evans Head STP has discharged treated effluent to Salty Lagoon for over 60 years. This has adversely affected the lagoon environment. DEC has required Richmond Valley Council to investigate rehabilitation and management options for Salty Lagoon. At its August meeting Council adopted a series of options for the rehabilitation of Salty Lagoon. These rehabilitation options will become part of Council's Environment Protection Licence.

- 407) Do you accept the advice of local experts who propose an eight hectare constructed wetland should be built downstream of the new STP?

No such proposal has been put to DEC. However DEC will consider a range of options if proposed by Council.

- 408) Richmond River Council has proposed building a pipeline that would see effluent released at the mouth of the Evans River. Does your Department support this?

I am advised that the Council is investigating potential wet weather release options near the mouth of the Evans River but has made no decision about a preferred option. DEC will review the options when it receives a proposal from council.

- 409) What research, EIS etc. has your department seen that would justify this course of action?

DEC needs to be sure that any preferred wet weather release option is sustainable and underpinned by sound science. DEC requires the development of an EIS for a preferred wet weather release strategy to be placed on public exhibition by 31 July 2007.

Water Sharing Plans

410) Can the Minister please detail what monitoring is being carried out by DEC on environmental impacts of Water Sharing Plans?

The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) monitors the environmental impacts of Water Sharing Plans under the Integrated Monitoring of Environmental Flows program as the water resource manager.

However, DEC does a range of complementary monitoring of aquatic environments, such as macroinvertebrate monitoring for the Sustainable Rivers Audit. This broad scale monitoring measures ecological condition of rivers against targets developed by the Natural Resources Commission (NRC); as such the monitoring reflects outcomes of Water Sharing Plans plus other management initiatives across the catchment.

DNR has the lead on this river condition monitoring with contribution from DEC and Department of Primary Industries. DEC also conducts an annual bird survey of significant wetlands, which contributes to statewide monitoring against NRC targets.

Timmsvale

411) Did DEC conduct any investigations of logging on private land blocks at Timmsvale and Billys Creek in 2006?

DEC conducted inspections of logging operations on private property at Timmsvale and Billys Creek in February 2006. These inspections were in response to a community complaint. The inspections were undertaken with the knowledge of the landholders and the Department of Natural Resources, whose staff accompanied DEC officers on the audit of the Timmsvale property.

412) Did DEC find that any rainforest had been logged on either of these two blocks?

I am advised that DEC officers observed areas of mapped rainforest that were subject to logging on the property at Timmsvale.

413) Did DEC find that any old growth forest had been logged on either of these two blocks?

I am advised that DEC officers observed areas of mapped candidate old growth forest that were subject to logging on the property at Timmsvale.

414) Did DEC find that any koala habitat had been logged on either of these two blocks?

DEC officers observed that both blocks contained areas of modelled koala habitat and potential koala habitat which had been logged.

415) What actions, if any, did DEC take in relation to the findings of these investigations?

The Department of Natural Resources is the agency responsible for administering the Native Vegetation Act 2003, which covers private native forestry operations. DEC therefore provided its findings to the Department of Natural Resources.

Dingoes and 1080 bait

416) Why are National Parks the target of 1080 aerial bait drops, when they are supposed to be a 'sanctuary' and safe haven for wildlife, including dingoes?

Pest animals are one of the most significant threats to biodiversity in Australia and also significantly impact on park conservation values. Baiting of foxes and wild dogs using the naturally occurring toxin 1080 (sodium fluoroacetate) is the most effective option for broad-area control and has been used as part of an integrated management approach in national parks for many years.

Aerial baiting has been re-introduced into some national parks recently to help eradicate wild dogs. The re-introduction followed the completion of detailed scientific research that showed that aerial baiting had negligible impacts on spotted-tailed quoll populations, the native carnivore most at risk from being poisoned.

417) The Kosciuszko National Park has the last bastion of alpine dingoes in the world – round 100 pure alpine dingoes located inside the park. Given that 1080 has been banned everywhere in the world where there is a top order land predator why is it still in use in Australia?

I am advised that up to 80% of the dingo population in Kosciuszko National Park contains domesticated dog genes and it is difficult to identify pure dingoes throughout the park. Control programs are concentrated in buffer zones on the edge of the park where they join private properties, especially farmland.

Incineration in Coal fired power stations

418) Are you aware that materials other than coal are burnt in coal fired power stations in NSW?

Yes.

419) Do you or your department have any responsibility for vetting what materials are incinerated in coal fired power stations?

Yes. All supplementary fuels burnt with coal at power stations are subjected to a rigorous environmental assessment, including the monitoring of air pollutants to ensure that emissions to atmosphere comply with the relevant NSW emission standards, before they can be used. In May 2005 DEC published a guidance note for the assessment of non-standard fuels. Only materials specified in the power station's environment protection licence may be burnt as a supplementary fuel.

420) Has the EPA ever been notified before or during one of these burn off operations?

Yes.

421) Has the EPA ever issued a fine against a power station for incineration of hazardous materials?

No.

422) Are you aware that materials from the clean up of the Homebush Bay site in preparation for the 2000 Sydney Olympics was burnt in a coal fired power station?

I am not aware that materials from the Olympic Park site were burnt in power stations.

423) If so, who notified you?

Not applicable.

424) Did you take any action? If so, please outline.

Not applicable.

Longwall Mining

BHP Billiton plans to develop longwall mining in the Special Area surrounding the Upper Cataract River, which channels approximately 7% of Sydney's drinking water down to Broughton's Pass Weir. BHP Billiton's own consultants predict that these mines could lead to localised fracturing and buckling of the bedrock in the base of the river. The Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) requires that the only development allowed in Special Areas is that which has a "neutral or beneficial effect".

425) What "neutral or beneficial effect" do you attribute to the three longwall panels that will cause damage through subsidence in this water catchment special area?

The Director-General of the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) is the approval authority for longwall mining processes. The Sydney Catchment Authority (SCA) has no approval role, however, as a member of the Subsidence Management Plan (SMP) Interagency Review Committee, provides advice to the DPI as part of the government agreed process of ensuring that the potential environmental impacts of mining are assessed and considered.

426) How does the approval of this mining operation ensure "a high quality water supply and enhance the catchment areas so that they remain healthy for future generations", a stated aim of government?

The SCA, over a long period of time, has provided comments to the advisory committee on potential conditions for the proposed mining activities. The SCA's primary focus is on ensuring that the mine operations do not impact on water quality, water quantity or ecological integrity in the

Special Areas. The modelling of this mine proposal does not indicate that any of these three areas will be significantly impacted so long as suitable management measures are implemented.

- 427) The SCA claims to "liaise closely with industry, business and the community regarding catchment issues" (www.sca.nsw.gov.au). However I understand that key community groups, such as the Nepean Action Group and the Macarthur NPA, have not been contacted by the SCA regarding BHP Billiton's plans to conduct longwall mining on the Upper Cataract River. In what way has the SCA worked with the community and environment groups to cooperatively manage and protect the catchment area?

In relation to the impact of longwall mining in Special Areas, I am advised that the SCA has provided information on environmental flow releases in the Cataract River and the proposed mining activities and has facilitated access and site visits by community groups to the Metropolitan Special Area, in particular the Cataract River.

More broadly, the SCA is currently engaged in project-specific consultation activities with the community in relation to the review of Special Areas management plans, Shoalhaven water supply transfers and environmental flows and the SCA's groundwater investigation program.

- 428) Have you discussed with the Minister for Planning the call from three Councils in the Southern Coalfield - Wollondilly, Camden and Campbelltown - for a Commission of Inquiry into mine plans that will crack and pollute 4 major rivers - the upper Cataract, the Nepean, the Bargo and the Georges -and dozens of tributaries? Will you support this?

Any Commission of Inquiry decision would reside with the Minister for Planning. The Government has, however, already committed to thoroughly assess mining applications through the Subsidence Management Plan assessment process.

- 429) The longwall panel width of 260m, which will go only 50m from the 70m high cliffs that fall steeply to the river, will certainly damage these rivers. BHP Billiton's own consultants predict that these mines will cause closure across the river gorge and creeks which could lead to localised fracturing and buckling of the bedrock in the base of the river, with the added possibility of 'anomalies', i.e. unpredictable damage which has in the past occurred in 16% of longwall areas in one nearby mine. Will you advise the Minister for Mineral Resources to place a 1km mining buffer zone around the river, as recommended by the NSW Scientific Committee, given the damage it will cause to these major rivers in our water catchment that support threatened species?

The Collieries in this area are required to prepare Subsidence Management Plans (SMPs) as part of any application for approval to the Department of Primary Industries. These plans and other documents in the application must be reviewed by the Interagency Subsidence Management Plan Review Committee, which is made up of representatives of the Department of Primary Industries, Department of Planning, Department of Environment and Conservation, Sydney Catchment Authority and the Mine Subsidence Board. This process provides a whole-of-government approach to mining approvals and allows agencies input into the assessment of any mining impacts.

- 430) Do you swallow the myth of remediation of cracked river beds? Have you ever inspected the multiple cracks which remain in the Lower Cataract nearly a decade after mining stopped, or the unsightly grouting at Marhnyes Hole, the former beauty spot in the Georges River behind Appin? Have you ever received advice about these cracks?

DEC has provided information about the potential environmental impacts of longwall mining and I am aware that DEC and members of the EPA Board have inspected some of these areas. In its role as part of the Subsidence Management Plan Committee, DEC supports a hierarchy of avoid, minimise, and as a last result, mitigate subsidence impacts. Approval or refusal of mining activities, including subsidence management, lie within the portfolio responsibility of the Minister for Primary Industries.

Elephants

- 431) On *60 Minutes*, director of Taronga Zoo Guy Cooper acknowledged that the reason the new Thai elephants are to be exhibited at Taronga is for commercial reasons. In light of this, do you agree that the Department made an error in judgment issuing Taronga with an importation licence?

No.

- 432) Given the fact that Perth Zoo has recently stopped its elephant breeding program, without a single birth having taken place, and give then are sanctuaries in Thailand willing to take Taronga's new Asiatic elephants, and given elephants will breed in sanctuaries but will not in zoos, do you still think it was wise from a conservation point to view to allow the elephants to come to Australia?

I am advised that, to date, over 695 Asian elephants have been born in zoos across the world. These captive bred animals provide a critical breeding herd of elephants and will help to better protect this species globally.

- 433) If Taronga is unable to breed from these elephants within a 10 year period will you be recommending to your department that it not issue any further importation licences for elephants into Australia?

The Commonwealth Government is responsible for importation licences.

- 434) What steps and inquiries did your department undertake to ensure that there could be no potential breach of any Australian animal welfare protection legislation by the handling, housing in the zoos and artificial insemination of the elephants?

The Zoological Parks Board (ZPB) adheres to the Australian Regional Association of Zoos and Aquaria's Captive Management Plan for Asian Elephants which outlines housing and husbandry requirements, as well as artificial insemination techniques. Taronga and Western Plains Zoos have housed elephants for more than 50 years and have a wealth of experience in the husbandry and management of this species. The ZPB will also adhere to the importation permit conditions outlined by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.

- 435) You will be aware that many animal protection organisations have been most concerned about the importation of Asian elephants to the Sydney and Melbourne Zoos. I watched the program *60 Minutes* on 13 August 2006 and noted that the weight of opinion expressed is that to contain the 8 Asian elephants in the small space available at Taronga Park Zoo will be cruel. How is it that the Zoo says that it would not infringe the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals legislation?

I am advised that the exhibit is nearly 3,000 square metres in area which, for the number of elephants involved, is 139% larger than that outlined in the applicable Australian Standards.

QUESTIONS FROM MR COLLESS

Sydney Catchment Authority

436) Does the process of accessing deep water storage mean that the water will only be used if dams fall below five per cent?

No.

437) If so, why is your Government planning for such low dam level figures?

Not applicable.

438) If the dam levels drop to below five per cent, do you not agree that the residents of Sydney will be fleeing the city due to the real possibility of empty dams?

The Government's Metropolitan Water Plan is designed to secure the water supply for Sydney and surrounding areas. It does this by diversifying the available sources of water, including massively increasing non-climate dependent water sources such as recycling.

439) Was any water pumped out in order for this project to proceed? If so, how much?

No.

440) Has the water available from deep accessing the Sydney water supply catchment dams come on line as yet?

On Saturday 15 April 2006, the SCA reached a major milestone in its deep-water storage projects when a water supply access point was created at the base of Warragamba Dam. Combined, the deep storage projects at Warragamba and Nepean dams add around six months of water supply to the system for use in the present drought. They also add about 40 billion litres a year to the available yield.

441) If not, when will it come on line?

Not applicable.

442) If the water was supposed to come on line in August, why was it included in the dam level figures from 20 April 2006?

See Question 440.

443) Was this because dam levels fell below 40 per cent for the first time, which is when the Government is supposed to construct bore fields to access the so-called 'new' groundwater which you used as a mechanism to shelve desalination?

No.

444) At the time of the aquifer announcement, the chemistry of the groundwater reserves, how much it can extract, and the environmental consequences of extraction were still at an investigative stage. Does the Government now know the answers to these questions and will you make this information available to the Committee?

Substantial technical reports were made available with the release of the mid-year report (*Metropolitan Water Plan Groundwater Investigation Report*, June 2006).

445) How much groundwater is available to Sydney?

For each of the prospective areas (Kangaloon and Leonay), volumes of 10-15GL/annum, for periods up to three years, have been identified as having the potential to supplement drinking water supplies during prolonged drought.

446) Given that this report notes that substantial volumes of excellent quality groundwater exists in the Blue Mountains sandstone aquifers, why was it not until February 2006 that the Government announced plans to increase the use of groundwater in the Blue Mountains region?

Please refer to the Government's *2006 Metropolitan Water Plan* and the SCA's *Metropolitan Water Plan Groundwater Investigation Report June 2006 Groundwater: Investigations for drought water supply* for the history of groundwater investigations in the Sydney basin and the role groundwater would play if the current drought should continue.

447) Are you familiar with the Southern Highlands Groundwater Technical Status Report of March 1999, by the Department of Land and Water Conservation?

The SCA has advised that it is familiar with this report.

448) Given that the report said that there is a sustainable yield of 221 gigalitres a year available, why has this possible supply source not been utilised?

The Government has ensured that extensive investigations are undertaken before consideration is given to utilising groundwater sources. The report referred to was taken into consideration when compiling the 2003 report (*Groundwater Investigations for Contingency Drought Relief in the Sydney Region*) which assessed all available information on groundwater, and by the recent detailed technical investigations undertaken by the SCA.

Priority sites for investigation by the SCA were recommended by the 2003 report which involved 17 major groundwater systems across the whole of the Sydney Basin and more than 29 potential borefield sites. The criteria adopted to select the seven priority areas were:

- potential bore yields
- suitable water quality
- proximity to existing water supply infrastructure

- potential bore pumping interference
- potential environmental impacts
- lead time/development obstacles.

449) Is it just coincidence that the water “found” at Kangaloon and Leonay just happens to fall within the aquifers that were analysed in these two comprehensive reports, the Southern Highlands Groundwater Technical Status Report of March 1999, and the Blue Mountains Sandstone Aquifer Status Report of February 1999, both by the Department of Land and Water Conservation?

The SCA has utilised all existing information and studies wherever possible.

450) If the Government has had detailed, comprehensive reports of this excellent quality groundwater since 1999, why did it then propose to spend more than a billion dollars on a desalination plant, with \$120 million already allocated and \$70 million already spent, as well as \$120 million on deep water dam access, as “drought insurance policies”, only to backflip and embrace the use of this groundwater as its supposed “first line of defence against drought”?

I am advised that these early groundwater reports were *not* detailed resource investigations.

451) At the time of the aquifer announcement, the chemistry of the groundwater reserves, how much it can extract, and the environmental consequences of extraction were still supposedly at an investigative stage. Does the Government now know the answers to these questions?

Please refer to answer to 444.

Hawkesbury Nepean river system

452) Have you or your department undertaken any studies into the degraded nature of the Hawkesbury Nepean river system?

DEC is co-ordinating the development of an integrated monitoring program for the Hawkesbury Nepean River. DEC also requires Sydney Water Corporation to undertake studies and monitoring in the Hawkesbury-Nepean system under its environmental protection license. Other agencies such as Department of Natural Resources and Department of Primary Industries (Fisheries) also play an important role in studying the health of the river system

453) If so, what are they?

The following reports have been produced by DEC including by the Environment Protection Authority:

- *1994–1996 Survey of recreational water quality in the Hawkesbury Nepean* and preparation of material to allow local government to continue the work.
- *1994–1996 Analysis of existing water quality data for Hawkesbury Nepean* and South Creek showed spatial and temporal trends in water quality.
- *2004 Modelling of nutrient generation by various land uses in South Creek Catchment*; and

- *2005 Preparation of a suggested monitoring strategy for South Creek* as part of the Northwest and South west Sector development. This included initial collection of fish and macroinvertebrate data for South Creek in 2005 and 2006.

454) If not, do you not believe this is an environmental issue?

The health of the Hawkesbury-Nepean system is a serious issue requiring careful management.

455) Do you have any figures of the demand the river system requires as environmental flows?

The 2004 Hawkesbury-Nepean River Management Forum recommended an environmental flow regime along with complementary works that would improve the health of the Hawkesbury-Nepean. The recommended regime for the Upper Nepean dams was adopted in the Metropolitan Water Plan and will provide approximately 32GL/year of water.

456) If not, why not?

Not applicable.

457) What is the total amount of water that the Hawkesbury Nepean river system needs to stay as healthy as possible?

Refer to the response to question 455

458) How much water is required to be released from Sydney's dams into the Hawkesbury Nepean each year?

According to the SCA's Water Management Licence, 55.5ML/d (20,162 ML/year) is required to be released for environmental flows to the Hawkesbury-Nepean River under normal conditions. In periods of extreme drought the Government can change priorities and change environmental flows, under the *Water Management Act 2000*, to protect the community..

459) When was the last time the full amount was released?

The amendment to the SCA's Water Management Licence to change the environmental flows was effective from 10 June 2005.

460) What are the impacts on the river?

Environmental flows are designed to mimic natural flows. During a drought natural flows are obviously reduced. The impacts are those that could be expected for any major river system in an urban area during a drought.

461) Do you agree the river is suffering as a result of the Government's inability to supply enough drinking water, as well as for environmental purposes?

As outlined in the Metropolitan Water Plan, the Government is implementing a range of options to increase Sydney's water supply, thus freeing up additional water for environmental flow needs.

Ocean outfalls and the environment

- 462) Do you agree with the comments Kerry Schott made as former Chairman of the EPA? "The EPA, with Sydney Water and the NSW Government, is developing a proposal for a similar scheme to address unsustainable levels of water consumption in the Sydney basin" and that "demand management solutions" are cheaper and more sustainable than committing to major new infrastructure."

Demand management is an important part of the Metropolitan Water Plan. The relative costs of demand management versus new infrastructure depends on the specific situation and the measures proposed. The Government has investigated a broad range of options for both water supply and environmental outcomes. The Metropolitan Water Plan sets out a mix of options that are economically, socially and environmentally sound. We are increasing supply, including massively increasing water recycling and reuse, which means we get more efficient use out available water, as well as providing water for additional environmental flows.

The Government has also set demand targets to require Sydney Water to implement demand management programs in order to reduce the levels of water consumption, which has decreased per capita, from 506 litres per person per day in the early 1990s to 342 litres per person per day in 2004-05.

- 463) Do you agree demand management solutions are more sustainable than new infrastructure?

The Metropolitan Water Plan outlines both demand management and new infrastructure options. A range of solutions are needed and these are reflected in the mix of programs outlined in the Metropolitan Water Plan.

- 464) Do you believe there are unsustainable levels of water consumption in the Sydney Basin?

The Government has developed the Metropolitan Water Plan to augment water supplies, significantly increase water recycling and reuse, decrease the demand for water and provide for more environmental flows. This will ensure sustainable levels of water consumption.

- 465) What payments does Sydney Water make to the to EPA?

Sydney Water pays licence fees to DEC annually for the environment protection licences it holds; however these fees are not retained by DEC.

Fees include load based licence fees and are primarily payable in relation to treated effluent discharges from licensed sewage treatment plants.

DEC keeps a public register of the its licences which can be accessed through the DEC website.

466) Why is it required to do so?

The *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* requires that annual fees must be paid by licence holders. The *POEO General Regulation 1998* prescribes the level of fees payable, consisting of an administration fee for each licence, plus load based fees (where applicable) for emissions of prescribed pollutants from licensed activities.

467) Under your tenure, will Sydney Water reform its practices to be more environmentally friendly?

DEC interacts with Sydney Water at a number of strategic and operational levels to influence and/or regulate improvements to Sydney Water's environmental performance.

Sydney Water's environmental performance has significantly improved and this has in part been a result of requirements imposed by its environment protection licences and other statutory instruments. Regulation has focused on the performance of Sydney Water's sewage treatment plants. Reductions in loads of nutrients and increased levels of disinfection in effluent discharged from the treatment plants have been achieved as a result. The current focus is on reductions in frequency of wet weather overflows and improved detection, response and cleanup of dry weather overflows.

468) What would you like to see done about the ocean outfalls?

The ocean outfalls are properly managed to minimise the environmental impacts of Sydney's sewerage system.

469) Director General of the Department of Environment and Conservation, Lisa Corbyn, recently told an Upper House Inquiry into Sustainable Water Supply for Sydney that the department would like to see Sydney Water recycle more. Is the discharge of billions of litres of primary treated effluent acceptable from an environmental perspective?

In the last ten years, the amount of water recycled in Sydney has more than doubled. The new recycling measures included in the Metropolitan Water Plan will increase the current level of recycling more than fourfold, to 70 billion litres a year. This will make Sydney one of the largest urban providers of recycled water in Australia.

With respect to impacts associated with the outfalls, routine DEC Beachwatch monitoring of recreational water quality is undertaken at 35 Sydney beaches. In 2004-05, all 35 ocean beaches monitored complied with guideline levels of faecal coliforms for 100% of the time, and most beaches also complied 100% of the time for enterococci guideline levels.

470) Do you agree that Wollongong sewage treatment plants should be upgraded to discharge water at secondary or tertiary treatment levels, but Sydney left behind at high rate primary or no treatment at all?

There are different levels of treatment at the Wollongong and the major Sydney plants at North Head, Bondi and Malabar. Sydney plants of equivalent size to the Wollongong plants (Warriewood and Cronulla) treat their effluent to similarly high standards.

However, regardless of the level of treatment, the environmental objectives remain the same – no bacteriological impact on bathing beaches and no measurable impact on the marine environment. The major Sydney plants address these objectives.

- 471) Have you done any studies into the environmental impacts of the ocean outfalls in Sydney? If so, what are they? If not, why not?

The Environment Protection Authority (EPA) undertook a comprehensive five year Sydney Deepwater Outfalls Environmental Monitoring Program which investigated ocean and beach water quality, contaminants in fish, oysters and sediments, and impacts on the distribution of fish and bottom-dwelling animals.

In addition, Beachwatch monitors water quality at ocean beaches and Sydney Water monitors the condition of sediment and bottom-dwelling animals near the outfalls (see answer to 469).

Sydney Water's environment protection licences require it to conduct ongoing environmental monitoring of the deepwater ocean outfalls.

Long term planning

- 472) Given that water restrictions are the only factor stopping Sydney from exceeding the sustainable yield of its dams, what is your long-term supply strategy for the dams?

The Government's long term supply strategy for Sydney's dams is detailed in the *2006 Metropolitan Water Plan*, specifically Chapter 7. The plan, which was underpinned by advice from independent experts, contains a diverse range of rainfall and non-rainfall dependent measures for dealing with severe drought, meaning that the Government is not reliant on any one water supply source. The combination of measures will meet greater Sydney's water supply growth and security needs into the future.

- 473) How will you ensure that the dams hold enough water for Sydney?

See Question 472.

- 474) Will this require implementing permanent water restrictions?

Please refer to the Government's *2006 Metropolitan Water Plan*.

- 475) How much water will be drawn from Sydney's dams by 2015?

Please refer to the Government's *2006 Metropolitan Water Plan*.

- 476) If you don't know, why haven't the forecasts been done?

Not applicable.

- 477) When Premier Iemma announced in February that the Government had "drought proofed Sydney", the Metropolitan Water Plan did not rely on massive increases in pumping water from the Shoalhaven. Why is this suddenly necessary?

Transferring water from Tallowa dam has not "suddenly" become necessary. The Shoalhaven System was built by a former Coalition Government for precisely the purpose it is now being used.

Rainfall

- 478) Can you supply a breakdown of how much rain has fallen over the Sydney catchment area, each year, for the past 25 years, or for as far back as your records go?

Historical rainfall records for Sydney are publicly available from the Bureau of Meteorology.

Guyra Abattoir

- 479) When were you or your staff made aware there is a waste pit adjacent to the now disused Guyra Abattoir, which has probably been there for 50 years and about the size of a football field, that contains waste animal products and possibly acids used in the cleaning of the abattoir?

I am advised that a report by HLA Envirosiences PL, dated 12 August 1997, was provided to the EPA which identified that a pond on the site contained sludges and tallow. That report recommended to the owner that the pond should be fenced and left as it was in July 1997.

DEC has no information to confirm that the waste pit contains cleaning products.

- 480) When were you or your staff made aware that a fire started in the pit early in August 2006 which was emitting a very dense smoke pall of unknown toxicity that has seriously affected at least three families causing them to require medical assistance?

DEC first became aware of possible health concerns on 15 August 2006 with a complaint to DEC's Environment Line. On receiving the complaint, the Armidale DEC office advised Guyra Shire Council, which is the appropriate regulatory authority for the site, to contact NSW Health.

- 481) Did you or your staff conduct any tests on this smoke while the fire was burning, and if so, how toxic was this smoke determined to be?

See Question 480.

- 482) If not, why not?

The Guyra Abattoir ceased operations and surrendered its Environment Protection Licence in 1997. The abattoir has since been under the regulatory control of Guyra Shire Council.

- 483) As this waste pit is in the catchment area of Malpas Dam (the principal Armidale City water supply), has the Department conducted any tests to determine the rate of leaching from this dam and the toxicity of the leachate?

Under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997*, the Guyra Shire Council is the appropriate regulatory authority for this particular matter. As such, this question should be referred to the council for a response.

- 484) Is there any threat that this leachate could enter the stored waters of Malpas Dam?

See response to Question 483.

- 485) Have you or your staff determined whether any surface runoff water from the site and the waste pit could enter the drainage system of the Malpas Dam catchment and ultimately enter the stored waters of Malpas Dam?

See response to Question 483.

- 486) Have you or your staff conducted any surface water quality tests of the water in the Malpas Dam catchment area below the waste pit?

See response to Question 483.

- 487) Have you or your staff conducted any water quality tests of the stored water in Malpas Dam to identify any toxic substances which may be emanating from the waste pit?

See response to Question 483.

- 488) If so, what were the results of those tests?

Not applicable.

- 489) What action has been taken to prevent further health risks that may threaten the residents of Armidale?

See response to question 483. It is of course expected that the council will use powers available to it under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* to prevent any risk to health or to the environment.

- 490) Have you put any plans in place to rehabilitate this site so that local residents, Armidale water users and the environment will incur no further risks from this abandoned site?

See response to question 483.

QUESTIONS FROM MR HARWIN

Shoalhaven Transfers

491) Every flood in the Shoalhaven river system has been diverted to Sydney over the last 21 months, so there has been no flushing to cleanse and revitalise the river. When are you going to allow a flushing of the Shoalhaven River?

The Honourable Member's assertion is wrong.

492) The NSW Government has announced plans to dramatically increase transfers to Sydney from the Shoalhaven. How much will the proposed regime of transfers cost?

To consult the local community, the Government released a discussion paper which details various options for the operation of the Tallowa Dam. No final decision has been made with respect to any option.

493) What will annual pumping costs be and how many greenhouse gases will this generate?

Please refer to answer to 492.

494) What studies have been done to assess environmental impacts on the Shoalhaven River of these transfers and on the Shoalhaven region?

These studies are detailed in and available in conjunction with the discussion paper referred to in the answer to Question 492.

Deep-water storage and groundwater

495) How much money has been spent on accessing deep water from our dams?

I am advised that expenditure to the end of June 2006 was \$95 million.

496) How much extra water will this deliver?

The deep water access projects will provide an additional 40GL/annum in long term water supply (yield) and an extra 200GL (8% increase) in storage capacity.

497) When did this water come on line?

Please refer to the answer to question 440.

498) If the water was supposed to come on line in August, why was it included in the dam level figures from 20 April 2006?

Please refer to the answer to question 440.

499) Was this because dam levels fell below 40 per cent for the first time, which is when the Government is supposed to construct bore fields to access the so-called 'new' groundwater which you used as a mechanism to shelve desalination?

Please refer to the answer to question 440.

Sic 428) At the time of the Government's announcement in February this year that they would access groundwater from Kangaloon and Leonay aquifers, did the Government know the chemistry of the groundwater reserves, how much it can extract, and the environmental consequences of extraction?

The substantial technical reports on these investigations were made publicly available with the release of the mid-year report (*Metropolitan Water Plan Groundwater Investigation Report*, June 2006).

500) If not, does the Government now know the answers to these questions?

Please refer to the answer to question 440.

Hawkesbury Nepean river system

501) Have you or your department undertaken any studies into the degraded nature of the Hawkesbury Nepean river system?

The Honourable R Colless MLC, also asked this question. Please refer to the relevant answer.

502) If so, could you please provide details.

The Honourable R Colless MLC, also asked this question. Please refer to the relevant answer.

503) Do you have any figures on the demand the river system requires as environmental flows? What are these figures?

The Honourable R Colless MLC, also asked this question. Please refer to the relevant answer.

504) What is the total amount of water that the Hawkesbury Nepean river system needs to stay as healthy as possible?

The Honourable R Colless MLC, also asked this question. Please refer to the relevant answer.

505) How much water is required to be released from Sydney's dams into the Hawkesbury Nepean, each year?

The Honourable R Colless MLC, also asked this question. Please refer to the relevant answer.

506) When was the last time the full amount was released?

The Honourable R Colless MLC, also asked this question. Please refer to the relevant answer.

Biobanking

- 507) Why did you go down the track of biobanking to try and deal with the conflict between development and the Threatened Species Act? Is the fact that you have introduced the Biobanking Legislation an admission that the Threatened Species Act isn't working?

BioBanking is being developed to further the Government's reform program to make threatened species regulation faster, more predictable and more effective for both nature conservation and industry. BioBanking is being developed to complement the existing system. Instead of ad hoc site by site threatened species conservation, BioBanking will provide a market-based approach to correct market failure to recognise biodiversity values. Importantly it will provide incentives to encourage landholders to protect land of biodiversity significance which the current system does not provide.

- 508) How much land has been acquired by developers as potential biobank sites to offset against other land they might want to develop in advance of the legislation being passed by the Parliament?

The details of land that has been acquired by developers as potential biobank sites (if any) is not known. Given that the legislation to establish BioBanking is still before the NSW Parliament, such action would obviously be premature.

- 509) Which other companies, apart from Hardie Holdings, have acquired land for biobanking?

See Question 508.

- 510) What sort of ratio do you envisage would exist between the area of biobank sites and the area of parcels of land that might be cleared for development?

Credit requirements will be based on changes in condition and predicted responses of threatened species to management. Scientific data concludes that improving biodiversity values is a lot more difficult than causing loss. The credit calculations take this into account. It is not a simple question of setting aside one hectare and developing another hectare. Often an offset will require far more land to generate gains than the concentrated losses on a development site. In considering the credit requirements, the condition, extent, connectivity and security of ecological communities and habitats will be considered. All these issues will be the subject of extensive consultation with stakeholders and the proposed Ministerial Reference Group.

- 511) (He will probably answer I don't know, in which case you can ask: Isn't that one of the stumbling blocks in the legislation, that you can't say how much land would have to be set aside as compensation for land that is cleared?)

See Question 510.

- 512) How long do you envisage a biobanking site might be managed for conservation purposes?

The Bill provides provisions for the biobanking site to be managed for conservation purposes in perpetuity. This means that if the land is sold, the funds held in trust are payable to the new

landowner so they can continue to carry out the management actions. Biobanking agreements are to be registered on title and will bind both current and future landowners.

513) What will happen to the land then – once the money runs out?

The biobanking agreements between the landowner and Minister will set out how much money will be paid each year to manage the site. This money will be paid into the BioBanking Trust Fund when the credits are first sold.

This is not a one-off payment. The agreements will ensure that landowners have enough money to manage the site each year and it also provides a financial incentive to landowners.

514) If the scheme is applied to coastal land, how do you propose to protect valuable land with views near the water?

BioBanking is aimed at addressing the impacts of urban and industrial development on biodiversity and is therefore integrated within the development assessment process undertaken by councils and the Department of Planning. Where a development meets the strict and rigorous improve or maintain test, a developer can choose to use BioBanking as an alternative path to the current threatened species 7-part test of significance.

BioBanking will not affect the relevant consent authority's role to approve or refuse a development. The consent authority will still be required to weigh up the social and economic considerations along with the environment considerations of a development proposal (including impacts on views) prior to giving consent.

515) Will the scheme apply between regions or only within a single region?

The BioBanking scheme will apply throughout NSW with most of the activity expected in coastal and urban areas. The scheme will not be limited by geographical regions but will apply where it is ecologically appropriate. The credit trading rules will adhere to the like- for-like principle. In areas where credits can be used to offset impacts under the improve or maintain test, there will be strict rules ensuring that:

- credits are obtained from a biobank site with either the same ecological community as the development site or a more endangered ecological community; and
- the credits are obtained from a biobank site with the same threatened species predicted to occur as the development site.

Waste

516) It was suggested last year that the Government wanted to sell WSN Environmental Services. Is this still the case and if so, does the Government intend to break it up or sell it as a single entity?

WSN is a State Owned Corporation operating in a commercial environment. It is appropriate that the Government continually review and assess its performance and position in the market.

517) Would the ACCC have to sign off on any sale of WSN?

This would be a matter for the ACCC.

518) What progress has the Government made in setting waste targets for Councils, as it said it would do in its City and Country Restoration Program?

The Performance Payment Targets have been set for 2006/07 and a Waste Performance Improvement Payments Advisory Group comprising local government representatives has been formed to assist DEC in the progressive updating of standards for the following year(s) targets.

The Performance standards for 2006/07 are publicly available. All Councils in the Sydney, Central Coast, Hunter and Illawarra areas have committed to meet them. The standards were some of the matters detailed in an MOU between the Minister and the LGSA.

519) Has the Government set any interim waste targets en route to achieve the targets it set for 2014?

No.

520) Why, if the Government's intention is to reduce waste going to landfill, does the Budget predict an increase in the amount of waste from Sydney and the extended regulated area going to landfill from 5.0 million to 5.68 million tonnes in 2009/10?

I am advised that the Budget Paper does not predict increased waste disposal.

521) Doesn't the Government have a vested interest in putting as much waste into holes in the ground as possible – because it makes money from it?

To the contrary, the Government is actively discouraging waste disposal. That is evidenced by the Government's long term commitment to its Waste Avoidance and Resource Recovery Strategy, the significant reduction in rates of waste disposal in Sydney and the significant increase in recycling.

522) The Deputy Premier recently criticised Ryde Council for placing microchips in wheely-bins. Were these microchips supplied by WSN Environmental Services, the successful tenderer for the Ryde waste collection contract? If not, was not WSN complicit as it would be a computer system in the WSN trucks that reads the microchip when it picks up the bin.

I am advised that WSN Environmental Solutions won the contract for the collection of waste from Ryde Council last year. As successful tenderer, WSN has implemented this system as required by Council under its contract.

QUESTIONS FROM MR HARWIN

Jenolan Caves

523) Can you confirm that you took back the Jenolan Caves House lease on July 4th?

Yes.

524) How much did you pay for the lease?

\$1.3 million.

525) Who is currently operating Caves House?

Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust.

526) How much promotion of the Caves are you now doing? How much did you spend on promoting the Caves in 2005/06 and for each of the five financial years before that?

2005/06	\$511,462
2004/05	\$522,971
2003/04	\$309,451
2002/03	\$277,479
2001/02	\$235,792
2000/01	\$101,610

527) How many cave tour tickets did you sell last year?

Nearly 220,000.

528) What was your revenue from cave tours – and what were your expenses?

Revenue in 2005/06 from cave tours was \$3.2 million (though this is only a portion of total Trust revenue of \$5.6 million). Total expenses were \$5.76 million.

529) Do you envisage that Government revenues will increase or decrease when you privatise the cave tours?

An expression of interest has been issued and projections of revenue and expenditure will depend on the integrated management of Jenolan Caves.

530) Do you expect the number of visitors to the caves to increase when the tours are privatised?

It is expected that the number of visitors will increase when a new lease for Caves House is negotiated.

531) In your opinion, did the previous lessee lift the overall standard of the property in the time he was there?

I am confident that the strategy now being implemented by the Government for Caves House will result in significant improvements.

532) In your opinion, did the previous lessee lift the overall standard of the property and especially Caves House between 1995 and 2005?

See Question 531.

533) If not, what was the independent NRMA rating for Caves House in January 1995 and what was the independent rating in December 2005?

I am not aware of the ratings at those times.

534) How much money did the Trust/Administrator spend on controlling weeds at Jenolan Caves in the 12 months to July first this year? How much money did the Trust/administrator spend on dealing with weeds in the previous two financial years?

I am advised as follows:

2005/06	\$50,795 plus grants for weed control
2004/05	\$127,714

Additional volunteer work by Conservation Volunteers Australia and GreenCorps equated to 100 days of work over the last two years.

535) Have you closed off any parts of the guesthouse? Why was this done?

I am advised that no parts of the guesthouse have been closed.

536) You said during the debate on Jenolan Caves on October 12 last year: "More than 15 years of testing by the Department of Health shows that the Government has been supplying drinking water to Caves House that complies with the Australian guidelines." What are those guidelines in relation to e.coli and other faecal coliforms?

The guidelines state that levels of E coli and total coliforms will be maintained at less than 1 per 100ml. If the levels detected are higher than these figures, appropriate action should be taken to ensure that the potential pathogens are eliminated.

537) If the Government has been supplying drinking water to Caves House that complies with the Australian guidelines, how do you explain sample results from last year supplied by the Jenolan Caves Reserve Trust which show coliform counts as high as 38 per 100ml of water?

The Department of Health conducts weekly tests on the Trust's water supply at Jenolan. I am advised that over the past 15 years these regular tests showed, with one exception, that the supply of potable water complied with the Australian Drinking Water Guidelines.

In contrast, I am advised that samples taken from within Caves House over the period of Jenolan Caves Resort's former proprietorship showed a number of failures in water quality, suggesting a problem with the internal infrastructure. In January 2006, after Caves House had been placed in receivership, the Trust tested the water in Caves House and found that a source of water pollution was the holding tank in the roof of Caves House. The receiver took immediate action and emptied and cleaned the tank.

538) Were you at any time made aware that the Administrator wanted the term of the Caves House lease reduced from 99 years to only 20-25 years before the government introduced its stated preferred business model?

Yes.

539) How much money is the government and the Administrator of the Trust spending to promote the destination in 2005-06 and planning to spend in 2006-07?

2005/06	\$500,044
2006/07	\$532,000

540) How much was the average spend per cave tour in 2005-06 and did the government plan to increase prices again in 2006-07?

In 2005/06, the average visitor expenditure was \$17.35 per cave tour. There are no proposed price increases.

541) How does average spend per cave tour increases between 2003-04 and 2005-06 compare with the average spend per cave tour between 1995-06 and 2001-02 when declining visitation was a serious problem?

The average increase in average spend per cave tour over the 1995-06 to 2001-02 period was 7.86 percent compared to 2.22 percent for the 2003-04 to 2005-06 period.

542) What was your revenue from cave tours – and how does this relate to total labour costs in 2005-06?

As indicated in my reply to question 528 above, Trust revenue from cave tours was \$3.2 million. Total labour costs for the Trust were also \$3.2million.

Kosciuszko Plan of Management

- 543) What is the difference between a booking system and a permit system for horse - riding in the Kosciuszko National Park?

Under a permit system, an approval is required to ride horses in an area. A booking system may be used at discreet locations during peak times to ensure riders are guaranteed an available camping site..

Kosciuszko entry fees

- 544) Does the Government know if there has been any impact on local businesses from the increase in vehicle entry fees this winter?

The 2006 winter is widely acknowledged to have been a particularly low snow year, which of itself will have had an impact on visitation and business in the region.

- 545) How many vehicles entered the park this winter compared with last winter?

The number of people who go skiing, and therefore the number of vehicles entering the park during winter, will fluctuate according to the amount of snow that has fallen in the resort areas. If it's a good winter for snow, more people will go skiing and, in so doing, enter the park. If it's a bad winter for snow, fewer people will obviously go skiing and enter the park.

During June, July and August 2005, when excellent snow falls were recorded, a total of around 283,000 vehicles entered the park via the Thredbo and Perisher entry stations. Full figures for the winter months during this year are not available because the vehicle counter on the Alpine Way (being the main entry point to the Thredbo resort) was out of service during June. However, due to the very low snowfalls this winter, it is expected that fewer people will have entered the park via these stations this year.

- 546) Will the Government review the increase, given the entry fee is set to rise again next year to \$27 per day during the 2007 snow season?

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) determined that future funding for the Perisher Range Resorts should be raised in part by the application of a per vehicle surcharge for entry to the NSW ski fields. Implementation of the IPART determination will mean that all visitors, other than local residents, will eventually pay an \$11 per vehicle winter surcharge to enter the ski fields of Kosciuszko National Park. Any decrease would have a direct impact on the Department of Environment and Conservation's ability to operate and provide essential municipal services to Kosciuszko National Park.

Smoke abatement notices

547) How many smoke abatement notices have been served on NSW home owners under s.135B of the Protection of The Environment Operations Act?

Smoke abatement notices are issued by local councils, not by the Government.

548) How were the offences measured?

See response to Question 547.

549) Who issued the smoke abatement notices – EPA or Council officers?

See response to Question 547.

550) In which town or local government area was each notice issued?

See response to Question 547.

551) How many fines have been issued for breaching a smoke abatement order? What was the size of the fines?

See response to Question 547.

Manly Quarantine Station

552) What's the current status of the Government's proposed lease of the Manly Quarantine Station to Mawland Holdings?

The Department of Environment and Conservation is continuing negotiations with its preferred lessee for the North Head Quarantine Station, Mawland Hotel Management Pty Ltd.

Flying Foxes

553) I understand the current flying fox cull quota is around 3000 animals a year. Can you guarantee that this number of animals, and only this number of animals, is killed each year?

The cull limit is set in conjunction with the Commonwealth Department of Environment and Heritage. The Department of Environment and Conservation works closely with NSW fruit growers. This has led to a considerable increase in the level of reporting from licensees. Last season 954 flying-foxes were reportedly culled. This represents only 31% of the NSW cull limit (3040).

554) So you can guarantee that no animals are shot, in the air at night, and fly into neighbouring properties before they die?

Licence holders are required to report on the numbers of flying foxes killed, however it is impossible to guarantee that an animal could not leave the property where the shooting is taking place.

555) Do you think culling is an effective way of reducing damage to fruit crops?

The Department of Environment and Conservation's policy on flying fox management advocates the use of full exclusion netting as the only reliable method for fruit crop protection. However the policy does make provision for the licensing of shooting, where no other method is possible, in line with the adopted national approach.

556) If you owned an orchard that was being attacked by 2000 bats, do you think shooting half a dozen bats would protect your crop?

Shooting is an effective means of scaring the animals and discouraging them from returning to the orchard. The number of licensees shooting that have reported not harming any flying foxes suggests that a level of crop protection can be achieved with minimal impact on the flying fox population.

557) What other measures is the Government planning to keep bats away from fruit crops?

In addition to issuing licences to harm limited numbers of flying-foxes where impact to commercial crops is demonstrated, the Government continues to have ongoing discussions with horticultural organisations such as the NSW Farmers' Association. The NSW Farmers' Association was involved in the development and endorsement of a proposal to the Commonwealth to fund a research project investigating aspects of flying-fox damage to commercial orchards. The Association also has representation on both the NSW Flying-fox Consultative Committee and the national recovery team for the Grey-headed Flying-fox.

Additionally, the Department of Environment and Conservation has contracted two consultants to identify, rank and map the foraging habitat of the grey-headed flying-fox across its distribution of Queensland, NSW, the ACT and Victoria. The project will identify spatial and temporal gaps in native food availability for the species, which will facilitate improved decision-making with respect to flying-fox habitat conservation and management. It will also make recommendations for habitat retention and tree-planting programs that will assist with conservation of the species and provide alternative food sources to commercial fruit crops across the geographical distribution of the species.

558) I understand flying foxes are also causing considerable damage to fruit trees in the Botanic Gardens. What is the Government doing to stop the bats from roosting here? And is this effective?

The flying foxes have camped in the Palm Grove and adjacent beds on and off for over a hundred years, but in the last 15 years they have reached numbers of up to 10,000 individuals.

The Botanic Gardens Trust has completed an arboriculture report on the impact of the flying foxes. The report states that over the last 15 years the large numbers of flying-foxes have had a

detrimental and permanent effect on many trees of great scientific and cultural significance in this section of the gardens.

The Botanic Gardens Trust is developing a flying fox management plan. The Trust has commenced stakeholder consultation and sought advice from other organisations that have developed and successfully implemented such plans.

Relocation of flying-foxes has been successful in similar situations, and if pursued in Sydney the Trust would take a holistic approach, combining research, monitoring and off-site management. Animal welfare would always be the key priority.

559) Will you guarantee that the \$400,000 recently committed by the Commonwealth and yourselves will be spent on researching practical alternatives to cuffing and netting bats, rather than on counting them?

The Commonwealth recently announced provision of \$397,000 from its Natural Heritage Trust Strategic Reserve funds to the "Grey-headed Flying-fox in Orchards: damage estimates, contributing factors and mitigation" project. The NSW Government's matching contributions for the project totalled more than \$415,000 through in-kind and cash contributions.

The objectives of the Commonwealth-funded *Grey-headed Flying-foxes in Orchards* research project were explicitly identified in the proposal submitted to the Commonwealth and, as such, cannot be changed.

The project seeks to:

- quantify and map netted and un-netted fruit crops that are susceptible to damage by flying-foxes within the range of the grey-headed flying-fox in NSW;
- quantify the relative abundance of flying-foxes in collaborating orchards and assess their abundance throughout the fruit season; and
- monitor the shooting effort and cost within orchards and assess the effectiveness of current practices in reducing flying-fox damage.

A method for an ongoing grower-based program to monitor trends in damage to fruit crops by flying-foxes will also be developed.

The project will provide for soundly-based and well-costed strategies for growers to use for damage mitigation in orchards, including non-lethal damage mitigation strategies such as full-exclusion netting.



NSW GOVERNMENT

The Arts & Environment

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2006-2007

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5

4 SEPTEMBER 2006

The Hon Bob Debus MP
Minister for Environment & Conservation
Minister for the Art

Department of Environment and Conservation (DEC) NSW

&

ARTS NSW

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5
 BUDGET ESTIMATES 2006-2007
 4 SEPTEMBER 2006

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE	QUESTION NUMBERS
Questions from Mr Harwin	
Departmental Motor Vehicles	001 – 014
Diversity reporting	015
Diversity costs	016 – 018
Public information	019 – 028
Staff with Non-English Speaking Backgrounds	029 – 033
Departmental staff – Community Language Allowance scheme	034 – 036
Use of translators and interpreters	037 – 043
Print advertising	044 – 046
Radio advertising	047 – 049
Intermediary Service Providers – Expenditure	050 – 052
Intermediary Service Providers - Accountability	053 – 057
Engagement of contractors by the Department – need identification	058
Engagement of contractors by the Department – cost forecasting	059 – 062
Credit Card Use	063 – 067
Departmental staff	068
Ministerial staff	069 – 072
Departmental support for the Minister	073 – 081
Professional development	082 – 084
Staff training & development	085 – 092
Work practices	093 – 095
Employment of people with a disability	096 – 097
Employment of mature age staff	097 – 100
State Government funded programs	101 – 103
Departmental public relations and media staff	104 – 111
Departmental advertising	112 – 120
Departmental advertising & public information	121
Departmental advertising & public information – effectiveness tracking mechanisms	122 – 123
Departmental research projects	124 – 126
Departmental break-ins	127 – 129

Departmental property theft	130 – 131
Departmental fraud	132 – 133
Departmental property loss	134 – 135
Computer equipment & security	136 – 140
Motor vehicle accidents	141 – 142
Departmental transport costs	143 – 145
Departmental function costs	146 – 148
Conference or training attendance by Departmental staff	149 – 152
Business Consultations	153 – 156
Regional NSW - print advertising	157 – 159
Regional NSW – radio advertising	160 – 162
Freedom of Information – Departmental Procedures	163 – 167
Sick leave	168 – 175
Departmental staff – compensation for private property	176 – 179
Departmental staff – private vehicles damaged on official business or other approved travel	180 – 184
Departmental staff – cost of travel to and from work	185 – 188
Departmental staff – first aid allowance	189 – 193
Departmental staff – flying allowance	194 – 196
Mobile Phone Use	197 – 199
Departmental Website	200 – 203
Departmental Website – Feedback management	204 – 208
Departmental website – Effectiveness tracking	209 – 210
Departmental website - Feedback	211 – 214
Departmental staff – Garage and carport allowance	215 – 218
Departmental staff – Use of private motor vehicle in conjunction with air travel	219 – 220
Departmental staff – Overseas travelling allowance	221 – 226
Departmental Staff – Travelling Compensation	227 – 231
Departmental staff – Remote areas allowances	232 – 235
Departmental staff – Home office allowance	236 – 239
Departmental staff – Semi-official telephone subsidy	240 – 243
Departmental staff management	244 – 248
Departmental asset management & identification	249 – 252
Departmental asset maintenance	253 – 255
Departmental asset maintenance costs and scheduling	256 – 261

Unfilled Public Service Positions	262 – 263
Unfilled Public Service Positions	264 – 269
Procurement Policy	270 – 271
Recruitment Agencies	272 – 273
Chartering Aircraft	274 – 276
Domestic & Overseas Travel	277 – 282
Massages	283 – 284
Overtime	285 – 286
Media Training	287 – 290
Barristers	291 – 294
Coaching	295 – 296
Lettable Area	297 – 299
Translation Services	300 – 302
Pianos	303 – 305
Coffee Machines	306 – 307
Non-Australians	308 – 309
Reservists	310 – 312
Behaviour Complaints	313 – 318
Opinion Polls	319 – 320
Opinion Polls	321 – 323
Photographs	324
Office Space	325 – 327
Drug Testing	328 – 332
Traffic Infringements	333 – 337
New Positions	338 – 341
Mobile Phone Telephone Services	342
Fees, Levies & Charges	343 – 344
Bullying	345 – 348
Stress Leave	349
Advertising	350 – 354
Questions from Mr Cohen	
Bushland In Western Sydney	355 - 360
North Coast	361 - 363
Kangaroos	364 - 387
Mining company fines	388 - 394
Development and biodiversity	395 - 401

NP – Goolawah	402 - 403
Evans Head	404 - 409
Water Sharing Plans	410
Timmsvale	411 - 415
Dingoes and 1080 bait	417 - 418
Incineration in Coal fired power stations	418 - 424
Longwall Mining	425 - 430
Elephants	431 - 435
Questions from Mr Colless	
Sydney Catchment Authority	436 - 451
Hawkesbury Nepean river system	452 - 461
Ocean outfalls and the environment	462 - 471
Long term planning	472 - 477
Rainfall	478
Guyra Abattoir	479 - 490
Questions from Mr Harwin	
Shoalhaven Transfers	491 - 494
Deep-water storage and groundwater	495 - 500
Hawkesbury Nepean river system	501 - 506
Biobanking	507 - 515
Waste	516 - 522
Jenolan Caves	523 - 542
Kosciuszko Plan of Management	543
Kosciuszko entry fees	544 - 546
Smoke abatement notices	547 - 551
Manly Quarantine Station	552
Flying Foxes	554 – 559
ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE	
Director General : The Arts	A
Director General : Department of Environment & Conservation	B
Deputy Director General – Parks & Wildlife	C

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE BY
DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL, PARKS AND WILDLIFE

Question

Ms Hale: "What has happened to the emus at the Australian Defence Industries site? Have they been culled or removed, or are they still in residence?" (p. 22)

Answer

There are around 50 emus on the St Marys Property (SMP). This population level has been fairly constant for the last few years. These emus are the descendants of emus from across NSW that were released into the SMP during the 1970s and 1980s.

The emus are covered by the endorsed Macrofauna Management Plan, prepared and implemented by the Maryland Development Corporation (MDC). The aim of the Plan is to manage the emu population to a sustainable level within the bounds of the future Regional Park.

There has been annual recruitment of emu chicks to the population, but this recruitment has been matched by mortality. The major causes of mortality appear to be natural (old age and ill-health). There may have been a small amount of mortality due to foxes. This is almost certainly reduced at present as the MDC has recently been doing a fox control program on the SMP in conjunction with the Rural Lands Protection Board.

The main direct management of the emus is their exclusion from current development areas. This is achieved through fencing and low-pressure herding of the emus. On the rare occasions that emus escape from the SMP (through holes cut in the boundary fence), they are generally recaptured through passive herding, usually by luring them with food.

The other major area of emu management is ensuring that their welfare is safeguarded, through monitoring the condition of the population, regulating visitor behaviour, and ensuring that they are protected from potential threats such as traffic, dogs and egg thieves.

The MDC is licensed under section 120 of the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974* to manage the emu population. MDC has also applied for a licence under section 121 to translocate macrofauna from the SMP to other locations in NSW. This licence application is currently under consideration. If it is found that the current population level is not sustainable, then options to reduce the population include measures to limit fertility, and translocation of emus to other locations.

Question

Mr Ryan (regarding disabled access to facilities at the Fairfax Heritage Track): "Can it be fixed? Secondly, when Parks intends to make somewhere accessible perhaps it could consult with more people in the disability sector because they would probably give sensible advice like that." (p.32)

Answer

The Fairfax Heritage Track was upgraded during the period February to June 2006 using funding provided under the *Revitalising Sydney's National Parks* program. Given the funding available for this track upgrade, the project focussed on the track itself and ensuring compliance with Australian Standard (AS) 1428.1 *Design for Access and Mobility* and AS 2156 *Walking Tracks*. These Standards guided the track specifications and design. The track entrance is wheelchair accessible through the Blue Mountains Heritage Centre, as are the full access toilets within this building. An upgrade of the lower carpark to allow for access from this track exit to the toilets at Govett's Leap lookout was outside of the scope of Fairfax Heritage Track Upgrade project.

Design and planning will be undertaken in the coming year for the upgrade of the Govett's Leap car park, viewing and amenity area to provide an improved wheelchair and full access facility at this significant visitor and tourism destination. Construction of the upgrade and enhancement works at this site will be scheduled as the required funding becomes available.

Local disability sector response has been very positive to the upgrade. During the construction phase of the track upgrade a representative of the disability sector inspected the works and provided feedback. The Department of Environment and Conservation is satisfied that the track complies with AS 1428.1.