

## Responses to Questions Taken On Notice

**Question:**

MS SYLVIA HALE: So your department has had no input into that figure. Have you or has anyone in your department met with business leaders in the Hunter about the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy?

MS SYLVIA HALE: If you could take on notice, therefore, whether there have been any meetings with any people and when those meetings took place?

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Staff from DSRD's Hunter office, along with business leaders and others, participated in meetings convened by the Department of Planning, about the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy.

**Question:**

Ms SYLVIA HALE: How frequently does it take place?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Dr Schott, would you be able to say how frequently it occurs?

Dr SCHOTT: No, I would need to take that on notice. The plant is currently being commissioned, so the testing of the water at the moment is in line with what is happening with the commissioning of the plant.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Sampling will be undertaken at the outlet of the Wollongong recycled water plant. The sampling regime and frequency will be in accordance with the NSW Guidelines for Urban and Residential Use of Reclaimed Water. For physical parameters such as temperature, alkalinity, turbidity etc, monitoring will occur at various frequencies.

The recycled water plant has continuous online monitoring equipment that automatically stops delivery of water when any critical parameter is out of specification.

**Question:**

Dr SCHOTT: While the water through the recycled plant is going through the testing processes—and it is currently up to about 12 megalitres a day instead of the anticipated 20 megalitres ...— in the interim we will provide water to BlueScope Steel from Avon Dam in an unfiltered form. There is a penalty paid by Veolia to Sydney Water for the plant not reaching performance targets if they do not get there at a particular time. That is all quite a normal part of things.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: What is that time?

Dr SCHOTT: I will take that on notice. I am not sure.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Under the provisions of the contract, the duration is from the date of practical completion to the end of the defects liability period.

**Question:**

Ms SYLVIA HALE: How many treatment plants does Veolia control or own within New South Wales?

Dr SCHOTT: I will take that on notice, but they are a major water company and they would run or own hundreds of plants.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: That would be useful, thank you.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

In Sydney Water's area of operations, Veolia operates two drinking water treatment plants, at Kembla Grange and Woronora and a sewage treatment plant at Gerringong which has an associated reuse scheme. Veolia also has a water treatment plant within Bayswater Power Station.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: In relation to the Coniston facility, which is about to be connected and which will provide recycled water, what consultation was there at all with the firemen's union prior to deciding to commission this project and provide the volume of wastewater that is going to be provided to BlueScope Steel?

Dr SCHOTT: I will have to take that on notice. It would be a consultation concerning the health guidelines around the water. They currently have guidelines for water quality for firefighting and, of course, Sydney Water would provide water that suited those guidelines.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Sydney Water has been liaising with the NSW Fire Brigade regarding the use of recycled water for some time.

The Fire Brigade Employees' Union previously indicated that it would accept the use of recycled water for fire fighting use, subject to it meeting appropriate guidelines.

The NSW Fire Brigade issued a water use policy in June 2004 indicating that recycled water that meets appropriate guidelines is suitable for fire fighting.

In 2004, the Water Services Association of Australia commissioned a comprehensive *Health Risk Assessment of Fire Fighting from Recycled Water Mains*. The assessment considered all possible exposures (including inhalation of droplets, ingestion, dermal) and concluded that properly treated and managed high quality recycled water is safe for fire fighting use. The assessment also compared risk to other alternative water sources (pools, local storages, rivers and dams) and concluded that high quality recycled water was as safe or safer than these sources.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, I asked a specific question about the number of meetings and when. I appreciate that you may not be able to answer that today, but would you take that on notice and provide an answer to the Committee?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Sure.

**Answer:**

Between February 2006, when I assumed Ministerial responsibility for Water Utilities, and August 2006 I both met directly and directed my staff to meet with and maintain consultation with the Fire Brigade Employees Union.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Thank you. It is now, of course, going to the Industrial Relations Commission. What will the legal costs and other costs be to the taxpayer, or the cost to Sydney Water if you like, the cost to New South Wales, of this dispute going to the Industrial Relations Commission? Is there an estimate at the moment?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will get that information. I take that question on notice.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Minister for Emergency Services.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Thank you. Minister, through you to Dr Schott, when did Sydney Water first become aware that the fire brigades union was going to place a ban on the use of industrial wastewater from Coniston?

Dr SCHOTT: I will have to take that on notice. It would be about the same time as the Minister was aware of it.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Late last year Sydney Water became aware that the Fire Brigade Employees Union had some concerns about the use of recycled water for fire fighting.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Can you tell the Committee the day on which wastewater from Coniston could have commenced being used by BlueScope?

Dr SCHOTT: I could take that on notice.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

The commissioning process for the recycled water plant could have commenced late last year.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes, please. Therefore, could you also provide the Committee with the amount of drinking water that has been drawn down from Avon Dam since then because of this dispute?

Dr SCHOTT: I can do that. I should make it clear to the Committee that what is being used from Avon Dam to replace the recycled water at present is unfiltered water. It is not water that has been treated to potable levels. It is purely water out of Avon Dam.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

When fully operational, the Wollongong recycled water plant will supply 20 megalitres of water each day to BlueScope. It is important to note that full flows of 20 megalitres a day would not occur immediately. The level of flows would be progressively increased over a period of time.

**Question:**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: —he was not forced to move on? Is he still on the public payroll?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I do not believe so.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Could you find out for sure?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Just to make certain it is absolute, yes, we will find out. But I am very confident that he is not. He resigned and that was effective from a given date. But I will make sure that we take it on notice for absolute clarification.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Mr David Nemptzow submitted his written resignation to both Ministers, indicating that he wished to resign for personal reasons with effect from 19 April 2006.

**Question:**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Could you find out for certain if there is any payout and provide us with the detail?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: This was a person who worked diligently for the Government and I do not want to have any sense that there is any controversy around this. So I will make sure that it is clarified in writing for the Committee. He deserves that respect as a public sector employee.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Mr Nemptzow was paid the usual entitlements due to a resigning officer. This includes his final pay plus any accrued leave.

As this was a voluntary resignation there was no additional payment or compensation paid.

**Question:**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Could you tell me the salary range?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will take that on notice. I do not have that figure on hand.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Remuneration details for the Director-General of the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability can be found in the Department's Annual Reports.

**Question:**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: Was that position advertised?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We will take that on notice.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Sydney Water Corporation is managed under the direction of a Board of Directors. The Board is responsible for the appointment of the Managing Director. In many cases, large corporations do not advertise for the position of Managing Director. In this instance the position of Managing Director was not advertised.

**Question:**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: How much water is recycled at each of the three main ocean outfalls in Sydney?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Significant amounts are used at those sites.

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: How much?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will get the exact figure for each site for the Committee.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

In 2005/06, the Bondi sewage treatment plant recycled 1,027 million litres of water, Malabar sewage treatment plant recycled 496 million litres of water and North Head sewage treatment plant recycled 2,807 million litres of water.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What are the total expenses, the total operational costs, involved in the water restrictions patrols that are occurring within the area of Sydney Water's operations?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: To ensure accuracy we will take that on notice and make sure you have the exact figure.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Can you provide to the Committee details of how much money has been raised in fines during the last financial year?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We will provide that on notice as well.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Also, Minister, can you outline to the Committee the distribution of the money collected in proceeds from fines?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We will give that in the same answer. There is a package then.

**Answer:**

Sydney Water refers all collection and processing of fines to the NSW State Debt Recovery Office.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Is it not a fact that, despite the amount you have claimed was spent, in 1995 there was a backlog of \$1,700 million worth of projects? How much progress has been made in clearing that backlog? When do you envisage it will be cleared? Can you provide a list of which councils are next due to be funded, and in which order?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will take that question on notice and provide the Committee with the report of the ranking committee.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

An assessment in 1994 estimated that the total capital cost of the backlog works in the Country Towns Water Supply and Sewerage Program was \$1,710 million. The estimated cost to the Government to provide 50% subsidy for these backlog works under the Program was \$855 million.

The Government has honoured that estimate and has since increased its commitment to the Program to \$915 million.

The Government has already allocated \$760 million of this total which has enabled some 300 projects to be completed and placed in service for the benefit of the local communities. These projects have delivered improved water supply and sewerage systems directly benefiting over 1 million residents of country NSW.

The \$915 million commitment will enable all high priority projects as determined by the Inter-agency Prioritisation Committee to be funded for construction. This will see another 115 projects constructed, with more than 50 of these having already commenced construction. It is envisaged that these backlog works will be completed in 5 years, providing the utilities develop these solutions expeditiously.

The Government is committed to providing ongoing funding to enable these projects to be completed as soon as possible. There is no list of which projects can proceed in which year as the funding allocation for 2006-07 of \$70 million will enable all possible projects to proceed as soon as the responsible local water utilities have completed their designs and obtained statutory approval and community support for the projects.

**Question:**

The Hon. DUNCAN GAY: How much is your general advertising budget?

Dr SCHOTT: I will have to take that question on notice.

**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](http://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.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: How many applications for funding have been made under the Water Savings Fund?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: To get the exact number, I will take the question on notice. In round one there were 27 successful applications. But the exact number in round one and round two I am not sure of, so I will take the question on notice.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As part of that answer, how many were refused?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will provide that in the same answer.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As part of your answer, could you advise how much water will be saved as a result of the successful applications?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will do that. I made some comment on the amount to be saved in answer to an earlier question. But I am happy to repeat it in the answer on notice.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

75 applications for funding were made in each of Round 1 and Round 2.

Announcements of projects, including water savings, can be found on the website of the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability – [www.deus.nsw.gov.au](http://www.deus.nsw.gov.au).

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Could you provide a full list of the names of the persons on that committee?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We will do that in that same answer.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: On what criteria are the grants approved or denied?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: We will give the criteria in that written answer.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

The following people served on either or both of the Evaluation Panels for Round 1 and Round 2 of the Water Savings Fund:

Alex Walker (Chair)  
Katy Brady (Metro Water Directorate)  
Geoff Dyce (Hunter Water)  
Ross Edwards (NSW Treasury)  
Gary Marshall (DEUS)  
Gary Mitchell (Water Directorate)  
John Nieuwland (Sydney Water)  
Matt Sherb (Metro Water Directorate)

The criteria are published in the Guide for Applicants, available on the website of the Department of Energy, Utilities and Sustainability - [www.deus.nsw.gov.au](http://www.deus.nsw.gov.au).

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Could you outline where, if at all, it differed from the advice given to you by the committee?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I think I just did. I did not substitute any projects that the committee did not recommend and I do not believe I refused any that the committee recommended.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: If you could on notice please check that and, if you did, tell us why you did that?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I am happy to give the clarification for that.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

For Round 2 there were no projects recommended that did not receive funding offers.

**Question:**

CHAIR: I understand that Sydney Water recently opened some gates in the Macquarie Marshes draining a Ramsar-listed wetland to give water to a landholder for agricultural purposes. Is it also true that the Department of Environment and Conservation was not notified of this action, as it should have been? What actions will Sydney Water take to remedy the environmental damage it has caused and legislation it has breached?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will take the question on notice.

**Answer:**

I am advised that water releases for stock and agricultural purposes are made in accordance with the Macquarie Water Sharing Plan (WSP). Following stock and domestic flow delivery to the lower Macquarie River in May/June 2006, State Water operations staff shut the regulator on the North Marsh Bypass Channel in June 2006 and maintained a minimal flow through the regulator as agreed with the Department of Environment and Conservation.

As a precaution, I am advised that State Water has also now locked the Channel regulator.



**Question:**

CHAIR: In your area of the Illawarra, you are probably aware that about 12 months ago Minister Sartor refused to go ahead with the Jamberoo pipeline to reuse effluent back in the farming areas in Jamberoo Valley. In light of the succeeding drought and water problems, would you agree that was a mistake?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: It is not a project that I have specific details about, so it would not be possible for me to agree or disagree on the knowledge that I have of that particular project.

CHAIR: Perhaps you could take it on notice because it is something that has frustrated many of the farmers because of problems with lack of water and they were begging the Government for that reuse pipeline. In fact, I took a delegation to see Minister Sartor about that and at the time he said it did not add up, but we have subsequently had very serious drought conditions. Would you perhaps undertake to investigate that matter?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will undertake to look at it.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

In July 2003, the Managing Director of Sydney Water announced that a reuse scheme would not be a part of the sewerage project in Jamberoo.

More than \$250,000 was spent on technical studies to determine the feasibility of effluent reuse in the Jamberoo area. The studies found that effluent reuse would be technically feasible but expensive to implement, and would provide minimal environmental benefit for the investment.

Construction of reuse infrastructure in Jamberoo would have involved a capital cost of around \$7 million, which would have dramatically increased the cost of providing services to the Jamberoo community. Investigations concluded that reuse in the Jamberoo area, either in the form of dual reticulation or for farm irrigation, are not economically viable, would have delivered minimal environmental benefits and would not have reduced demand for drinking water to a degree necessary to justify the project. The cost and limited benefits of a wastewater reuse scheme cannot be justified in Jamberoo at this time.

**Question:**

CHAIR: In the recent spills of radioactive material at the Lucas Heights nuclear reactor in June this year I understand that water was used in the clean-up of the spillage. How was that water disposed of and was it allowed to enter the sewage system untreated?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: Because it is such a serious matter, I think I should take it on notice and make sure that I am not relying on memory but on facts.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

Any wastewater from areas involving radioactive operations such as hospitals, are transferred to a dedicated storage tank system for accumulation and processing. Each tank on filling is processed to remove radioactivity.

All effluent, including sewage is analysed for radioactivity (and other contaminants) to ensure compliance with the discharge limits as specified in the Trade Waste Agreement with Sydney Water.

The "spills" reported in the media in June involved very small amounts of short-lived isotopes intended for medical use within controlled areas. The incidents did not involve the reactor. All wastewater from controlled areas are treated by holding the effluent to reduce levels of radioactivity before being discharged.

**Question:**

CHAIR: Do you have a uniform code covering all the recycling of domestic sewage carried out on site? Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will take that question on notice.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

The Code of Practice Plumbing and Drainage provides the administrative and plumbing requirements for the installation of approved onsite domestic sewage recycling systems, greywater diversion devices and greywater treatment systems.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, can you tell me the current status of the pilot desalination plant at Kurnell and whether it is operational? Secondly, can you tell me what discussions you have had about the need for an increased electricity supply, which I am sure was not necessary before the desalination plant, and if necessary take on notice, given the time, what the actual electricity needs are to operate the fully commissioned desalination plant?

Mr DAVID CAMPBELL: I will take that on notice. I do not have the technical detail of electricity supply.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

There are two pilot plants at the Kurnell site and both are operational. Energy Australia has confirmed that there is sufficient electricity supply to Kurnell to meet the operational needs of a desalination plant without the need to augment the system.

**Question:**

The Hon. DON HARWIN: But in terms of the pilot plant being operational, presumably you do not need to take that on notice; it is either yes or no.

Dr SCHOTT: If it is not, it is imminent. As to the power supply, no further upgrade is required, but the other technical matters you asked we will take on notice.

**Answer:**

I am advised:

The testing for one plant commenced in the week beginning 7 August 2006. The testing program for the other plant commenced in the week beginning 4 September 2006.