

**RESPONSES TO TABLED QUESTIONS ON NOTICE FROM BUDGET
ESTIMATES 2006-2007**

Questions from Mr Gay

1. Departmental Motor Vehicles

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

i) 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;**

ii) 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.

iii) 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.

iv) 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.

v) 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.

vi) 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.

vii) How many cars owned and/or leased were powered by petrol 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.

viii) How many cars owned and/or leased were powered by diesel 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.

ix) How many refuelling stations does the Department operate as at:

- a. 30 June 2006**
- b. 30 June 2005**
- c. 30 June 2004**
- d. 30 June 2003**

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

x) Does the Department have a policy or strategy to reduce the fuel consumption of its car fleet, if so, can details be provided?

xi) What is the department's position on the use of ethanol fuel?

xii) What is the fuel efficiency rating of all the cars provided to the Department and/or departmental staff under the arrangement described above?

xiii) How does the actual fuel consumption and mileage compare with that rating?

xiv) State-wide, 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:

- a. LPG**
- b. CNG**
- c. 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 bio-fuels.

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.

2. Diversity reporting

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

i) 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?**

ii) 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:

- a. FY2000-01**
- b. FY2001-02**
- c. FY2002-03**
- d. FY2003-04**
- e. FY2004-05**
- f. 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.

3. Diversity costs

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

i) 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?**

ii) 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?**

iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

4. Public information

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

i) Which publications are being published, as at today, for public information purposes?

ii) 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.

iii) For the list of publications published for general public information purposes?

a. Which publications were produced in languages other than English and what languages were the publications published in?

b. From the above list, how many copies were printed?

c. From the above list, what was the total cost of the publication (i.e. translation, printing and distribution) of each of these documents?

iv) 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.

v) 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.

vi) 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.**
- vii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

5. Staff with Non-English Speaking Backgrounds

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

- i) What proportion of employees as at 30 June 2006 have a non-English speaking background?**
- ii) What efforts has the Department made to identify employees from non-English speaking backgrounds and the languages in which they are fluent?**
- iii) 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?**
- iv) 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?**
- iv) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

.6. Departmental staff – Community Language Allowance scheme

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

- i) 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**

ii) 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**

iii) 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 are contained in the Personnel Handbook.

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

7. Use of translators and interpreters

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

iv) 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?**

v) 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?**

vi) What is the amount budgeted in FY2006-07 for engaging:

- a. language translators**
- b. language interpreters?**

vii) 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?**

viii) 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?**

ix) 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**

x) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

8. Print advertising

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

i) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial in the ethnic print media during each of the following years:

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

ii) 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:

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

iii) 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.

9. Radio advertising

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

i) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial on ethnic radio in each of the following years:

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

ii) 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:

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

iii) 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 \$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.

10. Intermediary Service Providers – Expenditure

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

i) 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?

ii) 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?

iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

11. Intermediary Service Providers - Accountability

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

- i) 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?**
- ii) 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?**
- iii) 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?**
- iv) 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?**
- v) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

12. Engagement of contractors by the Department – need identification

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

i) 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.

ii) 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:

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.

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.

13. Engagement of contractors by the Department – cost forecasting

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

- i) 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?**
- ii) 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:**
 - a. 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;**
 - b. 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**
 - c. 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.**
- iii) 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?**
- iv) 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:**
 - a. 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;**
 - b. 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**
 - c. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

14. Credit Card Use

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

- i) How many employees/staff carry, use or have been issued with Departmental/Agency credit cards as at**
 - a. 30 June 2006**
 - b. 30 June 2005**
 - c. 30 June 2004**
 - d. 30 June 2003**
- ii) 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?**
- i) 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**
- ii) 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:**
 - e. FY2002-03**
 - f. FY2003-04**
 - g. FY2004-05**
 - h. FY2005-06?**
- iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

15. Departmental staff

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

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.

16. Ministerial staff

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

i) How many departmental employees were seconded/assigned to work in Offices of Ministers and of Parliamentary Secretaries as at:

- a. 30 June 2002**
- b. 30 June 2003**
- c. 30 June 2004**
- d. 30 June 2005**
- e. 30 June 2006**

ii) To what Minister or Parliamentary Secretary outlined in part i) were they assigned?

iii) What was the total cost of seconding/assigning department employees to work in Offices of Ministers and of Parliamentary Secretaries for the following periods:

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

iv) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

17. Departmental support for the Minister

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

i) 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:

- a. Coordinating and processing correspondence,**
- b. Briefings,**
- c. Freedom of Information requests,**
- d. Reports to Parliament,**
- e. Answers to Questions of Notice,**
- f. Estimates briefings?**

ii) 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:

- a. Coordinating and processing correspondence,**
- b. Briefings,**
- c. Freedom of Information requests,**
- d. Reports to Parliament,**
- e. Answers to Questions of Notice,**
- f. Estimates briefings?**

iii) How many employees are currently in the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit (whose duties are outlined in part i) as at:

- a. 30 June 2003**
- b. 30 June 2004**
- c. 30 June 2005**
- d. 30 June 2006**

Please provide details of salaries & job titles/descriptions of the employees counted above.

iv) 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?

v) As at 30 June 2006, to whom does the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit report to within the department?

vi) As at 30 June 2006 and to whom in the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit?

vii) What was the total cost of the Ministerial/Parliamentary Liaison Unit (whose duties are outlined in part i) for the following periods:

- a. FY 2002/03**
- b. FY 2003/04**
- c. FY 2004/05**
- d. FY 2005/06**

viii) 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.

18. Professional development

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

i) What was the total expenditure on professional development for senior staff in the following periods:

a. FY 2002/03

b. FY 2003/04

c. FY 2004/05

d. FY 2005/06

ii) 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.

iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

19. Staff training & development

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

i) 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?**

ii) 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?**

iii) What was the total budgeted expenditure on in-house job-related training for the FY2006-07?

iv) 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?**

v) 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?**

vi) What was the total budgeted expenditure on external job-related training for the FY2006-07?

vii) 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?

viii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

20. Work practices

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

i) 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?

ii) 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?

iii) 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

21. Employment of people with a disability

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

i) How many people with a disability are employed by the Department in each NSW electoral divisions?

ii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

22. Employment of mature age staff

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

i) 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?

ii) 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?

iii) 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?

iv) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

23. State Government funded programs

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

i) Does the Department administer any State funded programs for which community organisations or businesses can apply for funding? If so, what are these programs?

ii) Does the Department advertise these funding opportunities?

iii) 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.

24. Departmental public relations and media staff

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

- i) 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?**
- ii) 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?**
- iii) How many media and/or communications advisers are currently employed by the Department?**
- iv) What is the estimated total cost to the Department in FY2006-07 of media and/or communications advisers employed by the Department?**
- v) How many media and/or communications advisers were employed as contractors by the Director General of the Department during FY2005-06?**
- vi) What was the total cost to the Department in FY2005-06 of media and/or communications advisers employed as contractors by the Department?**
- vii) How many media and/or communications advisers are currently employed as contractors by the Department?**
- viii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

25. Departmental advertising

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

- i) Did the Department submit any campaign advertising plans to the Advertising Peer Review during FY2005-06?**
- ii) Please provide a detail of all campaign advertising plans submitted by the Department to the Advertising Peer Review during FY2005-06.**
- iii) 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;**
- iv) What was the total actual advertising expenditure by the Department in FY2005-06?**
- v) How has the total advertising expenditure by the Department varied over the last three financial years?**
- vi) Please provide a monthly breakdown of total actual advertising expenditure by the Department in FY2005-06.**
- vii) 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.**
- viii) 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.**
- ix) 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.

26. Departmental advertising & public information

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

- i) 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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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.

27. Departmental advertising & public information – effectiveness tracking mechanisms

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

- i) 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?**
- ii) 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.

28. Departmental research projects

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

i) 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?

ii) How many of these research projects are expected to be completed by the end of this financial year?

iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

29. Departmental break-ins

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

i) How many break-ins did the Department report to the NSW Police in each of the following years:

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

ii) How many break-ins did the Department not report to the NSW Police in each of the following years:

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

iii) For each incident:

- a. What was the location and cost of the damage associated with each break-in?**
- b. What was the cost of damage incurred because of the break-in?**
- c. What was the subject of theft in each break-in?**
- d. What was the cost of any theft associated with each break-in?**
- e. Was anyone apprehended and charged in relation to the break-in (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?**
- f. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

30. Departmental property theft

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

i) 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**

ii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

31. Departmental fraud

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

i) How many incidents of fraud were detected against the Department in each of the following years:

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

ii) For each incident:

- a. What was the subject of the fraud in each instance?**
- b. What was the value of the fraud?**
- c. Which administrative unit was the subject of the fraud?**
- d. Was anyone charged in relation to the fraud (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?**
- e. Was anyone convicted in relation to the fraud (please indicate if the relevant individual/s was employed by the Department)?**
- f. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

32. Departmental property loss

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

i) 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?**

ii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

33. Computer equipment & security

- i) 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:**
- a. what and how many have been lost;**
 - b. what and how many have been stolen;**
 - c. what is the total value of these items;**
 - d. what was the replacement value per item; and**
 - e. were these items been recovered or replaced.**
- ii) Were the police been requested to investigate any of these incidents? If so: how many were the subject of police investigation;**
- a. how many police investigations have been concluded;**
 - b. in how many cases has legal action commenced; and**
 - c. in how many cases has this action been concluded and with what result?**
- iii) 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?**
- iv) How many of the documents or files in (iii) were:**
- a. confidential, classified for security or for limited distribution for any other purpose;**
 - b. if any, what was the security classification involved and how many have been recovered?**
- v) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

34. Motor vehicle accidents

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

i) 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?**

ii) 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.

35. Departmental transport costs

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

i) 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?

ii) What is the budget for expenditure by the Department on taxi, limousine and hire car services (including Cabcharge) for the FY 2006-07?

iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

36. Departmental function costs

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

i) 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?**

ii) 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.**

iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

37. Conference or training attendance by Departmental staff

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

i) How many fee-paying conferences did staff members attend in

a. FY 2003-04

b. FY 2004-05

c. FY 2005-06?

ii) 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.

iii) How many fee-paying conferences have staff members attended in FY2006-07 to date?

iv) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

38. Business Consultations

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

i) How many business consultations and/or information sessions directed to the business community did the Department conduct in:

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

ii) Please give an indication of the broad industries that the Department consults.

iii) 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.

iv) Were any consultations made outside the Sydney Metropolitan area in:

- a. FY 2003-04**
- b. FY 2004-05**
- c. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

39. Regional NSW - print advertising

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

i) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial in the print media in regional NSW in each of the following years:

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

ii) 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:

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

iii) 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.

40. Regional NSW - radio advertising

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

i) How much was spent on advertising or advertorial on radio in regional NSW in each of the following years:

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

ii) 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:

- e. FY2002-03**
- f. FY2003-04**
- g. FY2004-05**
- h. FY2005-06?**

iii) 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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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.

41. Freedom of Information – Departmental Procedures

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

- i) When did the Department last update its policies and/or procedures for dealing with Freedom of Information applications received by the Department?**
- ii) Who has responsibility within the Department for dealing with Freedom of Information applications received by the Department?**
- iii) Please provide details of the policies and/or procedures followed within the Department for dealing with Freedom of Information applications received from the public?**
- iv) 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?**
- v) 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.

42. Sick leave

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

i) 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

- a. FY2003-04,**
- b. FY2004-05 and**
- c. FY2005-06,**

ii) 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

- a. FY2003-04,**
- b. FY2004-05 and**
- c. FY2005-06,**

iii) 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:

- a. less than one month;**
- b. greater than one month but less than three months;**
- c. greater than three months but less than six months;**
- d. greater than six month but less than 12 months;**
- e. greater than 12 months?**

iv) 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:

- a. the total cost, in terms of wages etc, of the leave taken by the employee;**
- b. the total amount of leave taken by the employee in terms of full-time equivalent days.**

v) 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?

vi) 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?

vii) 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:

- a. less than one month;**
- b. greater than one month but less than three months;**
- c. greater than three months but less than six months;**
- d. greater than six month but less than 12 months;**

e. greater than 12 months?

viii) 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:

a. the total cost or cost to date, in terms of wages etc, of the leave taken by the employee;

b. 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.

43. Departmental staff – compensation for private property

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

i) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

ii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

iii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

iv) 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:

- a. the item of personal property in respect of which the claim was made;**
- b. the nature of the loss or damage to the item of personal property which the staff member claimed;**
- c. the amount of the compensation claimed for loss or damage to the item of personal property by the staff member;**
- d. 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**

e. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

44. 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:

i) Did any Departmental personnel receive reimbursement of an insurance policy excess in respect of a private vehicle damaged while being used for work during:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

ii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

iii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

iv) 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?

v) 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:

- a. how many times was such a reimbursement made in each of FY2003-04, FY2004-05, FY2005-06 and FY2006-07 to date;**
- b. 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.

45. Departmental staff – cost of travel to and from work

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

i) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

ii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

iii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06**
- d. FY2006-07 to date?**

iv) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

46. Departmental staff – first aid allowance

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

- i) 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:**
 - a. FY2003-04**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2005-06**
 - d. FY2006-07 to date?**
- ii) 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:**
 - a. FY2003-04**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2005-06**
 - d. FY2006-07 to date?**
- iii) 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:**
 - a. FY2003-04**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2005-06**
 - d. FY2006-07 to date?**
- iv) 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?**
- v) 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 each 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

47. Departmental staff – flying allowance

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

i) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY 2005-06 to date?

ii) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

v) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. 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.

48. Mobile Phone Use

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

i) How many employees/staff carry or use Departmental/Agency mobile telephones as at:

- a. 30 June 2003**
- b. 30 June 2004**
- c. 30 June 2005**
- d. 30 June 2006**

ii) What was the total amount of expenditure by staff on calls and charges involving Departmental/Agency mobile telephones in each of the following years:

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

iii) 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:

- a. FY2002-03**
- b. FY2003-04**
- c. FY2004-05**
- d. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

49. Departmental Website

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

i) Did the Department budget for costs associated with developing and maintaining a Departmental website in each of the following financial years:

e. FY2002-03

f. FY2003-04

g. FY2004-05

h. FY2005-06?

ii) How much did the Department budget for costs associated with developing and maintaining a Departmental website in each of the following financial years:

a. FY2002-03

b. FY2003-04

c. FY2004-05

d. FY2005-06?

iii) How much has the Department actually spent developing and maintaining the Departmental website in FY2005-06 to date?

iv) How many times was the Departmental website updated in each of the following financial years:

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.

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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

50. Departmental Website – Feedback management

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

- i) 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?**
- ii) 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?**
- iii) 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?**
- iv) 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?**
- v) 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.

51. Departmental website – Effectiveness tracking

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

- i) How does the Department evaluate the effectiveness of information delivery to the public via the Departmental website?**
- ii) 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 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

52. Departmental website – feedback

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

- i) Does the Department's website contain a section where it invites comments or feedback from the public regarding the website and/or Departmental services?**
- ii) 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?**
- iii) Of emails received by Department from the public via the Department's website during each of FY2003-04, FY2004-05 and FY2005-06 to date, please provide a breakdown by year and month of the number of emails which could be classified as:**
 - a. complaints about the Departmental website**
 - b. complaints about delivery of Departmental services**
 - c. requests for further information about the Department and its services**
 - d. miscellaneous communications.**
- iv) Of emails received by Department from the public via the Department's website which could be characterised as complaints about the Departmental website or complaints about delivery of Departmental services, please indicate how many of the email complainants made in each of FY2003-04, FY2004-05 and FY2005-06 to date received:**
 - a. a computer generated response to the email indicating that it had been received by the Department;**
 - b. a personalised email from a Departmental staff member to seek further information or identify a possible remedy for the complaint;**
 - c. a telephone call from a Departmental staff member to seek further information or identify a possible remedy for the complaint.**

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.

53. Departmental staff – Garage and carport allowance

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

- i) 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:**
 - d. FY2003-04**
 - e. FY2004-05**
 - f. FY2005-06 to date?**
- ii) 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:**
 - a. FY2003-04**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2005-06 to date?**
- iii) 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:**
 - a. FY2003-04**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2005-06 to date?**
- vi) 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:**
 - d. FY2003-04**
 - e. FY2004-05**
 - f. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

54. 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:

i) 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?

ii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

55. Departmental staff – Overseas travelling allowance

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

i) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY 2005-06 to date?**

ii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06 to date?**

i) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06 to date?**

ii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06 to date?**

iii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06 to date?**

iv) 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.

56. Departmental Staff – Travelling Compensation

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

i) Did any Departmental personnel receive travelling compensation under the Crown Employees (Public Service Conditions of Employment) Award 2002, clauses 25 to 34 during:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY 2005-06 to date?**

ii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06 to date?**

iii) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06 to date?**

iv) 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:

- a. FY2003-04**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2005-06 to date?**

v) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

57. Departmental staff – Remote areas allowances

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

i) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

ii) 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:

d. FY2003-04

e. FY2004-05

f. FY2005-06 to date?

iii) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

iv) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

58. Departmental staff – Home office allowance

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

i) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

ii) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

iii) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

vi) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

59. Departmental staff – Semi-official telephone subsidy

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

i) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

ii) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

iii) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

vii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

60. Departmental staff management

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

i) How many staff resigned in:

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

ii) How many staff retired in:

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

iii) How many staff were medically discharged in:

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

iv) How many staff were terminated in:

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

v) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

61. Departmental asset management & identification

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

- i) 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?**
- ii) When did the Department last update its strategy, policies and/or procedures for facilitating the effective management of Departmental assets?**
- iii) 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?**
- iv) 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.

62. Departmental asset maintenance

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

i) 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?

ii) 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?

iii) 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

63. Departmental asset maintenance costs and scheduling

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

i) 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?

ii) 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?

iii) 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?**

iv) 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?**

v) How much has the Department/Agency/Entity actually spent on maintenance of Department/Agency/Entity assets in FY2006-07 to date?

vi) 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.

64. Unfilled Public Service Positions

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

i) 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?

ii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

65. Unfilled Public Service Positions

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

i) 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?

ii) Please provide details of the employment and placement agencies used by the Department/Agency/Entity in the following periods:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06

d. FY2006-07 to date?

iii) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06

d. FY2006-07 to date?

iv) Which employment and placement agencies received payments from the Department/Agency/Entity for the placement of staff in each of the following periods:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06

d. FY2006-07 to date?

iii) Which employment and placement agencies received payments from the Department/Agency/Entity for temporary or contract staff in each of the following financial years:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2005-06 to date?

iv) 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:

a. FY2003-04

b. FY2004-05

c. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

66. Procurement Policy

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

i) When did the Department last update its procurement policy documentation?

ii) 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.

67. Recruitment Agencies

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

i) What sum was spent on recruitment agencies for the following financial years:

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

ii) Will the Minister provide a list of recruitment agencies which were used for the following financial years:

- a. FY2005-06**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2003-04**
- d. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

68. Chartering Aircraft

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

iii) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what sum was spent on chartering aircraft for the following financial years:

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

iv) Will the Minister provide a list of aircraft chartering firms which were used for the following financial years:

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

v) 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:

- a. FY2005-06**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2003-04**
- d. 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 taxpayer 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

69. Domestic & Overseas Travel

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

- i) What sum was spent by the Minister's department on domestic and international air travel for the following periods:**
 - a. FY2005-06**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2003-04**
- ii) 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:**
 - a. FY2005-06**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2003-04**
- iii) 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:**
 - a. FY2005-06**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2003-04**
- iv) 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**
 - a. FY2005-06**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2003-04**
- v) 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:**
 - a. FY2005-06**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. FY2003-04**
- vi) Which company provides travel management services to the Minister's department for the following periods:**
 - a. FY2005-06**
 - b. FY2004-05**
 - c. 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.

70. Massages

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

vi) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what sum was spent on massages for staff for the following financial years:

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

vii) For each Department and agency that the Minister was responsible for what how many staff made use of massage services provided:

- a. FY2005-06**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2003-04**
- d. 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).

71. Overtime

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

ix) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

72. Media Training

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

i) Did any agency, entity or department in the Minister's portfolio employ the services of a media training company in the following periods:

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

ii) How many individuals in each agency and department the Minister was responsible for received media training in the following periods:

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

iii) What was the cost for each agency and department the Minister was responsible for media training in the following periods:

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

iv) Which entities were hired by each agency and department the Minister was responsible to provide media training for staff in the following periods:

- a. FY2005-06**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2003-04**
- d. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

73. Barristers

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

i) What sum did the Minister's department spend on external barristers for the following periods

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

ii) What sum did the Minister's department spend on solicitors for the following periods

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

iii) What sum did the Minister's department spend on internal legal services for the following periods:

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

iv) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

74. Coaching

- i) 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?**
- ii) 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.

75. Lettable Area

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

- i) 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?**
- ii) 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).

76. Translation Services

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

v) What was the total cost of translating documents for the following periods

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

vi) 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

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

vii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

77. Pianos

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

i) How many pianos does his department

a. own and

b. lease?

ii) How many grand pianos does his department

a. own and

b. lease?

iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

78. Coffee Machines

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

iv) How many coffee machines does his department

a. own and

b. lease?

v) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

79. Non-Australians

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

vi) How many non-Australian citizens worked in each department and agency you were responsible as at the end of the:

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

vii) 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:

- e. FY2005-06**
- f. FY2004-05**
- g. FY2003-04**
- h. 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.

80. Reservists

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

i) How many employees in each Department and agency the Minister is responsible are currently members of the Australian Defence Force (ADF)

Reserves as at:

- a. 30 June 2000**
- b. 30 June 2001**
- c. 30 June 2002**
- d. 30 June 2003**
- e. 30 June 2004**
- f. 30 June 2005**
- g. 30 June 2006**

ii) 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:

- a. 30 June 2000**
- b. 30 June 2001**
- c. 30 June 2002**
- d. 30 June 2003**
- e. 30 June 2004**
- f. 30 June 2005**
- g. 30 June 2006**

iii) 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:

- a. FY2000/01**
- b. FY2001/02**
- c. FY2002/03**
- d. FY2003/04**
- e. FY2004/05**
- f. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

81. Behaviour Complaints

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

i) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for sexual offences in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:

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

ii) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for general harrasment in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:

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

iii) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for discrimination in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:

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

iv) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for abuse of power in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:

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

v) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for bullying in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:

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

vi) How many unacceptable behaviour complaints were reported for inappropriate workplace relations in each of the Departments and agencies you were responsible for in:

- a. FY2005-06**
- b. FY2004-05**
- c. FY2003-04**
- d. 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 fulfil 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.

82. Opinion Polls

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

i) 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?

ii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

83. 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:

- i) how many consultants were engaged by the department and/or its agencies to conduct surveys of community attitudes to departmental programs?**
- ii) 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**
 - i. what was the cost,**
 - ii. who was the consultant,**
 - iii. was this consultant selected by tender; if so, was the tender select or open; if not, why not?**
 - iii) 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

84. Photographs

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

i) 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.

85. Office Space

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

i) 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

ii) 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

iii) 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).

86. Drug Testing

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

i) How many random drug tests have been administered to each departmental and agency employees personnel in the following periods:

a. FY2005-06

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2003-04

ii) How many employees had positive results to drug testing for the following periods:

a. FY2005-06

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2003-04

iii) How many employees have had their employment terminated for testing positive for drugs in the following periods:

a. FY2005-06

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2003-04

iv) How many employees have been disciplined for testing positive for drugs in the following periods

a. FY2005-06

b. FY2004-05

c. FY2003-04

v) 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.

87. Traffic Infringements

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

i) How many penalty notices did each department/agency receive for traffic infringements for the following periods:

- a. FY2005/06**
- b. FY2004/05**
- c. FY2003/04?**

ii) Will Minister inform us of the breakdown of number of each type of infringement incurred for the following periods:

- a. FY2005/06**
- b. FY2004/05**
- c. FY2003/04?**

iii) What was the total value of fines for traffic infringements incurred in department/agency vehicles for the following periods:

- a. FY2005/06**
- b. FY2004/05**
- c. FY2003/04?**

iv) 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:

- a. FY2005/06**
- b. FY2004/05**
- c. FY2003/04?**

v) 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:

- a. FY2005/06**
- b. FY2004/05**
- c. 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 this question would be an unjustifiable diversion of public resources.

88. New Positions

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

- i) How many new positions were authorized to be created in each department and each agency the Minister was responsible for in the following periods:**
 - a. FY2005/06**
 - b. FY2004/05**
 - c. FY2003/04**
 - d. FY2002/03?**
- ii) 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:**
 - a. FY2005/06**
 - b. FY2004/05**
 - c. FY2003/04**
 - d. FY2002/03?**
- iii) How many positions were abolished in each department and each agency the Minister was responsible for in the following periods:**
 - a. FY2005/06**
 - b. FY2004/05**
 - c. FY2003/04**
 - d. FY2002/03?**
- iv) 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:**
 - a. FY2005/06**
 - b. FY2004/05**
 - c. FY2003/04**
 - d. 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.

89. Mobile Phone Telephone Services

i) 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.

**90. No question provided in transcript from GPSC 5 Budget Estimates
2006-07 Questions on Notice**

91. Fees, Levies & Charges

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

i) What are all the fees, fines, levies, charges and taxes that fall under your portfolio responsibility?

ii) What was the level/rate of each of these as 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.

92. Bullying

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

i) 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?

ii) How many of these claims resulted in WorkCover cases being established for each year and year to date since 1 January 2003?

iii) What was the total cost of these claims for each year and year to date since 1 January 2003?

iv) 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.

93. Stress Leave

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

- i) 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.

94. 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:

- i) What advertising campaigns were commenced? And for what programs?
- ii) 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.
- iii) 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.
- iv) Which:
 - a. creative agency or agencies; and
 - b. research agency or agencies, were engaged for the campaign.
- v) 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.

95. NSW Food Authority

Do you recall the NSW Food Authority's Compliance and Enforcement Policy (December 2004) which says the Authority will "create a more streamlined, consistent and efficient approach to food regulation in NSW and a single point of contact for both the industry and public"?

Response:

Yes.

95 a. Given this, why did you in July this year create a partnership between the NSW Food Authority and local councils in relation to food safety?

Response:

In common with every other Australian jurisdiction and New Zealand, local councils in NSW play an important role in food regulation. In NSW this role dates back to 1896 and all 152 local councils are prescribed "enforcement agencies" under the Food Act 2003. In 2002, the Kerin Review of the NSW food regulatory system recommended that the NSW Government explore with local government the implementation of a model for a mandatory local government role. The Partnership I announced in July was the culmination of an extensive consultation process undertaken by the Authority with local councils which developed an agreed "Blueprint" for the model recommended by Kerin. The Government has provided \$1.58 million during 2006-7 to implement the model and intends to introduce necessary enabling legislation in the current Parliamentary session.

95 b. Does this create duplication and add confusion for the public as to who is the authority?

Response:

No, implementation of the Food Regulation Partnership will clarify the respective State and local government roles in food regulation and improve coordination.

96a. In the 2005-06 Financial Year, \$4,704,000 was budgeted for earnings in sales of goods and services yet the revised figure is only \$895,000. Could you please explain the huge discrepancy?

Response:

See Q 31 taken during the Hearing.

96b. Is the discrepancy due to bad budgeting or a lack of confidence in the quality of your goods and services?

Response:

See Q 31 taken during the Hearing.

97. Why are NSW restaurants not licensed? What is the reason for this?

Response:

I am advised the Food Act 2003 and the Food Standards Code apply to restaurants in NSW and allow both the Authority and Local Government to take appropriate enforcement action when a food safety risk is found. This action includes prohibiting restaurants from operating if significant food safety risks are found. In this way, the Act and Code have equivalent impact of removing a licence from a business and not allowing them to operate until such time as the enforcement agency is satisfied that the business is compliant. This system works and implementation of any licensing scheme would increase the regulatory burden on restaurants.

Ovine Johne's Disease

98. a. In 2005 you stated that the transaction based contribution scheme was expected to wind up once it had achieved certain industry objectives – when do you envisage this to happen?

Response

I will be guided by advice from the Ovine Johne's Disease Industry Advisory Committee (OJDIAC).

b. You also stated that the transaction-based contribution scheme would be reviewed in 2006 – has this happened and if not when will this happen?

Response

The transaction-based contribution scheme is not scheduled for review in 2006.

c. Furthermore under the transaction-based contribution scheme what initiatives that support important industry-wide goals have been implemented?

Response

The scheme has supported payments to affected producers who were promised such funding support in return for undertaking on-farm disease control actions. The scheme has also supported a review of Exclusion Areas and NSW industry representation on the national stakeholder committee established by Animal Health Australia to determine the direction of disease control post June 2006.

99. a. Were some processors failing to collect the OJD levy?

Response

The NSW Rural Assistance Authority as Fund Administrator of the OJD Transaction Based Contribution Scheme is not aware of any processors who are currently failing to collect the Scheme contributions.

b. If yes why and where does this leave producers who were paying the levy?

Response

Not applicable.

c. Will any monies that were not collected be traced and collected now?

Response

The Fund Administrator has in place an independent audit process being conducted by Internal Audit Bureau Services. To date no significant compliance issues have been identified. The next audit round will specifically investigate processors. Appropriate action will be taken if any non-compliance issues are identified.

Drought

100. Can you please provide a detailed breakdown of the drought programs and costings for the 2005-2006 financial year?

Response

The expenditure on drought assistance measures for the 2005-2006 financial year was:

Fees	\$2,600,000
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Drought programs*	\$2,548,449
Transport subsidies	\$15,272,160
Rural business assistance	\$1,103,311
Exceptional Circumstances	\$15,575,441
Loans	\$4,856,472
Town Water	\$1,500,235

* Includes programs like Drought Support Workers, Farm Family Gatherings and Rural Financial Counsellors.

DPI Budget

101. a. Some \$54 million was expected to be cut from the Department of Primary Industries budget this financial year. Are you on track to these savings?

Response

The Department is on target to achieve the budget set by the Government.

- b. What programs and services have been slashed or downgraded to ensure these savings?

Response

None. All savings have been achieved without affecting front line services.

- c. What assets have been sold to make these savings?

Response

None. All major assets sold have been reinvested in the Departments key infrastructure in accordance with the Towards 20/20 initiative.

102. Within each agency you are responsible for can you please provide details of expenditure on office renovations?

Response

Office fit-outs may be undertaken where necessary to ensure the most efficient and economical use of floor space.

Design and cost fit-outs are in accordance with the Department of Commerce guidelines and the applicable design standard.

These guidelines are part of the Government's whole-of-government reforms in office accommodation. These reforms have saved \$570 million in rentals since 1996 and the average space use for each public servant reducing from 24 square metres under the Coalition to 17.12 square metres in 2006 under the present Government.

Accommodation costs are now \$123 million less per year than they would have been if space use had continued at its pre-1995 level.

Since 1995, the real cost per person for Government office accommodation has been cut by over 45 percent.

- 103.** Within each agency you are responsible for can you provide details of expenditure on staff development including education programs, refresher courses and conferences?

Response

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

The policy provides for a whole-of-government approach to responding to these issues with a range of initiatives to be implemented at the sector and individual agency level.

A major focus is to align skill gaps with resources spent on training and development to meet current and future service and policy challenges. 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 specific initiatives for developing leadership across the sector including the Executive Development Program, the Public Sector Management Program and study assistance scheme.

The Government is also in partnership with universities for the delivery of the Executive Fellows Program and the Executive Master of Public Administration.

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 Department or the employee's career development within the Public Service and preferably both.

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

Strict guidelines apply to any expense claims related to working meals and gifts of protocol. Any such gifts must be in conformity with a particular Department's functions and considered acceptable in accordance with community expectations.

- 104.** When items such as cameras are purchased for the use by your Department's at what value does such an item become an asset?

Response

DPI adheres to Treasurer's Directions in regard to asset management. Items such as cameras costing more than \$5,000 are considered fixed assets of DPI and individual records are created in the Fixed Asset system of DPI.

Items between \$1,000 and \$5,000 if considered at risk of loss by misappropriation are recorded on the assets register as a low value asset.

- 105.** Within your agencies how many voluntary redundancies have been made in the past financial year?

Response

72.

- 106. a.** What was the cost of reproducing and developing DPI's six AgSkills books?

Response

These publications were a revision and updating of publications originally developed during the 1980's. This was done at minimal cost utilising the in-house resources of Departmental educational and extension officers. The total printing costs for these publications was \$75,420 all of which will be recouped through commercial sales, ultimately making a positive impact on Departmental revenue.

- b.** How many of the AgSkills books have been circulated?

Response

To date a total of 2,869 Agskills publications have been sold. A further 80 Tractor Agskills have been distributed at training courses as reference material.

- 107. a.** In your June budget media release, why did you claim that the DPI budget was nearly \$400 million when the 2006-2007 Budget allocation is actually \$389.8 million? Do you always round your figures up so considerably?

Response

In the context of a total general Government state expenditure budget of over \$42 billion dollars it is not inappropriate to round up expenditure from \$389.9 million to 'nearly \$400 million' for the purpose of a media release heading. The first sentence of the actual media release specified the amount of \$390 million.

b. You then went on to claim that the DPI budget was increased by \$30 million from the previous year – but a close look at the budget papers reveals that in 2005-2006 DPI actually spent \$399 million – therefore isn't this a loss of \$9.49 million?

Response

The press release was correct in stating that DPI budget increased by \$30 million from \$359 million in 05/06 to \$389 million in 06/07. The \$399 million refers to the 05/06 revised budget and includes supplementation for non expenditure such as drought, QX disease, etc.

NLIS Cattle

108. a. What are NSW producers paying for NLIS tags?

Response

Currently Allflex ear devices are available through the NSW Government subsidy program at \$2.86 (GST inclusive).

b. How many tags have been purchased for the 2005/2006 financial year?

Response

Total number of NLIS devices purchased by NSW producers in 2005/06 was 3,576,871.

c. How many NSW producers benefited from the tag subsidy?

Response

24,275.

d. How much were NSW producers subsidised?

Response

The recommended retail price of Allflex ear devices prior to the commencement of the subsidy (March 2005) was \$3.36. The current subsidy price is \$2.86 (GST inclusive).

Rural Lands Protection Board

- 109.** Given in 2005/2006 the Rural Lands Protection Board revised budget was \$475,000 why was it only allocated \$425,000 for 2006/2006?

Response

At the 2006 annual State Conference of Rural Lands Protection Boards I announced the allocation of \$600,000 for 2006-07 financial year. This is an increase of \$125,000 over 2005-06. I also announced provision of \$100,000 in recognition of amendments to the Public Sector Employment and Management Act that were introduced to protect NSW workers from the coalition's draconian work choices legislation.

- 110a.** What affect has the amendments to the Public Sector Employment and Management Act has financially on the Rural Lands Protection Board?

Response

The Public Sector Employment and Management Act amendments involve changes to the way payroll in particular is handled. The NSW Government recognised the administrative aspects of these changes by providing an extra \$100,000 to State Council.

- 110b.** Under the amendments to the Public Sector Employment and Management Act what changes have been made to operations?

Response

The amendments to the Public Sector Employment and Management Act have virtually no impact on Boards' autonomy or their capacity to operate within their districts. Also see response to Question 110a.

- 111.** Are you aware of concerns that the Braidwood area only has one fox trap?

Response

The Braidwood Rural Lands Protection Board obtained an Envirofund grant for fox control. Among other things, the grant allowed the purchase of two cage traps. One trap has been used at a number of sites while there has been no demand for the second trap.

- 112a.** Is it with connivance and blessing of your Government that RLPB rates have increased?

Response

Virtually all costs and charges increase over time. Boards also face these increases and this is reflected in their rates.

- 112b.** How much have rates increased in each Board? Can you detail what each RLPB defines as rateable land and by how many hectares this has changed to in 2005/2006?

Response

The response to this question involves considerable complexity and requires a level of detail beyond the scope of the available time frame. A further response will be provided to the Honorable Member as soon as possible.

113. Compared to the previous financial year can you detail how many ratepayers are within each RLPB?

Response

See response to Question 112b.

114. You made comment on the ABC South East in June 2006 that there was "some overlap in work" in relation to RLPBs can you detail this so called overlap in services?

Response

There is insufficient information upon which to respond.
Need further information.

115. Can you detail the assets of all RLPBs?

Response

See response to Question 112b.

- 116a. How much was provided to RLPB's to implement it's information technology strategic plan?

Response

The State Government provided a \$3.5 million grant for State Council to implement the plan.

- 116b. Are you aware if the budget for the plan's implementation has blown out?

Response

I am advised there has been a cost over-run.

- 116c. If the project has blown out who is picking up the shortfall in funding?

Response

State Council is funding the over-run in conjunction with a modest contribution from individual Boards.

Noxious weeds

- 117.** How much did Local Control Authorities spend in 2005/2006 from funding raised by levies on farmers?

Response

NSW DPI does not collect information on money levied by local control authorities on farmers or other ratepayers.

- 118.** How much do noxious weeds cost NSW's agricultural sector per year?

Response

Weeds, including noxious weeds cost agriculture approximately \$2.0 billion per year.

- 119.** What recommendations has your department implemented from the Gledhill Report into Co-ordination and Management of Weeds in NSW?

Response

The NSW Government amended the Noxious Weeds Act in 2005, following Robert Gledhill's review. The changes commenced on 1 March 2006.

I also toughened the rules on plant nurseries as recommended, by prohibiting sale of 73 plants and have asked NSW DPI to investigate restricting further plants.

I recently reformed and reduced the size of the Noxious Weed Advisory Committee to nine members with an independent chair.

To improve coordination and efficiencies in weed and animal pest management the NSW Government is developing the NSW Invasive Species Plan.

Catchment management authorities are developing catchment weed management strategies with local weed control authorities. These strategies will form the basis for regional noxious weed grant funding in the future

NSW DPI has continued to support biological control and education programs with \$340,000 of noxious weed grants. In 2006 the successful weed officer training program is being extended to improve the weed management skills of rural land protection boards and catchment management authorities

- 120.** Is DPI attempting to work more closely with Local Control Authorities and the Catchment Management Authorities?

Response

Yes. The 13 catchment management authorities are all working with DPI and local weed control authorities in their areas. The catchment management authorities have invasive species targets. To meet these targets CMAs are developing weed or invasive species strategies with DPI and local weed control authorities. These strategies will form the basis for regional noxious weed grant funding in the future.

DPI is also improving the CMA community support officers' ability to support farmers and the 859 Landcare groups working on weed programs by giving them technical resources, training programs and involving both councils and CMAs in biological control programs.

AgStart

121. a. Are you aware that more than 1000 young farmers registered their interest in a young farmers finance scheme, First Farmer, after an announcement was made by former Minister, Craig Knowles, for your State Government?

Response

I understand that NSW Farmers' Association maintained a list of individuals who were interested in the First Farmer Scheme as proposed by that organisation.

- b. How many young farmers have taken part in courses under the AgStart scheme?

Response

I established an AgStart Advisory Board to investigate and advise on specific assistance measures which should be included in an integrated assistance package. This Board has consulted widely with interested parties. A number of these consultations and discussions have specifically been groups of young farmers. The detailed assistance measures will be recommended to me by the Board in the near future.

- c. Have any young farmers have received financial support from the State Government and how much?

Response

See response to Q121b.

122. a. Are you aware that Victorian young farmers have received more than \$14 million in financial assistance?

Response

The young farmer finance scheme in Victoria provided loans with a capital value of \$14 million to recipients in 2004-05. The assistance measure is a reduction of 2% from commercial interest rates, which equates to an assistance level of \$280,000. This subsidy is also only available for a maximum period of five years.

b. What incentives are there for young farmers to stay in NSW rather than move to Victoria?

Response

The NSW Government provides a wide variety of research, advisory and support measures to support the sustainability and profitability of agricultural industries in NSW. The AgStart program will be an additional encouragement specifically for young farmers. These measures are designed to ensure the retention of profitable, prosperous farming business in NSW.

123. In March 2006 you said the hold up on a young farmers finance scheme was because an external consultant was going to make recommendations to you about the best direction – will you make those recommendations public?

Response

No.

Orange Agricultural Institute

124. a. Would any services or functions of the Orange Agricultural Institute be lost in the relocation?

Response

No.

b. Would any positions be lost due to the relocation?

Response

No.

c. What is the cost of such a relocation?

Response

Not costed at this stage as it is too premature.

d. When is this relocation expected to take place?

Response

In the next three to ten years.

e. So far what has been spent looking into this relocation?

Response

Only in kind support for a working party with Orange City Council.

Ticks

125. What quantity of tick chemicals have producers used in the past year and at what cost?

Response

In the 2005/2006 financial year the following tick chemicals were purchased by the Cattle Tick Program;

- 3360 Litres of pour on macrocyclic lactones at a cost of \$266,784.
- 62 Litres of injectable macrocyclic lactones at a cost of \$22,320.
- 80 litres of flurazuron an insect growth regulator at a cost of \$12,560.
- 640 Kg of amitraz at a cost of \$48,128.

126. a. Will the tick control program continue to exist? Will the weakening of relevant policies be halted?

Response

The tick control program will continue to exist. The relevant policies are not being weakened; if they are amended it is on the basis of experience and risk management principles.

b. Will a strong and effective policy be maintained?

Response

Yes.

c. Do you recognise the importance of border surveillance and security?

Response

Yes.

127. a. Did you inform the Tick Board that that the removal of surveillance on the western section of the border fence would release more funds to strengthen security on the eastern section?

Response

The western section of the border was closed before I became Minister. My predecessor made an announcement in those terms.

b. If so what is your evidence to support this claim?

Response

An electronic surveillance system is to be installed at crossings that abut the tick infected area of Queensland.

c. When will this promise be honoured?

Response

Tenders for their installation have been advertised and close on 6 October. Work will commence this financial year and be completed next financial year.

128. a. What are current staff numbers for border surveillance?

Response

There are 28 permanent full time employees supplemented by eight casual staff to provide emergency and holiday relief to maintain a fully staffed roster at each crossing.

b. What were staff numbers in 2004/2005?

Response

In 2004/2005 there were 30 permanent staff on the Border. Casual staff were employed as required to maintain a fully staffed roster at each crossing.

c. Are there enough staff to maintain an effective program?

Response

All rosters are fully staffed utilising a mix of permanent and casual staff.

129. a. Is the Tick Board to continue in its current form?

Response

Yes, until the government decides otherwise.

b. If not what will replace the Tick Board? How will new members be selected?

Response

That will be determined if and when a decision is made to restructure the Board.

c. Are the responsibilities of board members to be redefined?

Response

No.

d. Is the current board in a caretaker role?

Response

No.

e. Will NSW producers be abandoned and left to their own devices?

Response

No.

Eggs

130a. Has the NSW Food Authority begun its investigation into alleged mislabelling of eggs?

Response:

Yes, the Authority has commenced a survey into the alleged mislabelling of eggs.

130b. If so what are its preliminary findings?

Response:

Preliminary findings have not shown conclusive evidence of egg substitution. Further work is required before a definite outcome can be determined.

130c. When do you expect this investigation to be complete?

Response:

I am advised that due to the complexity of the survey, it is not possible to give a definitive time for completion but I would expect it to be finalised in the near future. The survey will be complete when all necessary documents are received, analysed and all relevant interviews conducted.

130d. What is the expected cost of this investigation?

Response:

There is no added cost to the Authority to conduct this investigation, as this type of work forms part of the Enforcement units core role.

Locusts

131. a. What is the total amount of funding that the Department of Primary Industries has spent on locust control for this financial year?

Response

For this financial year (2006-07) the Department of Primary Industries, using the Pest Insect Destruction Fund, has spent \$110,589 on locust control.

b. Can you provide a breakdown of the areas where this funding has been spent (ie. chemicals)?

Response

The breakdown of this expenditure is:

- Chemical purchase and storage \$108,984
- Administration \$1,605

132-137. QON DON'T EXIST

FarmBis/PROfarm

138. Are you considering again signing up to the \$30 million joint Federal/State FarmBis program?

Response

No. The Commonwealth made a number of variations to program terms and conditions in 2004 which were not acceptable to NSW.

139. Can you provide details of how many farmers participated in FarmBis over the life of the program?

Response

FarmBis supported 25,049 training activities during its 6 year life - July 1998 to June 2004.

140. Can you tell me how many farmers have participated in ProFarm?

Response

During its first year (2005/2006) 4106 participants attended PROfarm activities.

141. What is the total budget for ProFarm?

Response

PROfarm is a demand driven program. The anticipated total cost for delivery of PROfarm courses in 2006/2007 is about \$2.9M.

142. Can you tell me what percentage of the cost of approved training courses was covered under FarmBis?

Response

FarmBis initially subsidised 75 per cent of the cost of eligible approved training activities. In September 2002 this was reduced to 50 per cent, with the exception of four priority areas (fishers, indigenous, women, and non-english speaking backgrounds).

143. Can you tell me what percentage of the cost of approved training courses are covered under the State run ProFarm?

Response

Up to 55% through NSW Government subsidy and up to 100% through combined subsidies for some courses.

144. Can you provide a list of the courses that were offered under FarmBis and how much farmers paid for each course?

Response

FarmBis did not offer any training courses. It supported approved courses (generally Level 4 or higher under the Australian Qualifications Framework) provided by commercial training providers. The cost of these courses was determined by each individual training provider. The cost to farmer recipients was that portion of the total course cost, after allowance for the FarmBis subsidy.

145. Can you provide a list of the courses that are offered under ProFarm and how much each farmer has to pay for each course?

Response

As at 14 September 2006 there were 86 ProFarm courses advertised for delivery. An additional 62 courses are available on an "on demand" basis. The range of ProFarm courses offered is determined by demand and so this list is dynamic. See the PROfarm website for an up to date list of the PROfarm courses on offer. The site also provides details on the actual cost and price of each course.

www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/agriculture/profarm/

146. a. Will you continue to offer ProFarm in its current form?

Response

Yes.

- b. If so for how long?

Response

NSW Department of Primary industries plans to continue to develop PROfarm as a major component of its training delivery to farmers, primary industries, agribusiness and the community.

Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park

147. a. What was the reasoning behind including Little Beach as a sanctuary zone in the draft zoning plan?

Response

It is a better outcome to have intact sanctuary zones both for compliance and conservation reasons. The government is, however open minded and will carefully consider public submissions regarding fishing access to this location.

- b. Are you aware that because Little Beach is part of the sanctuary zones in the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park that one of NSW's few purpose built disabled jetty would be off limits for fishing?

Response

I am fully aware. The wharf is used to provide disabled access to the water at Little Beach for both swimming, and fishing. The Authority is currently considering ways to enable disabled persons to have improved access to NSW marine parks including the possibility of issuing permits, and these are included in the draft zoning plan.

- c. Where do you expect disabled anglers to fish now?

Response

See to response to Q147b.

Marine Park Public Consultation

148. a. How many public meetings have you attended regarding the Port Stephens-Great Lakes and Batemans Marine Parks and how many of those meetings were not organised by the Government?

Response

I have attended numerous meetings regarding these marine parks, some organised by the Government, some by other groups, and some organised collaboratively by both Government and stakeholders.

- b. On average, how many people were in attendance at the meetings that you did attend?

Response

That is impossible to answer in hindsight.

149. How many invitations have you received to attend and/or speak at public meetings regarding the Port Stephens-Great Lakes and Batemans Marine Parks?

Response

Numerous.

150. How were the public consultation meetings on the Port Stephens-Great Lakes and Marine Parks advertised and do you think that was sufficient?

Response

There has been extensive and sufficient public consultation. Meetings were advertised on the radio in newspapers and MPA web site. Over 150 meetings have taken place to date at various locations and times to suit the community.

151. Could you please provide information on how much was spent on public consultation for the Cape Byron, Jervis Bay, and Solitary Islands Marine Parks?

Response

It is not possible to put an exact figure on the amount spent. The majority of the marine parks staff time during the planning process is spent on public consultation and associated operations. On average individual budgets for Marine Parks range between \$570,000 and \$620,000 per annum for salaries and operations.

152. How much has been spent so far and how much more is budgeted to spend on public consultation for the Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Parks?

Response

Again, it is not possible to put an exact figure on the amount. The majority of 2006/07 will be focussed on public education and understanding and consultation to prepare an operational plan. The Port Stephens Great Lakes marine parks staffing and operational budget for 2006/07 is approximately \$577,000.

153. a. How many submissions on the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park draft zoning plan have been received so far and how many more do you expect to receive?

Response

There have been 4200 submissions on the draft zoning plan for the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park so far.

Around 40,000 submission forms have been printed and distributed.

b. Has any analysis of the submissions commenced? How many of the submissions have been unsupportive and how many have been supportive of the marine park?

Response

The submissions are progressively registered and data recorded. Detailed analysis will commence when the submission period closes.

Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park Office

154. How many people do you expect to be working from the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park Office?

Response

In the short term there will be 5 staff, increasing to around 8 staff in the near future.

155. a. How was the location for the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park office selected?

Response

The location was the most cost efficient for administration and compliance.

b. Did any work need to be done on the land before building could commence?

Response

Yes.

c. How much space has been allocated for the car park?

Response

The plan building provides for 22 car park spaces including spaces allocated for the disabled and visitors. This will be in addition to the car park space already available at the site.

d. Allegations have been made that an area approximately 10m x 50m in size of mangroves were bulldozed to make way for the car park. Is this correct?

Response

No.

156. a. What are you doing to fix the problem of Acid sulphate soils in relation to SEPP 14 and the drainage systems in the Taylors Beach area?

Response

The incident is being thoroughly investigated by relevant state and local Government agencies including NSW Department of Primary Industries and the Department of Natural Resources.

In a bid to avoid future acid runoff events a working group has been formed to inform landowners on the best methods for dealing with acid sulfate soils. NSW DPI Aquatic Habitat Rehabilitation staff also held a public information session on 30 August 2006 to discuss options to improve the management of coastal drainage systems with local Port Stephens landholders.

NSW DPI and DNR will continue to work with other agencies, council and local landholders to improve management of coastal floodgates, enhance the quality of aquatic habitats, enhance access to aquatic habitats and reduce the impacts of acid sulfate soil run-off.

157. Why has the office for the Port Stephens-Great Lakes Marine Park, a park set up to protect biodiversity, been responsible for the destruction of so much biodiversity itself?

Response

This is not the case. Less than 2 square meters of poor quality salt marsh was resumed under an approved permit for the construction of the facility at Port Stephens.

Commercial Fishing Buyouts

158. a. How much money has been spent on buying out commercial fishers? Could this information be provided for each buyout offer?

Response

In 2005-06 financial year, there were 2 buyout processes:

Cape Byron Marine Park:

- Approximately \$4.4M was spent on buying out commercial fishers in CBMP. This amount included payment for the fishing business or lobster shares, administration costs and payment for accelerated depreciation and retraining and relocation.

Port Jackson:

- Approximately \$3.5M was spent on buying out commercial fishers in Port Jackson. This amount included payment for the fishing business and payment for accelerated depreciation and retraining and relocation.

159. a. How many commercial fishers applied for buyouts and how many were successful in obtaining one?

Response

240 registration of interest were received through the Cape Byron Marine Park buy out process. In addition there were 48 invitations to participate in the Sydney Harbour buyout. In total, 58 fishing businesses were accepted for buyout.

- b. Could this information be provided for each buyout offer?

Response

Cape Byron Marine Park:

- 240 registrations of interest were received.
- 210 invitations to participate in the buyout were made and 22 fishing businesses were accepted for buyout.

Sydney Harbour:

- 48 invitations to participate in the buyout were made and 36 fishing business accepted the buyout.

- c. So, what percentage of commercial fishers have been taken out of the industry?

Response

Based on the number of active fishing licences (1179) in NSW during February 2006 approximately 5% of commercial fishers were bought out of the industry through the Cape Byron and Sydney Harbour buyout processes.

- d. Could this information be provided per buyout offer and in total please?

Response

5% in total is made up as follows:

- Cape Byron Marine Park equates to 1.8% of commercial fishers.
- Sydney Harbour equates to 3.2% of commercial fishers.

160. Once commercial fishers have received their buyout, what do you do to ensure that they don't use that money to re-enter the fishing industry elsewhere in New South Wales?

Response

Contractual arrangements prevent fishers who buy out from acquiring new fishing entitlements and commercially fish in the relevant marine park or buy out area. Fishers who accept a voluntary buy out can only re-enter the

fishing industry by buying entitlements to fish in another area of NSW, subject to the prevailing entry conditions.

Steven's Weir

161. What is the Department doing to prevent fish poaching at Steven's Weir?

Response

Fisheries Officers from NSW Department of Primary Industries spend considerable time in the field, including weekend and after hours, to detect and deter illegal fishing activity. Fishing patrols were conducted at Steven's Weir on a number of occasions during September and October 2005 and no illegal fishing activity was identified. However, as an interim measure a fishing closure under Section 8 of the Fisheries Management Act 1994 is now in force, 80m upstream and 70m downstream of the weir face. Local officers will continue to patrol the area to ensure compliance with fishing regulations.

162. Considering Senior Conservation Manager Adam Vey has indicated that a fish ladder at Steven's Weir is "the number one priority for the native fish strategy and DPI", and that money was set aside for this project some years ago, when will Steven's Weir get their fish ladder?

Response

The department is preparing a business case to seek funding to construct the fishway from the Murray Darling Basin Commission.

163. a. Is it true that when plans were drawn up for the fish ladder and it was discovered that more funding would be required, rather than proactively seeking more funding, DPI simply shelved the project?

Response

See response to Q162.

b. Will the local RSL fishing club have to raise the funds for the fishing ladder in addition to restocking the river each year?

Response

No.

Abalone

164. a. Were abalone fishers told last year that outstanding fees would be put on hold and further fees would be reduced?

Response

Not to my knowledge.

b. If yes, why is the industry now facing \$2.6 million dollars in fees at a time when the industry is already suffering from reduced quotas through the Government's mismanagement of the fishery, recognised by Elders Rural Bank?

Response

See above.

- 165.** Is it true that Management Charges for the NSW abalone fishery are not attributed to shareholders in the share management plan as required in clause 76(2) of the Fisheries Management Act?

Response

This issue is currently before the Supreme Court and it would be inappropriate for me to make any further comment about it.

- 166. a.** Is it true that Aoetera Fisheries Limited, a New Zealand company, have had preliminary discussions with you and your department regarding the purchase of a majority stake in the NSW abalone fishery?

Response

I have met with representatives from Aoetera Fisheries who expressed an interest in investing in the NSW abalone fishery.

b. Is this the reason behind the abalone industry now facing \$2.6 million dollars in fees even though they were told last year that outstanding fees would be put on hold and further fees reduced?

Response

No, and even if it was, your figures are so far off the mark it is ridiculous.

- 167. a.** Did you say on the Stateline program aired on Friday 28 April 2006 that you would be happy if the NSW abalone industry can get its act together and put together a proposition for its own management company?

Response

I cannot recall if that is exactly the words I used, but I certainly support that sentiment.

b. How can the industry get its act together when the government's mismanagement of the NSW abalone industry has resulted in divers struggling to make an income, divers struggling to pay deckhands, and

shareholders that have bought into this fishery, unable to pay back their loans?

Response

See, that is where you get it wrong again. The Government does not manage the abalone industry, the Government manages the abalone resource. Participants and investors in the industry are free to come and go as they please through share trading. Indeed, people are continuing to invest in the industry, just like the interest that Aoetera Fisheries Limited has shown as you pointed out in your question earlier.

Oysters/NSW Shellfish Program

168a. Do you believe that the Government should take some responsibility to ensure clean and healthy waterways?

Response

Both the Government and the public should take some responsibility to ensure clean and healthy waterways.

168 b. Which department do you think should take responsibility for ensuring clean and healthy waterways?

Response

I am advised there are many activities that have the potential to contribute to pollution of waterways, therefore the development of successful solutions requires a wide range of expertise from various departments.

169a. Given healthy water advantages the entire community including swimmers, sailors, commercial and recreational fishers, oyster farmers and shellfish consumers, why does the Government not provide any contribution to the NSW Shellfish Program?

Response

The NSW Government does provide a contribution to the NSW Shellfish Program.

169 b. The oyster industry is prepared to pay their share. Why won't you?

Response

To date, the NSW Government has contributed over \$2.7 million to establish and \$400,000 to maintain the Program. Future funding arrangements are currently being considered by a Treasury review.

- 170:** The Oyster Industry were told earlier this year that funding towards the NSW Shellfish program would not be committed until after a review of the program by NSW Treasury had been completed but to expect an announcement before the 2006-07 budget. Why is the industry still waiting for the announcement?

Response

The review of the Program involves consideration of complex issues and consultation with a number of industry stakeholders as well as various other agencies including DPI, DEC and DNR. I am advised that this added to the time taken to complete the review and draft report, and I am advised that the draft report will be available for public consultation shortly. I am also advised that it is intended the final recommendations of the review will apply to funding arrangements from the start of 2006-07, despite the delay.

- 171.** How do you expect oyster farmers to make a living when the lack of healthy waterways has lead to the QX breakouts on the Hawkesbury and Macleay Rivers and the closure of Tilligerry Creek and the Bellinger River?

Response

There is no proven link between water quality and the oyster disease QX. NSW DPI has developed a breeding line of QX resistant Sydney rock oysters which will assist NSW oyster farmers better manage the impacts of QX disease. The closure of Tilligerry Creek & the Bellinger River were necessary to protect public health, unrelated to QX.

- 172. a.** Considering that Tilligerry Creek oyster farmers have lost their livelihood through no fault of their own, do you think that it is fair that they have to find money to pay for the clean up of their own lease areas?

Response

I am advised that of the 12 Tilligerry Creek oyster farmers affected by the closure all have continued trading this year. Three of these farmers, held the majority of their leases in the closed zone. NSW DPI is working with the three affected farmers to ensure that leases are compliant with marking requirements for navigational safety. The farmers have not been asked to comply with other lease maintenance provisions given the difficult circumstances.

- b.** Why will the Government not provide any assistance to these farmers?

Response

The NSW Government through the Tilligerry Taskforce offered a range of assistance measures to the 12 farmers impacted by the closure including;

fee and rate relief for 2005/06 and 2006/07, financial counselling services, access to social and business support programs and offers of oyster leases outside the closed zone. In addition the Government is supporting local efforts to remediate problem areas and undertake necessary water quality testing that may lead to a reopening of the estuary for harvest.

Privileged Documents

173. a. Are you aware that in response to a call for papers on dioxin tabled on 18 May 2006 different departments disagreed on whether the same document should be deemed privileged or not?

Response

I am not aware that "different departments disagreed on whether the same document should be deemed privileged or not". However I am aware that the Department of Primary Industries responded to a call for papers on dioxin tabled on 18 May 2006.

- b. Is guidance provided to departments on the requirements for privilege and why is there not more consistency with classification?

Response

Guidance on the requirements for privilege is provided to departments by the Premiers Department. This guidance accompanies each request forwarded by the Premiers Department to departments.

Dioxins

174. a. Considering that dioxin testing in Homebush Bay and Parramatta River in 1989 and 1990 showed dioxin levels in bream both above the accepted "action level" and "level of concern", why was action not taken until 2004 to ensure that the situation along the Parramatta River did not get worse?

Response

In 1990, tests on fish and prawn samples in the Parramatta River were conducted. NSW Fisheries assisted with the collection of the samples. Due to the high levels of dioxin found in fish, both Homebush Bay and Duck Creek were closed to all commercial and recreational fishing.

- b. Why did the department not act on the information gained in the 1989 and 1990 tests when acceptable levels of dioxin changed significantly during the 1990s?

Response

In 1997, a fishing closure was also put in place upstream of Iron Cove Bridge.

c. How does this lack of action match your statement in the Sydney Morning Herald on 4 May 2006 that you “have a responsibility to get new information (on dioxin levels) out to the public as soon as possible”?

Response

Refer to responses to Q174a and Q174b.

Mineral Resources Budget

175. Could you please explain how the amount of money collected in mining royalties is expected to increase this financial year yet the value of NSW mineral production is due to decrease by 15%?

Response

These are estimates only and are revised as more data on mineral production and commodity prices become available.

176. For the 2005-06 financial year, the revised other operating expenses figure is almost \$9.3 million (actual \$9,269,000) less than the budgeted figure, a decrease of nearly 54%. What did the department sacrifice to achieve such significant cost cuts?

Response

I can advise that the actual expenditure for the Mineral Resources Division (as at 30 June 2006) for the 2005/06 year was \$14.077m. There have been no cuts to front line services resulting from savings in the Department of Primary Industries budget.

177. In 2005-06 the Department only managed to recoup 54% of administration costs from non-general government agencies (\$465,000 instead of \$865,000 as budgeted). Was this due to bad budgeting, laziness, poor skills in recouping money or bad relationships with these agencies?

Response

Part way through the 2005/06 year the arrangements for the recoupment of administration costs from non-general government agencies was changed. Funds from administration costs from non-general government agencies were remitted to Treasury (rather than retained by DPI) and subsequently allocated back to the Department in 'Recurrent Appropriation'. These funds were significantly higher than the Budget of \$865,000.

Caroona Coal Mine

178. a. Does the Government recognise that the Gunnedah Coal Basin encompasses one of NSW's major agricultural regions: the Namoi

Catchment Area that is estimated to contribute 50% of Gross Regional Product?

Response

The Gunnedah Coal Basin, which contains the proposed mine at Caroon, is wholly contained in the Statistical Areas of Gunnedah and Quirindi, which also contains the Liverpool plains. The gross value of agricultural output of these two Statistical Areas was \$190 million at the 2001 Agricultural Census, out of the NSW total of \$8.8 billion. The area of the Caroon exploration area is approximately 35,000ha out of a total 806,300ha in Quirindi and Gunnedah.

b. When will the Government commit to fund an independent hydrological study to investigate the potential cumulative effects of mining on the Namoi Catchment Area and its related hydrology in terms of impacts on the very successful agricultural industry?

Response

Given that BHPBilliton is interested in exploring this resource, it is entirely appropriate for BHPBilliton to cover the costs of the hydrological studies - rather than direct taxpayer dollars cover the costs. The company has also agreed to fund an independent peer review of its studies and results during the exploration phase of the project. Results of all hydrological studies will be made available to the community and will be rigorously assessed for potential impact on such things as the agriculture industry.

Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park Socio Economic Study

179. Page 14-10 of Budget Estimates 2006-07 Budget Paper No. 3 Volume 2 lists one of the Department's major initiatives for this financial year \$2.7 million to maintain the marine parks program administered by DPI. Could you provide a breakdown of this amount by marine park?

Response

This includes \$2.662 million for salaries and operations to be distributed across all parks. Combined with \$1.0 million provided by the Department of Environment and Conservation, the proposed approximate budget for each park for 2006/7 is as follows: Solitary Island Marine Park 594,000; Jervis Bay Marine Park 615,000; Lord Howe Island Marine Park 178,000; Cape Byron Marine Park 568,000; Port Stephens Great Lakes Marine Park 577,000; Batemans Marine Park 594,000; EXEC and Corporate 534,000.

180. a. Page 14-11 of Budget Estimates 2006-07 Budget Paper No. 3 Volume 2 lists \$1.4 million for purchase of new and replacement plant and equipment in marine parks. Could you provide a breakdown of this amount

by marine park?

Response

Replacement for plant and equipment capital across NSW Marine Parks is: Cape Byron \$130,000; Solitary Islands \$170,000; Port Stephens \$253,000; Lord Howe \$200,000; Jervis Bay \$85,000; Batemans \$555,000.

b. Is amount just for marine parks administered by DPI?

Response

No.

Freshwater Habitat Positions

181. a. What are the functions of the Aquatic Habitat Protection Unit in the Fisheries Conservation and Aquaculture Branch?

Response

The Aquatic Habitat Protection Unit undertakes functions to meet the NSW Government's responsibilities relating to the protection of aquatic biodiversity and fish habitat required under legislative provisions contained in the *Fisheries Management Act 1994* (FM Act). The unit also has a role in public education regarding the protection of fish habitats and fish populations and provide expert witness statements and evidence for compliance action in relation to breaches of the FM Act relating to aquatic habitat protection.

b. Would you consider those functions as some of the core roles of the Department of Primary Industries?

Response

Yes.

182. a. How many people are employed in that unit in the role of regional conservation managers?

Response

There are 11 regional Fisheries Conservation Managers.

b. What does their role entail?

Response

They are currently responsible for providing the Aquatic Habitat Protection Unit services outlined in response to 181a in their respective regions.

c. Why did 4 such managers not have their contract renewed?

Response

It is not true that 4 such managers did not have their contract renewed.

Questions from Ms Rhiannon

FISAP

183. Has Boral received money from Forest Industry Structural Adjustment Package (FISAP)?

ANSWER:

Yes

184. If so, how much FISAP money has Boral received

ANSWER:

\$22.3 million to date.

185. If Boral has received FISAP money, what was this money used for?

ANSWER:

- a) To re-structure and upgrade its native timber green and dry mills in Northern NSW.
- b) To upgrade a treatment plant and purchase equipment for their Nowra and Narooma sites.

186. If Boral has received FISAP money will this company be required to use some of this money to fund redundancy payments for workers who have lost their job?

ANSWER:

No. Companies execute funding agreements for each individual grant and payments are made in arrears after agreed milestones are met by the company.

187. Are there plans to increase FISAP funds?

ANSWER:

No

188. If FISAP funds are going to be increased how much money will be injected into FISAP?

ANSWER:

See 187.

189. Will FISAP money be used to phase out the Red Gum timber industry?

ANSWER:

No

190. Does FISAP still draw funds from the Environment Trust?

ANSWER:

Yes.

Lake Cowal

191. According to section 4.4 of the Cowal Gold Project Conditions of Consent, the maximum daily extraction of water from the Bland Creek Palaeochannel shall not exceed 15ml/day, and not exceed 3650ml/yr. Is the maximum daily extraction of water still 15ml/day or has the Director General agreed to any modifications to this amount?

Response

I am advised that the maximum permissible daily extraction is 15ML/day.

192. Have any fauna died as a result of operations at the Lake Cowal Gold Mine?

Response

No fauna deaths have been due to chemical toxicity.

193. Minutes from the Cowal Gold Project Community Environmental Monitoring and Consultative Committee (7/12/06; 1/6/05) indicate that there have been fauna deaths. Will the Minister investigate these incidents?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Environment.

Coal royalties

194. What were the NSW Govt's coal royalties for 2005/2006?

Response

The coal royalty for 2005/2006 was \$447 million.

195. Given discrepancies between the risk assessments of mining to the Bargo River, under Centennial Coal's current plans, between the company's consultants and an independent consultant employed by the Tahmoor Colliery Community Consultative Committee, will the NSW Government consider the call by the Rivers SOS coalition for it to employ its own consultants to assess Subsidence Management Plans put forward by consultants employed by the companies?

Response

Subsidence Management Plans are assessed by the Department. The Department will call on external experts if required.

196. Given the current water shortages throughout NSW, will the NSW Govt consider mandating a safety zone around rivers to protect them from cracking, draining of flow, and pollution caused by mine subsidence, as was suggested by a Dept. of Planning document of Dec 2005?

Response

The Government will make decisions about safety zones around rivers on a case by case basis, based on a scientific assessment of the geological and surface features associated with underground mine proposals. If potential environmental impacts from mining are considered unacceptable, the proposals will either be modified or refused.

Mining company fines and bonds

197. How many mining companies have been issued with fines this year? What proportion of fines were for: a) safety b) noise c) air d) water

Response

Four mining companies have been issued with fines in 2005/2006 for safety regulation breaches. The Minister for the Environment is responsible for issuing fines in relation to noise, air and water.

198. How many mines have received more than one penalty fine? Can you list which mines have received more than one penalty fine?

Response

One. Glennies Creek mine received two fines in relation to the same OH&S breach in 2005-2006.

199. Is it true that the EPA does not have enough staff to inspect mines when members of the public report pollution or breeches of conditions of consent?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for the Environment.

Bonds

200. How many mining companies are you aware of that have claimed back their rehabilitation bonds?

Response

In the last financial year 14 mining companies/lessees had their final rehabilitation bond released.

201. What is the current amount being held by the Government in bonds for mining land pending rehabilitation?

Response

The current amount of rehabilitation bonds being held by the Government is \$540,392,663.

202. How much has been paid back?

Response

I am advised that for the last financial year the incoming bond money was \$167,304,649 and the amount released \$128,767,200. The amount released includes securities refunded when the security bond is reviewed and increased. In these cases the initial security is refunded when the updated higher security bond is provided.

203. How many mines do not claim back their bond?

Response

Companies or lease holders do not claim back their bonds. The Department of Primary Industries releases these bonds when it is satisfied that the rehabilitation is complete.

204. Do you imagine that the tens of kilometres of open cut mines between Muswellbrook and Singleton will ever be rehabilitated?

Response

Yes.

205. Have you ever flown over this contiguous tract of open cut mines? Would you consider it?

Response

I have visited open cut mines in that area. I have flown over the Muswellbrook and Singleton areas.

What is burnt in power stations?

206. What is burnt in power stations besides coal?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Energy.

207. Is it true that industrial waste or materials from the clean up of the 2000 Sydney Olympic site was burnt in a coal fired power station? Was that the Bayswater or Liddell power station?

Response

See response to Q206.

208. What other Government refuse is burnt in coal fired power stations?

Response

See response to Q206.

209. How long has this practice been operating for?

Response

See response to Q206.

210. Are there any records or is there a register of the materials that are burnt in power stations?

Response

See response to Q206.

211. Who is responsible for vetting what materials are incinerated this way?

Response

See response to Q206.

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

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for the Environment.

213. Have hazardous materials ever been incinerated in a coal fired power station?

Response

See response to Q212.

Curfew for Port Kembla coal loader

214. Has there ever been a breach of the conditions in the SEPP No. 7 for the Port Kembla Coal loader regarding the times at which coal may be received by road haulage from a colliery - 7am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

215. Was any fine issued?

Response

See response to Q214.

216. Have you ever approved the receipt of coal at Port Kembla outside the allowed hours of 7am to 6pm, Monday to Saturday?

Response

See response to Q214.

217. Have you ever approved the receipt of coal on a Sunday or public holiday?

Response

See response to Q214.

Tharwa Sand

- 218 **Is the Minister aware of a pending sand mining application on the Murrumbidgee River in the Yass Valley Shire, lodged by Tharwa sands?**

ANSWER:

Yass Shire Council is the consent authority for this sand extraction operation. The operation also needs to be licensed under the *Rivers and Foreshores Improvement Act 1948* (RFI Act), administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR).

219. **Is the Minister aware of a report commissioned by DIPNR in 2005 to carry out an independent review of Tharwa Sands extraction operations in the Murrumbidgee River near Yass? This report was undertaken by Dr Tilleard**

ANSWER:

Refer to ANSWER to question 218.

- 220. Is the Minister aware that this report found "that there are significant environmental risks to the riverine environment associated with a continuation of current practices at this site" and "the existing regime of conditions and regulation fails to provide sufficient safeguard for the protection of riverine values"**

ANSWER:

Refer to ANSWER to question 218.

- 221. Is the Minister also aware of the response to this report, undertaken by Professor Wayne Erskine from the University of Newcastle? Erskine argues that the mine should be closed down.**

ANSWER:

Refer to ANSWER to question 218.

- 222. Given the environmental harm recognised by Tilleard's report and by Erskine's report, will the Minister allow Tharwa Sands to recommence operations?**

ANSWER:

The Department will take into account the various reports into the impacts of Tharwa Sands' activities.

- 223. If so, what conditions will the Minister impose to protect the riverine environment?**

ANSWER:

The Department is in the process of auditing Tharwa Sand's compliance with its existing permit activities.

- 224. When will the Minister make a decision on Tharwa Sands' mining application?**

ANSWER:

Refer to ANSWER: to question 218

Proposed new coal export terminal in Newcastle

- 225. Are plans to implement a large-scale coal mining industry in the Gunnedah Basin dependent on the approval of the proposed third Coal Export Terminal (CET) at the mouth of the Hunter River in Newcastle?**

Response

No.

226. Which currently proposed coalmines in NSW require the approval of the proposed CET if they are to be viable?

Response

None.

227. Will the Anvil Hill mine proposal be possible without the approval of the CET? If so, where will the coal be shipped from?

Response

There is no relationship between these two proposed developments.

228. Since so many coalmines will be established to provide coal to the CET if it is approved, why isn't the expansion of coal mining being included in the assessment process for the proposed new CET at Newcastle?

Response

See responses to Q225 and Q226.

229. Will the NSW Government conduct a full and comprehensive assessment of the cumulative regional and global social and environmental effects of proposals to open up the Gunnedah Basin to large-scale coal mining? If not, why not?

Response

There are currently no specific proposals to open up the Gunnedah Basin to large scale coal mining. BHP Billiton is exploring the coal resources at Caroona and undertaking relevant environmental studies. It is entirely appropriate for BHP Billiton to cover the costs of these environmental studies - rather than direct taxpayer dollars cover the costs. Any subsequent proposal by BHP Billiton to mine these resources would require approval under the State's planning legislation. The Government's development assessment and approval process is extensive, transparent and rigorous and provides for full community input.

230. When will the impacts of climate change resultant from the inevitable burning of the coal be included in the assessment for proposed coalmines?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

Caroona coalfield

231. How much money has the NSW Government accepted from BHP Billiton in exchange for the exploration rights to the Caroona coalfield?

Response

Refer to response provided in Budget Estimates Hearing of 4 September 2006.

232. How much money will the NSW Government expect to receive from BHP Billiton if approval is granted to mine at Caroona?

Response

Refer to response provided in Budget Estimates Hearing of 4 September 2006.

233. How can the NSW Government seriously claim that assessment of mining proposals at Caroona will be impartial when you have received such large amounts of money?

Response

The payments made by BHP Billiton formed part of the company's successful bid in a competitive Expression of Interest to gain exclusive exploration rights over the Caroona coal area for a period of five years. After this initial exploration period any future mining development proposal will be subject to the Government's extensive, transparent and rigorous development assessment and approval process under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*.

234. Does the exploration licence agreement signed between the NSW Government and BHP Billiton for the Caroona coalfield include a requirement for BHP to study the potential for a coal-fired power station in the Gunnedah region? Why was this included in the agreement?

Response

Refer to response provided in Budget Estimates Hearing of 4 September 2006.

Anvil Hill coal mine

235. How many jobs will be created if the proposed mine at Anvil Hill is approved?

Response

Details on employment are provided in the Environmental Assessment report for the proposal which is available from the Department of Planning website.

- a. How many of those jobs would be given to people within Muswellbrook Shire, and how many would be given to people from outside the area?

Response

The Environment Assessment report indicates that the company has committed to working with the local Council to facilitate local employment within Muswellbrook Shire.

b. How many local families would be forced out of their homes if the mine is approved?

Response

This issues falls within the portfolio responsibilities for the Minister for Planning.

Permit required to exhibit 5 elephants at Taronga Zoo

236. Has the Minister issued permits under the NSW Exhibited Animals Protection Act (1986) for the acquisition of the 5 Asian elephants from Thailand bound for Taronga Zoo and a permit to alter the elephant facility at the zoo?

Response

No. The Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries is the licensing authority under the Exhibited Animals Protection Act.

237. Will the Minister also apply new animal welfare conditions to the Zoo's existing permit to exhibit Asian elephants, noting that under existing conditions the zoos were able to keep their retired elephants, Heman and Burma, in appalling conditions?

Response

No. The Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries is the licensing authority under the Exhibited Animals Protection Act.

238. Will the Minister impose conditions on the permits to acquire and exhibit the elephants (required under the NSW Exhibited Animals Act 1986) that replicate those conditions imposed by the Administrative Appeal Tribunal (AAT) under the Commonwealth *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*?

Response

No. The Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries is the licensing authority under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act*.

239. How can the Minister issue permits to acquire Asian elephants when Taronga zoo is intending to break the ARAZPA guidelines in relation to space requirements when they split the enclosure to keep the adolescent male Gung separate from the females?

Response

The Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries is the licensing authority under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act*.

- 240.** How can the Minister issue a permit to acquire the male elephant Gung when Taronga Zoo ultimately intends to house him on his own in an entirely separate enclosure with minimal and uncertain contact with the female elephants and when the ARAZPA Guidelines emphasise that male elephants must have contact with the females?

Response

The Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries is the licensing authority under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act*.

- 241.** Will the Minister issue a permit to house the elephants at the more spacious Western Plains Zoo instead of the cramped Taronga when even Taronga Zoo's own elephant keeper has said the elephants would be better off at Western Plains Zoo?

Response

No. The Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries is the licensing authority under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act*.

- 242.** Will the Minister ensure that the elephants' living conditions and physical and behavioural wellbeing are assessed at regular periodic intervals by a qualified independent scientist and commit to making their report publicly available?

Response

No. These are matters for the Director-General of the NSW Department of Primary Industries to consider as he is the licensing authority under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act*.

Mining and Working Conditions

- 243.** Are you satisfied that NSW has a vigorous system of enforcement aimed at achieving industry compliance with the current occupational health and safety legislation that covers workers in coalmines?

Response

Yes.

- 244.** Has the Department made an assessment of the number of breaches of workplace conditions that go unreported and the number of times occupational health and safety laws are not enforced?

Response

NSW Mine Safety legislation requires that certain serious accidents and incidents must be reported to Department of Primary Industries (DPI) inspectors by mine management. Occupational Health and Safety representatives, local coal mine check inspectors and district coal mine check inspectors also report matters to DPI inspectors. Overall DPI mine safety enforcement officers made more than 1800 assessments and

investigations of mine safety systems, activities and incidents in the last financial year.

245. Do you agree with CFMEU Mining Division Secretary Tony Maher who in commenting on coal mining in NSW stated “Thirty per cent of all workers are contracted, with long hours; some up to 100 hours per week. Current legislation is inadequately enforced and this is highlighted by the woeful prosecution record.”?

Response

The Wran Review has recommended that a number of projects be undertaken to address the issue of hours of work. The Government through the Mine Safety Advisory Council is addressing the recommendations.

246. What are you doing to make coalmines safer for contractors and all coal miners?

Response

The regulatory reform process that will see the commencement of the new *Coal Mine Health and Safety Act 2002* and its Regulation introduces specific improvements for managing the safety of contractors and consequently all miners.

247. Is the government planning on any further deregulation of the operations in NSW coalmines?

Response

No.

Exploratory ruby mining by Cluff Resources in Barrington Tops state forest area

248. Is there an anomaly in the NSW mining legislation that sees all of the proceeds of ruby mining go to the mining company and none to the state?

Response

There is no anomaly in the treatment of rubies compared to other minerals. The same situation exists for many other minerals in the State depending on the conditions of the original land grant.

249. How have you, your department or other agencies been monitoring the impact of exploratory ruby mining on the 12 rivers that rise in the frost plains and swamplands of the Barrington Tops?

Response

Exploration for rubies has been monitored through site inspections of the activity undertaken on the Exploration Licence.

250. What contact have you or your department had with the DEC or DLWC or Dept. Water Utilities about the impact of this exploratory ruby mining?

Response

Assuming you mean exploration for rubies, not mining, I am advised that officers of the former DLWC were involved in assessing the exploration bulk sampling program under the *Rivers and Foreshores Improvement Act 1948* and licensing of dewatering pumps.

251. Who did you or your department consult with following requests to place stricter environmental conditions on the ruby mining exploration to protect the environmental values of the Little Manning River and the 12 other rivers that rise in the Barrington tops?

Response

The environmental values are protected by existing exploration licence and development consent conditions.

252. Have you discussed any investigation of the environmental impact of this exploratory mining with any other departments?

Response

See response to Q250.

253. Have you or your department consulted with any other bodies about the endangered plant communities in the affected areas in the Barrington Tops?

Response

I am advised that because impacts on endangered plant communities are considered not likely to be significant by current exploration activities the Department of Primary Industries has not needed to consult with other bodies.

254. Will you place a moratorium on this mining operation, pending an investigation of its impact on current and future fresh water supplies to the inland and coastal regions of the NSW Mid North Coast?

Response

I assume you are still referring to exploration for rubies. The potential impact of current exploration activities does not warrant a moratorium.

255. If investigations by other agencies revealed that the ruby mining poses an unacceptable risk to the affected rivers and water supply, would you withdraw approval of the mining operation?

Response

Assuming you are referring to any future ruby mining proposals, this issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

Mt Arthur mine

- 256.** Have any fines been issued against BHP Billiton for the dust storms that are generated at the Mt Arthur mine?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for the Environment.

- 257.** If so, how many fines have been issued?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for the Environment.

- 258.** If so, how much money has BHP Billiton paid in fines?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for the Environment.

Hunter Coal Export Terminal

- 259.** Are plans to implement a large-scale coal mining industry in the Gunnedah Basin dependent on the approval of the proposed third Coal Export Terminal (CET) at the mouth of the Hunter River in Newcastle?

Response

See response to Q225.

- 260.** Which currently proposed coal mines in NSW require the approval of the proposed CET if they are to be viable?

Response

See response to Q226.

- 261.** Will the Anvil Hill proposal be possible without the approval of the CET?

Response

See response to Q227.

- 262.** Why isn't the expansion of coal-mining being included in the assessment process for the proposed new CET at Newcastle?

Response

See response to Q228.

Mining in the Gunnedah Basin

- 263.** Will the NSW Government conduct a full and comprehensive assessment of the cumulative regional and global social and environmental effects of proposals to open up the Gunnedah Basin to large-scale coal-mining?

Response

See response to Q229.

- 264.** If not, why not?

Response

See response to Q229.

Anvil Hill Mine

- 265.** How many jobs will be created if the proposed mine at Anvil Hill is approved?

Response

See response to Q235.

- 266.** How many of those jobs would be given to people within Muswellbrook Shire, and how many would be given to people from outside the area?

Response

See response to Q235.

- 267.** Will any local residents be moved from their houses if the mine is approved? If so, how many?

Response

See response to Q235.

Lithgow

- 268.** Has your government taken any action on a moratorium on any development near Long Swamp, the headwaters of the Cox's River, because 6 nearby coal developments threaten to damage the birthplace of the Cox's River?

Response

I am advised that there is no mining being undertaken or planned near Long Swamp.

- 269.** Will you commission a Cumulative Groundwater Pollution Study for the aquifers feeding Long Swamp? If so, when?

Response

See response to Q268.

- 270.** What scientific assessment has been carried out to determine whether a mining buffer zone needs to be placed around the swamp and the river, as recommended by Deputy Director General of Mineral Resources Alan Coutts to Rivers SOS?

Response

See response to Q268.

- 271.** Is it true that the Invincible open-cut mine plans to dump contaminated waste water into old mine workings underneath the endangered Temperate Heathland Peat Swamp that occurs at Long Swamp? If so, how do you justify this threat to the river?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning. However I am informed that there are no mine workings beneath Long Swamp.

- 272.** Are you aware that the Temperate Heathland Peat Swamp was not identified in the Environmental Impact Statement for the proposed mine?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

- 273.** Given that the Invincible Colliery was originally approved decades ago in an era when the damage caused to the environment was an afterthought, will you reject the current open cut proposal as an extension of the existing underground mine and conduct more rigorous environmental assessment?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

Diega Creek mine

- 274.** Are you aware of the remediation problems and degradation being experienced in Diega Creek, near the Diega Creek mine site, owned by Xstrata?

Response

Refer to response provided in Budget Estimates Hearing of 4 September 2006.

- 275.** Do you know that the open cut mine pit goes to within metres of Diega Creek?

Response

Refer to response provided in Budget Estimates Hearing of 4 September 2006.

- 276.** How do you regard claims by the mine company that cracks in the creek, which runs only metres from the open cut pit, may not be caused by mining?

Response

Refer to response provided in Budget Estimates Hearing of 4 September 2006.

- 277.** Have you or your department been negotiating with Oceanic Coal about the loss of flows to Diega creek as a result of mine subsidence? What is the current status of this situation?

Response

Refer to response provided in Budget Estimates Hearing of 4 September 2006.

Long-wall mining in the Upper Cataract

- 278.** BHP Billiton plans to develop longwall mining the Special Area surrounding the Upper Cataract River. What “neutral or beneficial effect” will you attribute to the 3 longwall mines in the Special Area surrounding the Upper Cataract River, given the potential damage through subsidence in this water catchment area?

Response

The Department of Primary Industries has assessed that the proposed longwall mining will not have a significant impact on the existing environment.

- 279.** What scientific qualifications do the staff have that will advise you regarding the approval of BHP Billiton’s proposed mines in this area?

Response

The staff advising on BHP Billiton’s proposed mines have a range of qualifications. These include:

- Bachelor of Environmental Science (Honours) University of Wollongong
- Bachelor of Engineering (Environmental), 1st Class Honours, University of Wollongong
- Masters of Science, University of North Carolina
- Masters of Science – Agricultural Science, University of Western Australia
- Doctor of Philosophy (in Rock Mechanics), University of Newcastle
- Masters of Engineering Science (Geotechnical Engineering), University of New South Wales
- Masters of Engineering Science, University of Newcastle

- Doctor of Philosophy (Spatial Information), University of Newcastle

In addition, an Interagency Committee consisting of representatives from the Sydney Catchment Authority, the Dam Safety Committee, the Mine Subsidence Board, the Department of Planning, the Department of Natural Resources, the Department of Environment and Conservation and the Department of Primary Industries also provides advice on this issue.

- 280.** Does your Department consider that mining geologists are qualified to provide advice about managing threatened species, loss of biodiversity and future water supplies in Sydney's water catchment areas that are being undermined?

Response

The Department employs officers with a range of qualifications, such as geology, geotechnical engineering and environmental science, to advise on the potential impact of mining on the environment. The Department also draws on the experience of the Interagency Committee.

- 281.** What discussions have you had with the Minister for Planning about 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?

Response

Our offices have discussed the issue.

- 282.** Is it true that, at the Appin colliery, BHP Billiton is giving new jobs to interstate and even overseas applicants, not to locals?

Response

This is a matter for BHP Billiton, local workforce and trade unions.

- 283.** Have you inspected the multiple cracks which remain in the Lower Cataract nearly a decade after mining stopped?

Response

I have inspected areas in the Upper Cataract that have been previously undermined or are planned for future mining.

Coal mining in the Gloucester Basin

- 284.** Do you or your Department monitor the buy up of land by coal companies in rural communities to plan for the impact this has on regional communities? If not, why not, given that the local towns are built on small enterprise, farming and boutique food production?

Response

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

- 285.** Has your Government analysed the negative impact that this mine extension will have on the growing local industries of ecotourism, speciality guesthouses, organic farmers, and the growing number of ex-Sydney professionals moving to the area for a lifestyle change?

Response

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

- 286.** What percent of private land has been purchased for the Duralie mine extension? **287.** Are you concerned about the community unrest over your recent decision to grant Duralie Coal an extension to its open cut coalmine in the Gloucester Basin alongside the Mammy Johnson River?

Response

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

- 287.** Are you concerned about the community unrest over your recent decision to grant Duralie Coal an extension to its open cut coalmine in the Gloucester Basin alongside the Mammy Johnson River?

Response

This matter falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

Mining along the Mammy Johnsons River

- 288.** Considering Alan Coutts (Dep Dir Gen Min Res) recent written advice to Rivers SOS that mining buffer zones around rivers should be decided based on “a scientific assessment of the geological and surface features of each potential mine area”:

- a.** Will you be arranging for this investigation to take place for the Mammy Johnson’s River? If not, why not?

Response

The advice referred to concerns the assessment of the impact of underground longwall mining in the vicinity of rivers. The Duralie Coal Mine which is the only mine located near the Mammy Johnsons River is an open cut mine that has approval under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act.

- b.** What advice have you based your decision on?

Response

The process discussed in response to Q288a.

c. What are the scientific qualifications of government staff that have deemed the operation of a mine within metres of the Mammy Johnson's River acceptable?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

d. When Alan Coutts refers to "scientific assessment" of the conditions at each mine site, what types of scientists does he refer to?

Response

Scientists with appropriate qualifications and experience.

e. What advice have you sought from other agencies to determine the correct scientific qualifications that an officer needs to assess the impact of mining on the health of rivers and the ecosystems they support, and also the impact on future fresh water supplies?

Response

The Department of Primary Industries is able to determine the necessary qualifications that an officer requires. See also answer to Q280.

289. How is your department addressing the potential damage to the river from this mine and the threat to the future water supply for local and coastal communities from the central coast to Port Stephens? Are you working with the EPA or DLWC?

Response

The mine has consent from the Department of Planning. In addition, environmental management is addressed through the Department's Mining Rehabilitation and Environment Management Process. This process involves the submission of Mining Operations Plans, annual reports and inspections. Joint inspections of the site have been undertaken with the Department of Natural Resources in relation to water management and Department of Environment and Conservation with regard to water quality.

290. Who has your department consulted with so far about the Duralie coal mine extension with regard to the environmental impact and the future effects on future water supplies in the region?

Response

The extension was approved by the Minister for Planning after consultation with the Department of Primary Industries and other relevant agencies.

291. What govt. study has been undertaken of the Mammy Johnson River and its future role as a supplier of fresh water to the region? Have you or dept.

spoken with DEC, EPA or DLWC about conducting a specific review of Mammy Johnson River?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

- 292.** Have you ever discussed the Duralie mine with the Minister or Department of Planning or the Minister or Department of Water utilities or Dept land and water conservation? If so, when?

Response

No.

- 293.** How do you see your responsibility as a protector of the rivers and waterways that are threatened, damaged or destroyed by mining activities?

Response

As Minister for Mineral Resources my role is to enable the sustainable development of the state's mineral resources in a socially and environmentally responsible manner. The NSW Government has a Whole-of-Government approach to monitoring the environmental impacts of mining, including the impact on water courses.

CONSENT CONDITIONS AND DURALIE COALMINE

- 294.** How many consent conditions have been breached by Duralie Coal in the past year?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

- 295.** Have any fines or stop work orders been issued?

Response

None in the past financial year.

- 296.** How many inspections of the mine operations to assess the conditions of consent have been conducted in the past year? On what dates?

Response

Department of Primary Industries Environmental Officers have attended three inspections of the Duralie mine and three inspections of the Stratford mine on 25 August 2005, 3 November 2005, 8 February 2006, 10 August 2006.

- 297.** For this proposed extension of Duralie mine:

a. Have you or dept had any dealings with the Dept of Transport re: open cut mining and potential blasting near to the north coast railway line?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

b. Will any part of Johnson's Creek public road be altered or made private for the Duralie mine extension?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

c. Will you allow any diversion of the Mammy Johnson River in the 20km area between the existing Duralie mine and Stratford mine if the mining company proposes it?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

d. Will you allow any underground mining underneath the Mammy Johnson River or the Ward's River?

Response

Any proposal would be assessed on its merits by the Government.

Questions from Mr Colless

FORESTS

298. In light of the fact that NRAC had the Private Native Forestry Code before it for over 2 years, how can the Forestry Industry and farmers be guaranteed that the new Code will be any better than the one recently circulated?

ANSWER:

NRAC will have until the end of the year to bring back a new draft Code. The standing committee will be given an analysis of the submissions to the exhibited draft Code of Practice to aid them in their deliberations.

The Government will ensure that Private Native Forestry is conducted on a sustainable basis to ensure both the long-term viability of the industry and the proper conservation of our precious biodiversity. That was the goal when we started and it remains our goal now.

NRAC now has the opportunity to develop an agreed Code that achieves the needed balance.

- 299.** Is your Government fully funding the second rotation planting of plantations of softwood and eucalypts in NSW? Are the second rotation plantings completed?

Response

Yes. Forests NSW funds its second rotation plantings from its revenues. Second rotation plantings were completed in accordance with Forests NSW Business Plan.

- 300.** Can you advise the Committee what the dividends policy is from State Forests in regards to the payment back to Government? Are State Forests NSW being forced into borrowing to meet their dividends to the Government?

Response

Forests NSW dividend to be paid by June 2007 is calculated as 100 percent of operating profit after tax, plus a component of its superannuation fund earnings. No, Forests NSW is not being forced into borrowing.

- 301.** As it is estimated that the long term supply of structural timber in NSW and Australia has a shortfall of some 2-5 million cubic metres by 2030, due to increased population and increased per capita consumption of timber, can you advise what your Government is doing to address this perceived shortfall?

Response

I am aware of industry modelling that indicates there will be a significant shortfall between domestic production and the Australian demand for wood fibre by 2030 at current production and projected consumption levels. I am also aware of the \$2B balance-of-trade deficit in wood and paper products.

The NSW Government is committed to the sustainable development of the native forest and plantations sector, and has established a streamlined legislative framework that balances economic growth and the social interests of local and regional communities while protecting the environment.

The NSW plantation estate exceeds 330,000 ha of which over 280,000 ha are softwood plantations, 218,000 ha of which are State-owned. In the past decade, the State owned or managed hardwood plantation area has doubled to 57,000 ha, mostly comprising hardwood plantations established by Forests NSW. NSW has the largest softwood plantation estate in Australia, and the third largest overall plantation estate.

The NSW Government has implemented a number of initiatives aimed at encouraging and facilitating a significant increase in private sector investment in plantation forestry in NSW. These initiatives include:

- The *Timber Plantations (Harvest Guarantee Act)1997*.
- The *Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999*;
- preparation of a comprehensive Code of Practice covering the establishment, management and harvesting of plantations (both privately and publicly owned) in NSW;
- development of a Plantation Capability and Suitability Assessment for NSW;
- establishment of the Department of Primary Industries as a single point of reference within the NSW Government for private forestry stakeholders;
- Formation of a market capable of recognizing the value of the carbon sequestered in the plantations in financial terms.

302. Do you and your Government support the current Commonwealth Management Investment Schemes in the softwood industry?

Response

The NSW Government supports a continuation of the current Commonwealth taxation provisions for forestry Managed Investment Schemes.

303. As private investment in softwood is being affected by the interpretation of ‘clumps’ of native forest, which cannot be removed and affects the viability of softwood plantations, can you advise whether this problem is being created by State Forest NSW or whether it is the interpretation of Department of Natural Resources employees.

ANSWER:

The key objective of the *Plantations and Reafforestation Act 1999* is to promote the establishment of plantations on essentially cleared land. The legislation and relevant Code clearly states that all patches of native vegetation greater than one hectare must be retained for biodiversity protection. This has been the case since 1999 when this Act came into force. The Department of Natural Resources regulates the activities under this legislation.

304. The Forestry Industry Structural Adjustment Package still has \$4.2 million available for industry development assistance. The time frame for completion of projects for this assistance is 28 February 2007. Applications for projects were called in May 2006. What applications were received?

ANSWER:

The Forestry Structural Adjustment Unit received 14 applications under a set of draft Restructuring Assistance Guidelines. There has been no formal further round of applications under FISAP.

305. How has the Forestry Structural Adjustment Unit dealt with them?

ANSWER:

There has been no formal assessment of applications.

306. Have any applications been approved?

ANSWER:

No

307. When did the advisory committee last meet to consider applications?

ANSWER:

The Forestry Industry Structural Adjustment Package Advisory Committee last met in December 2005 to consider Forestry Industry Structural Adjustment Package matters. The Committee has also considered matters out of session since that time.

308. Forests NSW purchased unused allocation from Boral Timber, which subsequently closed its Bostobrick and Kempsey sawmills. Is Forests NSW maintaining supply to mills in accordance with agreements?

Response

Yes.

309. On what basis was this purchase made?

Response

This was a negotiated agreement to purchase unutilised accumulated undercut from the Boral Wood Supply Agreement.

310. What was the cost and where did the funds come from?

Response

Forests NSW advises that the cost of purchasing unutilised accumulated undercut is commercial-in-confidence and I am unable to provide it. The source of funds was Forests NSW.

311. What is the allocation reduction resulting from this purchase?

Response

34,000m³ of High Quality sawlogs.

312. Forests NSW manage logging contracts on the North Coast and elsewhere in NSW. What costs, including administration costs, has Forests NSW incurred in these operations?

Response

\$78,364,000 in 2004-05.

313. Has Forests NSW been able to recover these costs by sale of logs to sawmills?

Response

Yes.

314. Has the cost of harvesting and haulage increased in real terms since the Forest Agreements?

Response

Yes.

315. Has the cost of forest supervision increased in real terms since the Forest Agreements?

Response

No.

- 316. The CFMEU was paid \$120,000 to provide industrial advice on termination payments made to retrenched Brigalow workers. Now that the Union has withdrawn its participation, what is being done to obtain that advice?**

ANSWER

The Industrial Officer employed by the CFMEU remains in that role.

- 317. Is it true that the required advice is now up to more than a year overdue and 16 business exists are still awaiting final payment?**

ANSWER

No. I am advised that the documentation regarding worker entitlements from seven businesses exiting the timber industry are currently with the Legal Industrial Advisory Officer. In 3 of these cases the Industrial Officer has advised that the workers appear to have not been paid their correct redundancy payments based on information supplied by these businesses.

- 318. Has the Union been using this arrangement to delay payments on behalf of the government?**

ANSWER

No.

319. Has the Union been using access to the existing businesses to pursue termination entitlements up to six years old?

ANSWER

No.

320. The Forestry Structural Adjustment Unit still holds Exit Assistance Funds of \$3.7 million for:

- i) Bingara Cypress Pine**
- ii) Logan Cypress**
- iii) JT & H Burns**
- iv) RJ and JR Stephenson**
- v) E & RJ Hay**
- vi) Grenfell Timbers**
- vii) Robert George Kilday**
- viii) Scott and Lee-Anne Turner**
- ix) R & R Logging**
- x) KT & SS Richards**
- xi) EW Haymen**
- xii) VG Finlay**
- xiii) Leo Bailey**
- xiv) CR & CM Lord**
- xv) Michael O'Neill**

321. As Bingara Cypress Pine and Logan Cypress closed business more than a year ago, within the terms of the Government's Brigalow Decision, when will they be given the assistance they were promised?

ANSWER

Bingara Cypress Pine has been paid \$1,505,000 and will be paid the final 20% of their business exit assistance payment when the Government receives independent verification that correct redundancy payment to workers have been paid. Site rectification costs of \$37,876 have been paid and the balance will be paid on the production of appropriate approved receipts.

Logan Cypress has been paid \$1,000,000 and will be paid the final 20% of their business exit assistance payment when the Government receives independent verification that correct redundancy payment to workers have been paid.

322. How much has the government paid as training assistance to retrenched workers from the Brigalow Decision?

ANSWER

From the inception of the Brigalow Timber Workers Assistance Fund program July 2005 until 31 August 2006 the government has paid \$68,297.57 as training assistance to retrenched workers.

323. How many (Brigalow) retrenched workers have taken up the alternative employment with the National Parks Service and Forests NSW?

Response

13.

324. Following the closure of Gallagher Insultimber as part of the Brigalow Decision, their contractors applied for exit assistance. The harvesting contractor was approved and has subsequently been paid. The haulage contractor, who delivered those same logs to the mill was denied assistance. How can that inequity be justifiable?

ANSWER

Gallagher Insultimbers at the time of its voluntary exit from the Brigalow and Nandewar timber region used the services of a number of harvest & haulage subcontractors. Hyde Haulage is still operating; Dewson Haulage has exited; B Collison has exited, Eastern States Cypress Pine (EW Hayman) application is being processed; Olsen Partnership has exited and Evans Haulage whose business closed on 7 July 2004 does not strictly fit within the Brigalow Timber Industry Exit Assistance Fund Guidelines.

325. In March 2006, Minister Macdonald approved industry development assistance guidelines and applications were accepted up until 21 April. Since then, how many applications have been approved?

ANSWER

The Brigalow Assistance Fund Advisory Committee has provided advice to the Community Conservation Council on 59 applications. In respect of applications being approved so far I refer to my answer in Parliament on 28 September 2006.

326. Why has the FSAU taken it upon itself to vary the approved guidelines?

ANSWER

The Brigalow Timber Industry Development Assistance Fund Guidelines have not been varied by the FSAU.

327. Why have export market strategies been relegated to a low priority?

ANSWER

Given the time elapsed since publication of the NSW Cypress Industry Strategic Plan 2004-2010 in 2003, and to assist in prioritising applications received under the Brigalow Timber Industry Development Assistance Fund, the Brigalow Assistance Fund Advisory Committee reviewed the strategic objectives identified in the Plan as a first step in the process of consideration of application. Individual applications under the Brigalow Timber Industry Development

Assistance Fund are considered on their merits and final determinations on applications will be made by the NSW Minister for the Environment and the NSW Minister for Primary Industries taking into consideration the advice of the Brigalow Assistance Fund Advisory Committee and the Community Conservation Council.

328. Why have they not been able to make any recommendations since receiving applications?

ANSWER

The Brigalow Assistance Fund Advisory Committee has made recommendations to the Community Conservation Council on 59 Brigalow Timber Industry Development Assistance Fund applications.

329. Why have no payments been made with respect to retrospective investment as promised by the Minister?

ANSWER

The Community Conservation Council agreed that prior expenditure applications should be considered concurrently with all other applications in accordance with advice on equity from an independent Probity Auditor. Government recognises the need for, and undertakes a transparent, rigorous and equitable process to ensure the appropriate use of public funds. In respect of payments made I refer to my answer in Parliament on 28 September 2006.

330. Gulargambone Cypress has advised that they are at critical cash flow levels as a result of investments for which they were promised \$2 for every \$1 spent. They are able to cease production and be closed down. What is being done to provide them the assistance promised?

ANSWER

I refer to my answer in Parliament on 28 September 2006.

331. FSAU consideration of industry development applications is denying assistance to companies who have done work themselves in investment projects. Why would they not be entitled to the same assistance as companies who have spent money outside the industry and engaged external contractors for installations?

ANSWER

Consideration will be given to providing assistance in relation to investment projects completed by an applicant where appropriate documentation to substantiate costs can be provided.

332. Do you know one of your consultants named Linda Stephens who contracts her services to NSW Forests in the name of Deipera Pty Ltd.?

i) Are you aware that she is on a contract made up of a \$30,000 retainer plus \$1450 per day for 180 days a year, making it a package worth up to \$291,000?

Response

I understand Forests NSW has contracted Ms Stephens for up to 15 days per month. The fee is all inclusive and does not have any additional overheads.

ii) Why have you entered into this arrangement in this way?

Response

Forests NSW required specialist assistance during a period of restructure and business refocus in early 2004. Ms Stephens, a change management specialist, was engaged to assist the executive management team in ensuring the success of the restructure and business refocus and to support and assist the staff through the change process.

iii) At that salary level why is she not employed as a senior executive?

Response

The contract allows for termination of services once the change process is complete. The services provided through this contract have been needed during a period of substantial and permanent reduction in the senior executive team of Forests NSW. A fulltime, ongoing executive position was not required.

iv) Did the Department call for tenders for the delivery of this consultancy as I believe it is policy to do so (anything above \$30k pa should get three quotes and above \$150k should go to tender)?

Response

No. The arrangement is not a consultancy but is a service contract paid on a monthly basis with termination provisions. At the time of engagement, the contractor's rates were checked against similar service providers and with referees. The rates have not increased since the start of the contract.

v) Is it true that Ms Stephens demands payment of her invoices on the day she submits them rather than waiting the usual ten days?

Response

Forests NSW processes payments within its standard terms for payment.

vi) While Ms Stephens is permitted to work a maximum of 15 days a month what evidence do you require of the days she actually works those days. (I have an invoice here of hers that gives no proof of any days

worked, just a plain invoice). Does she provide you with her diary or does she provide you with time sheets?

Response

Forests NSW has access to Ms Stephens' diary and her work performance is closely monitored by the CEO and the Senior Management Team of Forests NSW.

- 333.** Has the department also engaged Touche Tohmatsu and Deloitte Finance Pty Ltd to undertake a review of Forests NSW marketing? Was this contract put out to tender?

Response

No.

- 334.** Was the refurbishment of Forests NSW offices in West Pennant Hills which will cost over \$400k put out to tender?

Response

The refurbishing project was internally managed by Forests NSW with quotes being sought for each trade element of the work in accordance with Government procurement procedures.

Menindee Lakes

The Government recently announced that yet another study will be done on the Menindee Lakes and Darling River to be completed by February 2007.

- 335. Are you unhappy with the studies that have already been done? Are you questioning the competency of those studies?**

ANSWER:

I believe that the previous studies were too narrowly focussed on the Menindee Lakes and we now need to look at broader options to deliver good outcomes for all stakeholders along the entire Darling River system.

- 336. Why has the NSW government not done anything to improve the management of Menindee Lakes despite there having been a number of studies already done on the subject?**

ANSWER:

While the current drought persists, we are doing the maximum possible to ensure that the highest priority needs are met from existing Menindee Lakes resources. However, structural works are very expensive and we need to be sure that the overall strategy ensures the best outcome possible for the investment.

- 337. What do you expect the study to cost the Department?**

ANSWER:

The cost of the study will be announced once the successful tenderer is announced.

338. Do you really think that September to February is going to be enough time for a comprehensive study of a very complex issue to be done?

ANSWER:

The successful tenderer will be capable of delivering an outcome by February 2007.

339. Is this not just a political stunt to make it look like you are doing something?

ANSWER:

No.

Groundwater

340. How was the anomalies process undertaken as part of the Groundwater entitlement reduction process in for example the Namoi and Murrumbidgee Valleys?

ANSWER:

Appeals against the Department's determination of history of extraction and applications for special circumstance consideration were considered by regional verification committees in the Upper and Lower Namoi, Lower Murrumbidgee, Lower Murray, Lower Lachlan, Lower Macquarie and Lower Gwydir Groundwater Sources.

341. Who was on those committees?

ANSWER:

Regional Verification Committee comprised the local CMA Chairperson, the CEO of the NSW Irrigators Council (or representative) and a senior officer of the DNR.

342. How many matters were considered by the committee?

ANSWER:

Within the Upper and Lower Namoi there were 108 cases and the Lower Gwydir 26 cases.

343. How many licence holders had their entitlements altered after being considered by the anomalies committee?

ANSWER:

64 licence holders had their entitlements altered after being reviewed by the Regional Verification Committees.

344. In the Lower Murrumbidgee Groundwater Area there is an entitlement holder by the name of Eric Bergemeister who planted 150 acres of vines planted on his property prior to the decision to cut entitlements using a History of Use model. He had a 1000MI entitlement but has now been advised that under the Ministers new Water Sharing Plan that his entitlement has been reduced to about 180MI. Given that he needs at least 450MI to water these vines why were permanent planting not taken into consideration when considering the anomalies?

ANSWER:

I am advised that the Murrumbidgee Regional Verification Committee reviewed the application for special circumstances by Mr Bergemeister. The Committee noted that Mr Bergemeister commenced planting vines in 1999, but did not complete his planting until 2005. Unfortunately, the Verification Committee did not support Mr Bergemeister's application.

Native Vegetation

345. Which farmer or farmers agreed to fund the \$1.5m part of the \$3 m study on invasive native scrub?

ANSWER:

There is no requirement for farmers to allocate cash to the project.

346. Do you have that commitment in writing?

ANSWER:

See Above.

347. What do you hope to achieve from that study?

ANSWER:

The goal is to develop best practice in the management of Invasive Native Scrub (INS).

348. Why will you not accept a document titled "A Vegetation Management Plan for Areas Invaded by Native Trees and Shrubs in the

Cobar Penneplain” compiled by scientists Geoff Cunningham, Peter Milthorpe and Dick Condon and economist Bob Wynne, instead of spending \$3 million on a further study?

ANSWER:

While the document has considerable technical merit and covers many of the impacts of INS, it does not address some key natural resource management issues such as the impact of INS on soil health, soil biodiversity and landscape function. Nor does the document address these key issues in terms of assessments of applications, as legally required under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

Sacking of Regional Directors and Redundancies

349. How many DNR employees have been made redundant since the beginning of the 05/06 financial year?

ANSWER:

A total of 124 staff have accepted the Department’s offer of a voluntary redundancy. Additionally, as a part of a re-structure of the Department, 9 SES staff were terminated.

350. Were those costs absorbed by the Department or were they paid out of consolidated revenue?

ANSWER:

The cost of the Department’s redundancy program has been funded by way of an allocation from NSW Treasury.

351. What savings did you expect to make out of the redundancy program when the announcement of the redundancy program was made?

ANSWER:

The redundancy program was aimed at assisting the Department achieve its 2006/2007 Budget allocation.

352. What have been the savings made so far?

ANSWER:

The Department expects to operate within its 2006/2007 Budget allocation.

353. Are there any DNR employees on the unattached list?

ANSWER:

The Department has no staff on the SES Unattached list.

The Department of Natural Resources has 6 displaced officers down from 36 a year ago when I became Minister.

354. Can you please provide us with information about the floodplain management funding that will be allocated to the Richmond River County Council?

ANSWER:

Under the 2006/07 Commonwealth & State Assisted Program I will be offering Richmond River County Council a \$50,000 grant to continue with its Lismore Voluntary House Purchase/House Raising scheme.

In addition, on 10 August 2006 I offered Richmond River County Council \$84,600 to assist Council with the maintenance of its flood mitigation works that were constructed prior to 1984.

I will also be offering the Richmond River County Council grants under the 2006/07 State Assisted Program once finalised.

Funding for CMAs

355. Are CMA chairs happy with the current level of funding for CMAs?

ANSWER:

You will have to ask them.

356. Given that when CMAs were established their role was basically to administer NAP and NHT funding and that they were themselves funded to perform those functions, how is that they are now expected to perform other roles such as determining the Groundwater Structural Adjustment, Macro Water Sharing Plans, implementing your Native Vegetation reforms all without additional funding?

ANSWER:

The specific functions of CMAs are outlined in the *Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003*. These functions are much broader than just administering NAP and NHT funding.

357. Is there a view to increase the funding for CMAs to cover these additional roles?

ANSWER:

These are not additional roles. The specific functions of CMAs are outlined in the *Catchment Management Authorities Act 2003*.

Questions from Mr Cohen

Forests NSW

358. How much does Forests NSW currently spend on “educational” activities?

Response

\$4.2 million pa.

359. Why does the Department of Primary Industries undertake media liaison activities on behalf of Forests NSW?

Response

Following the establishment of Department of Primary Industries (DPI) in July 2004, incorporating the former Department of Mineral Resources, NSW Agriculture, NSW Fisheries and Forests NSW, it was decided to integrate and centralise like services that were used by all sections of the new department. Under this arrangement, Forests NSW now sources and pays for a range of corporate and support services provided by other divisions of DPI, including media liaison.

360. Does this imply that the Government wishes to retain control over the media image of this otherwise independent government owned business enterprise?

Response

No.

361. Has the Government made any estimate of how much Forests NSW would pay on rates to local government if its production forests were treated equally with private plantation operators and required to pay local government rates? Please provide details for the Eurobodalla, Bombala and Bega Valley Shire council areas.

Response

Yes. For 2001 estimated potential gross rates payments for Eurobodalla, Bombala and Bega Valley Shires were \$61,000, \$100,000 and \$66,000 respectively.

362. I refer to the Australian Forestry Standard certification scheme which was developed by the former federal Forestry Minister Wilson Tuckey. Is the

Government still committed to achieving this form of certification for State Forests in NSW?

Response

Yes.

- 363.** Does Forests NSW still expect to achieve this by 2006?

Response

Yes.

- 364.** Is the Government/Minister aware that the conservation movement strongly and unanimously rejects this scheme as an industry greenwash, which has no credibility as a label of environmental sustainability and will mean business as usual?

Response

Yes. However, the Australian Forestry Standard is accredited by the Australian Standards Association and has international recognition through its endorsement under the Program for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes.

Game Council

- 365.** On what date did the Game Council and Forests NSW gain certification under Australian standard 4360, and with which certification body did they acquire that certification?

Response

Benchmark P/L, experts in Occupational Health & Safety, explain that Australian standard 4360 "is an interactive process consisting of well defined steps which, taken in sequence, support better decision making by contributing to a greater insight into adverse events and their impacts". This standard was used to identify hazards, assess risks and identify controls to minimise the risks. There is no certification process required to use this standard.

- 366.** If they did not gain certification, did the staff members who carried out the risk assessment to determine [quote from information kit:] "the risks posed by hunting to [Forests NSW] field staff and contractors" undergo any formal training/certification on the AS4360 standard prior to making the assessment?

Response

Staff from Game Council NSW and Forests NSW both have expertise in occupational health and safety. Game Council NSW staff also have expertise in firearms and hunting management. This full range of expertise was utilised in the assessment.

- 367.** Was an independent audit performed on the process to determined that it

did indeed meet the standard as claimed by the Game Council?

Response

No

- 368.** We note that the risk to people inside the forest and to non-target animals outside the area of state forest was assessed as "likely", and the likelihood of hitting people outside the area assessed as only "very unlikely" or "unlikely", in the event of boundary misidentification or firing into or across private land adjoining state forest.

Response

This assessment reflects the 'uncontrolled' risks before the assessment was done and the conservation hunting scheme was implemented. These 'uncontrolled' risks are managed through the controls and safeguards implemented as result of the assessment.

- 369.** Since Forests NSW appear to have gone to great lengths to create exclusion zones to protect their workers, is it not appropriate that adjoining landowners and recreational users be similarly protected? Will the Minister allow exclusion zones to be requested by landowners and recreational users, since the legislation allows for partial declaration of forests?

Response

A range of controls and safeguards have been implemented to minimise risks without the need for exclusion zones suggested by the Honourable Member.

- 370.** Given that the letter sent to landowners did not specifically ask the question "do you support or reject the proposal", how did Game Council determine whether a given letter supported/rejected the proposal?

Response

As per the content of each reply.

- 371.** How many of the respondents in the second round consultation reported significant feral animal problems in state forests?

Response

52

- 372.** In which state forests were significant feral animal problems reported by respondents?

Response

Forest Name	Forest Name
Awaba	Mundaroo
Barrington	Murrah
Bellangry	Myall

Bolaro	Olney
Bondi	Pennsylvania
Boyne	Pine Brush
Bril Bril	Pokolbin
Buladelah	Rammornie
Canobolas	Richmond Range
Chichester	Roseburg
Clyde	Scotchman
Colbyn Broken Back	Sunny Corner
Corrabare	Tabbimoble
Dog Rocks	Tallaganda
Ellis State	Tantawangalo
Forestland	Tuggolo
Gladstone	Vulcan
GlenBog	Wandera
Grange	Wang Wauk
Green Hills	Watagan
Hampton	Whiporie
Jenolan	Wyrra
Kippara	Yarratt
McPherson	

- 373.** Of the forests that have been declared for hunting, how many have feral animal control plans published and implemented by Forests NSW that include opening up the forest to general hunting by recreational hunters?

Response

Conservation hunting is one component of feral animal control in all State Forests that are declared for hunting.

- 374.** What was the total cost to the Game Council and Forests NSW in undertaking public consultation rounds in 2005/06, and was this above or below budget estimates?

Response

I am advised that this information is not specifically recorded.

- 375.** A) How many R licences applications were received in 2005/06 by the Game Council for hunting on public land?

Response

1,349 up to 30 June 2006

- B) How many applicants sat the R licence test in 2005/06?

Response

Tests are conducted by Approved Hunting Organisations and only those candidates who pass are able to apply for an R license. Game Council NSW does not receive information about candidates sitting the test including those who do not pass the test.

C) How many of these applicants failed the licence test?

Response

See response to question 375 (C).

D) How many R licences were issued in 2005/06 by the Game Council for hunting on public land?

Response

1,349 up to 30 June 2006

E) How much revenue was generated in 2005/06 from the issue of R licences for hunting on public land?

Response

\$ 74,225

F) How much money did the Game Council pay in 2005/06 in commissions to hunting organisations for issuing R licences to hunt on public land?

Response

\$ 8,094

376. A) How many R licences were suspended or revoked in 2005/06 for failure to comply with the licencing conditions?

Response

Nil

B) How many fines have been issued to R licenced hunters in 2005/06, and how much revenue was received?

Response

Nil

C) How many licence/compliance checks have been undertaken by Game Managers, Forests NSW staff or NSW police or other authorised persons on hunters in NSW state forests in 2005/06?

Response

Game Council NSW has undertaken compliance checks on long weekends since conservation hunting commenced. Forests NSW does not undertake compliance checks.

Any request for information on compliance checks conducted by NSW Police should be referred to the Minister for Police.

- 377.** How many complaints were received from the public by the Game Council, Forests NSW and NSW Police relating to i) illegal hunting and ii) licenced hunters not complying with the code of practice, on public land in 2005/06?

Response

I am advised that Game Council NSW receives allegations of illegal hunting from time to time but does not have a centralised system to record these.

Game Council NSW is responsible for administering the code of practice. It advises it has received one complaint about a licensed hunter and this hunter was found not to have breached the code of practice.

The request for information on complaints received by NSW Police should be referred to the Minister for Police.

- 378.** How much money did the Game Council pay in salary and other expenses to its Game Managers in 2005/06?

Response

\$356,125

- 379.** How many feral animals were reported wounded and killed on PUBLIC land by R-licenced hunters in 2005/06? To what extent have these figures been verified by Game Council or Forests NSW staff?

Response

Hunter returns provide information on animals taken and seen. There is no requirement to verify these figures. Game Council NSW advises that the number of feral animals reported in hunter returns from the commencement of conservation hunting on declared public land in March 2006 to July 2006 were:

- Total number of animals taken: 647
- Total number of animals reported seen: 4,990

- 380.** How many studies did the Game Council undertake and/or commission to monitor the ACTUAL impact on the environment of feral animal hunting on public land in 2005/06 and how much money did the Game Council spend on such monitoring studies in 2005/06?

Response

The Game Council has not undertaken studies or spent funds but is collating information provided by hunters along with any assessments undertaken by other agencies including Forests NSW.

- 381.** How many access permits were issued in 2005/06 by the Game Council

and/or Forests NSW for hunters to hunt on public land on a FOREST BY FOREST BASIS?

Response

Forest Name	Number of permits issued	Forest Name	Number of permits issued
Awaba State Forest	4	Massey's Creek	1
Bago State Forest	25	McPherson State Forest	14
Ballengarra State Forest	6	Micalong State Forest	1
Barrington Tops	4	Mount Boss State Forest	8
Billapaloola State Forest	2	Mullions Range State Forest	29
Binya State Forest	3	Nana Creek	2
Bondi State Forest	7	Nowendoc State Forest	4
Bondo State Forest	12	Nundle State Forest	88
Boonoo State Forest	2	Olney State Forest	6
Buckingbong	19	Orara East State Forest	4
Bulahdelah State Forest	1	Pennsylvania State Forest	103
Bulga State Forest	15	Pokolbin State Forest	8
Bungongo State Forest	3	Putty State Forest	23
Butterleaf State Forest	2	Red Hill State Forest	9
Canobolas State Forest	8	Riamukka State Forest	29
Carabost State Forest	18	Roseberg State Forest	8
Corrabare State Forest	8	Tallaganda State Forest	36
Currowan State Forest	14	Tamban State Forest	2
Doubleduke State Forest	4	Tomalla State Forest	1
Doyles River State Forest	1	Torrington State Forest	3
Enfield State Forest	2	Tumut State Forest	1
Forestland State Forest	2	Watagan State Forest	11
Gibberagee State Forest	1	Wee Jasper State Forest	1
Girard State Forest	2	Whiporie State Forest	2
Glenbog State Forest	43	Yadboro State Forest	19
Glenwood State Forest	4	Yambulla State Forest	12
Grahway State Forest	13	Yarrat State Forest	1
Maragle State Forest	34	Yathong State Forest	3

382. How much money was spent by Forests NSW in 2005/06 in capital and staff costs in terms of:

A) preparing reports, plans and maps to meet Game Council scheme requirements

Response

Forests NSW advises that this is not separately costed in Forest NSW accounts.

B) installing signs and other infrastructure to meet Game Council scheme requirements

Response

Forests NSW advises that this is not separately costed in Forest NSW accounts.

C) monitoring compliance of hunters in state forests

Response

Forests NSW advises that no funds were spent in capital and staff costs monitoring compliance of licensed hunters in state forests

D) monitoring the actual impact of the Game Council's hunting scheme in state forests

Response

Forests NSW advises that no funds were spent in capital and staff costs monitoring the impact of Game Council's hunting scheme in state forests

E) dealing with wounded animals or carcasses left in state forests by Hunters

Response

Forests NSW advises that no funds were spent in capital and staff costs dealing with wounded animals or carcasses left in state forests by Hunters

State Forests

383. Have FNSW been involved in logging or sourcing timber from private property in northern NSW to meet Crown supply commitments over the last three years?

Response

Yes.

384. If so, what volume of timber have FNSW sourced from private land each year over that period?

Response

An estimated 235,700 m³ of sawlogs have been accessed since 1999.

385. Under what set of rules or prescriptions were these lands logged? Were they logged under the same standards as those for public lands, or inferior standards?

Response

Harvest operations on private property conducted under Timber Purchase Agreements as part of the Upper and Lower North East Regional Forest Agreements were conducted in accordance with the *Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997*, or the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

386. Were any of these private lands logged under the exemption to the Native Vegetation Conservation Act 1997 or the later Native Vegetation Act 2003?

Response

Yes. All operations under the exemption were conducted in accordance with the draft best operating standards for private native forests issued under the *Native Vegetation Act 2003*.

387. If so, what area of vegetation was logged, and what volume of timber obtained by FNSW, from private land logged under this exemption?

Response

A total of 8.5 hectares of private property has been harvested under the exemption yielding 880 cubic metres of sawlogs.

Forests NSW

388. What area of rainforest, old growth forest, endangered ecological communities and wilderness were logged on private lands from which FNSW sourced timber over the last 3 years?

ANSWER

None

389. Does the Minister agree that there is a blatant and unacceptable conflict of interest with him being responsible for one agency that regulates logging on private land and another that conducts logging on, or sources logs from, private land?

ANSWER

No

390. Isn't this yet another example of the conflict of interest between gamekeeper and poacher that the Minister has, where with one hat he is meant to be regulating and with the other he is extracting as fast as possible?

ANSWER

No. The harvesting of timber on crown lands and private lands is regulated such that the operations are ecologically and economically sustainable in the long term.

391. Will the Minister relinquish one or the other of these portfolios?

ANSWER

No

- 392.** What area of forests affected by, or at risk of, Bell Miner Associated Dieback have FNSW logged in northern NSW over the last 12 months?

Response

It is not possible to scientifically predict which forests may be “at risk of” being affected by Bell Miner Associated Dieback.

- 393.** Given the grave threat that BMAD and its rapid spread throughout the forests of northern NSW now poses to forest health and future timber production, will you put in place a moratorium on logging of areas affected by, or at risk of, BMAD?

Response

Forests NSW advises that its Ecologically Sustainable Forest Management plans make specific reference to the need to address chronic decline in native forests which may result or has resulted from long term environmental changes affecting the forests. Bell Miner Associated Dieback is one of the forms of forest decline being addressed by the Plans.

The extent of Bell Miner Associated Dieback occurring on the Forests NSW estate on the north coast does not constitute grounds to review wood volume estimates.

I believe it would be irresponsible to invoke a moratorium on timber harvesting, with the consequent loss of employment and resource, when there is no proven link between harvesting history and forest decline.

- 394.** Is the Minister aware that the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals signed in 1999 for Eden and Upper and Lower North East NSW and the NSW Forest Agreements were required to be reviewed within 5 years?

Response

Yes.

- 395.** Given that such a review is now 2 years overdue, when does the NSW Government plan to announce the terms of the review? Given that the Resource and Conservation Division of the Department of Urban Affairs and Planning is now defunct, who will be conducting the review?

Response

This question should be directed to the Premier, since I understand the policy functions of the former Resource and Conservation Division of the Department of Urban Affairs have been transferred to the Premier’s Department.

- 396.** As per those agreements and approvals mentioned above, has FNSW prepared management plans for large areas of rainforest, high

conservation value old growth and other areas excluded by prescription been completed?

Response

Draft Model Plans for the management of informal reserves are currently being reviewed by the regulating agencies. Once approved, FNSW will use the Model Plans to prepare the management plans for the areas to which you refer.

- 397.** When was the Wood Supply Agreement with South East Fibre Exports last amended or renewed?

Response

1999.

- 398.** How long is the agreement to last and what volume of woodchips is to be exported from the Eden region and the Southern region of NSW State Forests?

Response

20 years, commencing in 1999. The quantities will vary year to year based on the amount of residues produced from sawlog production and from scheduled thinning of regrowth stands to improve forest health and growth rates. An average of approximately 350,000 to 375,000 tonnes pa may be expected.

Farmers and El Nino

- 399.** How much money will be set aside by the Government to assist farmers to survive this next El Nino?

Response

The NSW Government has committed \$6.3 million to drought assistance until 30 November 2006, including funding of Drought Support Workers until 31 December 2006. Under the NSW Greenhouse Plan, DPI will fund a 3 year project to the value of \$1 million which will provide advice for improved management under conditions of climate variability.

- 400.** Is the average farmer in debt to the tune of \$400,000 to \$500,000?

Response

The Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics estimates that the average farm debt for broad-acre farms in NSW was \$177,900 in 2005-06. This is a decrease from \$238,160 in 2004-05.

- 401.** What will your government do to assist farmers caught in this debt trap to leave the land in marginal areas?

Response

The NSW Government either supports or provides the following programs to assist farmers in their management decision making:

- Rural Financial Counsellors;

- Drought Support Workers;
- Profarm (courses tailored to management skills);
- Exceptional Circumstances assistance; and
- the Farm Debt Mediation Act.

Marine Parks

- 402.** What public statements have been made and what materials have been produced by the Minister and the Department to promote the benefits of marine parks in regional communities and what statements and materials will be made in the next six months?

Response

The Marine Parks Authority has produced and distributed well over 100,000 brochures, pamphlets and zoning plan submission forms which promote the benefits of marine parks.

The Marine Parks Authority also maintains an active website www.mpa.nsw.gov.au that provides the goals, benefits and planning process and research associated with NSW marine parks. Recently a scientific summary paper detailing the benefits of marine parks was placed on the website.

Over 150 meetings have taken place at Port Stephens, likewise many meetings have taken place in the Batemans Bay area. These meetings are held at various locations and times to suit the community. The benefits of marine parks inter alia were discussed at these meetings.

Refer also to response to question 148.

- 403.** Has the Department costed the economic benefits resulting from the environmental and social gains that will arise as a result of implementing the marine parks?

Response

Yes. Estimates have been prepared that predicted overall positive outcomes. Government practice is to ensure costs and benefits are considered in making decisions that affect the community.

Grey Nurse Shark

- 404.** With the NSW Government acknowledging that the Grey Nurse Shark is a critically endangered species with fewer than 500 sharks remaining off the east coast why is the government not using the current Batemans and Port Stephens – Great Lakes Marine Parks commercial fisheries buy-out process to provide marine sanctuaries around all six key habitat areas in the marine parks, as recommended by the CSIRO Dr John Stevens report?

Response

The proposed zoning plans for the Port Stephens-Great Lakes and Batemans Marine Parks include significant sanctuary zones for all major grey nurse critical habitat sites that occur within the parks' boundaries.

The NSW Government is also reviewing the protection of grey nurse sharks and is taking a number of other steps to assist with the recovery of the east coast population including the recent establishment of a large sanctuary zone at the Julian Rocks critical habitat site and the development of a world-first breeding program.

- 405.** Will the Government increase expenditure to ensure the protection of these key habitat areas and the long term viability of the Grey Nurse Shark?

Response

Additional investment through the Marine Parks program will address protection of key habitat areas and the long term viability of the Grey Nurse Shark.

Mineral Resources

- 406.** A second mining lease over Leard State Forest is currently held by Namoi Valley Coal Pty Ltd, but the mine has not yet commenced operations?

Response

I am advised that Department of Primary Industries records indicate that one mining lease is held by Namoi Valley Coal Pty Ltd and part of the lease area includes a portion of Leard State Forest. Mining operations have not commenced.

- 407.** What year was the Environmental Impact Statement conducted for that mine?

Response

Department records indicate the Environmental Impact Statement was dated September 1989.

- 408.** What year was the development approval given for that mine?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning. However I am advised that the year was 1990.

- 409.** What area of native vegetation is proposed to be cleared for open-cut coal mining by this mine?

Response

The Mining Operations Plan would indicate this. No Mining Operations Plan has been received by the Department of Primary Industries for this lease area.

410. Will the Minister now ensure that a new Environmental Impact Statement is required prior to commencement of the Namoi Valley Coal mine over Leard State Forest, given the outstanding conservation values of the area and the imperative to assess it properly in the context of the major legislative changes that have occurred over the last decade?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

411. What consultation has taken place with indigenous communities in relation to these two mines?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

412. What, if any, offsets are these two mines proposing to implement?

Response

This issue falls under the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Planning.

Natural Resources

413. Are you aware that Forests NSW is targeting dead and dying stands of Red Gum for so-called salvage logging in the Riverina?

Response

There are many densely stocked stands with stressed and dying trees in the State forests of south western NSW, due to severe soil moisture deficits associated with the prolonged drought. Where permissible under Department of Environment and Conservation licences, Forests NSW may remove some of the stressed trees in an attempt to keep at least a core of standing trees alive by reducing competition for moisture. In addition, very often coppice will grow from the stumps of felled trees thereby perpetuating the genetics of that tree but with drastically reduced moisture demand on the site. Coppice eventually grows into large trees off the stump.

414. Given that other States have Red Gum Rescue Packages in place to try to prevent or ameliorate dieback of Red Gum, how can Forests NSW justify this targeted destruction of extremely stressed Red Gum stands?

Response

Harvest plans for all tree removal operations are checked by the Department of Environment and Conservation and licences authorising the operations are issued, if approved. Before or during approved

harvesting operations, Forests NSW may identify trees within the harvest area that are stressed and unhealthy because of the extended drought.

- 415.** Can you give an assurance that this archaic practice will now stop immediately?

Response

Harvesting red gum sawlogs from among these stressed trees is permitted, subject to the licence issued by the Department of Environment and Conservation for the approved operation.

- 416.** Are you aware that the volume of Red Gum timber logged in NSW is 10 times as much as that logged in Victoria? And that almost all of the Red Gum timber produced in NSW goes to Victoria or South Australia?

Response

No. I am aware that some Red Gum is sold in Victoria and South Australia.

- 417.** Do you admit that NSW is in effect destroying its precious Red Gum wetlands to meet the ill-considered and unsustainable demands of other States?

Response

No. Wetlands on State forests in NSW, whether they have Red Gum present or other species, are excluded from timber harvesting or protected by environmental prescriptions.

Natural Resources Staffing

- 418. With the latest restructure of the Department of Natural Resources:**

a) How many agency staff members are still available with expertise in:

- i) Groundwater science and aquifer interference**
- ii) Cumulative impacts of surface water interference**
- iii) Water quality monitoring**

b) How many of these staff members are available in the coalfield regions of NSW?

c) How many staff members are available to give expert advice in interagency committees reviewing:

- i) subsidence management plans**
- ii) focus planning meetings for new mine proposals**
- iii) reviewing environmental assessment reports for new proposals**

ANSWER:

The Department has more than 25 officers with particular skills in groundwater science, surface water movement, water quality monitoring, environmental assessment and consultation. These officers are located in all the mining areas of the State, with substantial concentration in the Hunter Valley, the focal point of the coal mining industry.

The Department also has substantial numbers of technical staff with specialist skills in its Science and Information Division.

419 What monitoring does the Department of Natural Resources undertake of the cumulative impacts of mining in catchments?

ANSWER

Refer to answer to 418

420 What commitment from the NSW government to undertake rigorous regional water studies before approving new, varied or extended coal mining proposals across the coalfield regions?

ANSWER:

The Minister for Planning is the consent authority for major mining developments. All new, modified and extended proposals would be thoroughly assessed through the Government's planning assessment and approvals regime for major projects. Proposals which have an unacceptable impact will not be approved.

421. What commitment is there from the NSW Government to undertake rigorous monitoring of the current impacts of coal mining on water sources and the effectiveness of rehabilitation programs?

ANSWER:

The NSW Government has a Whole-of-Government approach to monitoring the environmental impacts of coal mining. This involves the Department of Planning issuing project approvals; the Department of Environment and Conservation supervising Environment Protection Licences and the Department of Natural Resources monitoring groundwater impacts.

422. Did the Invasive Native Scrub PVP at a property near Ivanhoe facilitate the clearing of 27.600 hectares of native vegetation?

ANSWER:

A PVP approving 27,633.9 ha of invasive native vegetation management was agreed to between a landholder in the Ivanhoe area and the Western Catchment Management Authority.

423. If not, how many hectares of native scrub were permitted to be cleared with this PVP?

ANSWER:

Refer to Answer to 422.

424. Is the Menindee Lakes water system one of the most wasteful in the country, wasting some 450 gigalitres a year through evaporation?

ANSWER:

While Menindee Lakes exhibits high evaporation, the Lakes are a very important strategic part of the Murray Darling System. As well as meeting NSW obligations to supply South Australia, the Menindee Lakes storages provide water in NSW for urban water supplies (both Menindee and Broken Hill), industrial supplies, stock and domestic supplies, irrigation of high value crops such as cotton, table grapes and stone fruit and for the environment.

425. When do you intend to introduce a scheme to reduce these unacceptable losses?

ANSWER:

The Government intends to start implementing the findings of the strategic review from the second half of 2007.