



The Hon Katrina Hodgkinson MP

Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Small Business

Mr Stewart Smith
Director of Budget Estimates
Room 812, Legislative Council
Parliament House, Macquarie Street
Sydney, NSW, 2000

5 SEP 2013

Dear Mr Smith,

Please find attached responses to the questions on notice and supplementary questions asked at the Budget Estimates Hearing 2013-14 on Monday 12 August for my portfolios of Primary Industries and Small Business.

Yours Sincerely,

Katrina Hodgkinson MP
Minister for Primary Industries
Minister for Small Business

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013-2014

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5

PRIMARY INDUSTRIES, SMALL BUSINESS

Monday 12 August 2013

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

QUESTIONS FROM HEARING

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Question from the Hon. Steve Whan MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Do your staff actually go out into the field and inspect these areas?

Mr ALLAN: Not all of the time. Sometimes they do.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Is the department being reimbursed for the work it is putting into that—

that is, the cost of the staff time—through the sale process?

Mr ALLAN: No.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Can you give us an estimate of how much staff time has been involved in that process, particularly since the Government took the decision to speed up the processing of Crown land sales? Perhaps you will have to take that question on notice.

Mr ALLAN: Maybe I should take that on notice.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Yes, I am happy for you to take that on notice.

ANSWER

Historically there has been approximately half the time of a position (clerk 6/8) involved in the process. Since the process has been accelerated, an additional, dedicated full-time position (clerk 3/4) has been employed to assist in the process. For the next twelve months, there will be an ongoing commitment of one full time position (clerk 3/4) plus half of the time of a position (clerk 6/8).

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Question from the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Thank you. Are there more people employed in the sector now than there were in 2008?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: We do not have the 2008-specific figure, but today it is 65,716 employed in agriculture and services. That is compared to 2011.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: So you do not know if there are more people employed this year in the agricultural sector than last year? Is there a decreasing trend or an increasing trend in that sector?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Up by 5,000. Mr Bullen would like to make a comment.

Mr BULLEN: Mr Buckingham, I think we will take that question on notice, but one of the things that needs to be considered around this is that during the period from 2000 to 2010 there was a major drought that impacted on agricultural product production. Therefore, there may well have been an increase here, depending on when one takes the commencement of statistics. I would like to take that question on notice and we will come back to you in relation to that one.

ANSWER

Agricultural employment is particularly sensitive to seasonal conditions, and as one of the most significant droughts on record occurred during the last decade, significant variability in NSW agricultural employment is to be expected.

Census data provide the most detailed estimates of employment in the NSW agricultural industry, but are only available every five years.

The ABS provides quarterly labour force estimates (ABS Cat. No. 6291.0.55.003, Labour Force, Australia, Detailed, Quarterly). These estimates are volatile because they are based on surveys, but taking the average quarterly estimate across each financial year yields the following estimate of agricultural employment in NSW (in thousands):

2007-08	80.15
2008-09	79.18
2009-10	87.43
2010-11	87.81
2011-12	70.17
2012-13	76.36

Agricultural employment in NSW therefore rose by around six thousand between 2011-12 and 2012-13, but is now at a level around four thousand lower than 2007-08.

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Question from the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Minister, what is the salary of the Land and Water Commissioner and what is the total budget for that office?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: It is a very specific question. I have it here.

Dr SHELDRAKE: It is a Senior Executive Service position that Mr Laurie holds. The budget is managed through the Office of Agricultural Sustainability and Food Security. It is a relatively small budget. The Commissioner reports directly to Mark Paterson but we can take that on notice and give you the expenditure allocated to Mr Laurie's salary and the functions that he carries out.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: I add to that: The Commission's office is a small team. The Commissioner has dedicated clerical support, but for broader support can and has called on the NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer, the Division of Resources and Energy, the Office of Coal Seam Gas, the NSW Department of Primary Industries, Agriculture NSW, the Office of Agricultural Sustainability and Food Security, the NSW Environment Protection Authority and the Department of Planning and Infrastructure. The office's budget in 2012-13 was \$1.56 million plus \$4.78 million in project funds. The projected budget for 2013-14 is \$1.8 million plus \$3.6 million in project funds.

ANSWER

The Land and Water Commissioner's position has been established at a Senior Executive Service Level 3 position with a salary package applicable to that classification and appropriately pro-rated for 4 days per week which is the current working arrangement. In 2013/14, \$345,000 has been allocated for salary, clerical support and travel related costs associated with the Commissioner's role and office.

Budget requirements will be monitored throughout the year with sufficient budget made available for the Commissioner to undertake the role in an effective manner.

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Question from the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: In terms of the agricultural impact statements that you alluded to, how many agricultural impact statements has the department provided advice on since their introduction in November 2011?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: We will take that on notice.

ANSWER

Since 2011, the Office of Agricultural Sustainability & Food Security has provided advice to the Department of Planning and Infrastructure or the Division of Resources and Energy on Agricultural Impact Statements from 100 submissions on state significant development or exploratory activities relating to mining or coal seam gas developments.

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Question from the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Based on the agricultural impact statements, on how many occasions has the department given advice that the project that the agricultural impact statement is being prepared in relation to, should not proceed?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

As per the NSW Government's Agricultural Impact Statement guidelines, that were developed in consultation with the Agricultural Reference Group, the Office of Agricultural Sustainability and Food Security, with support from Agriculture NSW provides advice to the relevant approval authority, either the Department of Planning and Infrastructure or the Division of Resources and Energy. That advice is on whether, in light of the value of the agricultural resources and enterprises impacted and the nature of those impacts, the impacts are unacceptable and should be avoided. The submissions are reviewed in detail. Responses either indicate that the Office sees no issues with the proposal as submitted; or raises issues with specific information provided or specific impacts; and or recommends suggested conditions be placed on the approval, rather than recommending that a proposal should not proceed.

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Question from the Hon. Jeremy Buckingham MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: What is the total budget for the Wild Dog Destruction Board?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Just one moment. We have notes.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: Has there been a net increase or decrease in funding? If so, why?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: We will have to take the question about the total budget on notice, I think.

The Hon. JEREMY BUCKINGHAM: I am quite happy for you to take that on notice.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: I will refer to the Director General for a moment.

Dr SHELDRAKE: I do not have the total budget for this year, but it is self-funding and based on the properties serviced by the Wild Dog Destruction Board. We will be able to provide you the information required. We will take it on notice.

ANSWER

The annual budget for the Wild Dog Destruction Board is \$1.89 million. A base funding level of \$200,000 is provided annually by the Government, and this has not changed since 1993. The balance of the funding is sourced from levies on landholders in the Western Division whose properties exceed 1,000 hectares in size, with an annual rate set by the Board at 4.5 cents per hectare. This rate has not altered since 2005.

Throughout the extended period of drought from 2003 to 2011, the levies on landholders were waived either partially or fully as part of broader drought assistance measures.

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Question from the Hon. Steve Whan MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Minister, what response did you make to representation from the member for Bega earlier this year regarding forest corporation charges for groups such as the Bermagui Dirtsurfers Mountain Bike Club and other not-for-profit mountain bike and cycling clubs?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Thanks for the question. I get many representations from the member for Bega. I will seek further information on that one, unless Mr Roberts would like to make a contribution.

Mr ROBERTS: We get a number of applications from different kinds of organisations, be they charitable organisations or schools. We have a set schedule of fees for different kinds of organisations. Where there is a charitable organisation, we will endeavour to allow those people to access and use the forest for free. Where there are larger groups and somewhat more complicated arrangements we endeavour to cover the cost of our administration.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: What is the fee for the Bermagui Dirtsurfers Mountain Bike Club going to be in 2013/2014 and are you aware it has gone up by 300 per cent in the past few years?

Mr ROBERTS: I do not know the figure as at today. I can take the question on notice. In respect of an increase, I would suggest that relates to the fact that on previous occasions when they have used the forest we have probably given them a holiday on the rental or the access fees and they would have gone up.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: According to the club it has received significant increases in the annual fee over a number of years. It is now up to more than \$1,200 a year from next year. Do you think that is fair for a not-for-profit mountain bike club that does its own maintenance?

Mr ROBERTS: I think that we have to recover our cost of administration. We have to recover our cost of making sure that the event can be safe for the numbers of people involved.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: It is not a specific event. This is an annual usage charge for them to have a track in the forest.

Mr ROBERTS: I would have to take the question on notice in respect of the amount that we are charging them and get back to you.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Minister, do you think it is reasonable that not-for-profit cycling clubs and mountain bike clubs are seeing such steep increases in their annual fees? Is that something you feel is a good way to encourage recreational activity?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Forestry Corp is entitled to set its fees. It does try to exercise cost recovery like a good corporation should. In an ideal world, we would be able to hand out everything for free, employ millions of people and provide everything for nothing but, of course, we have to be accountable to the taxpayer as Forestry Corporation has to be accountable to its board. It would be setting its fees in accordance with its own policy for cost recovery, I am sure.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Minister, these groups undertake the maintenance of their tracks themselves with volunteer labour. Is that something you are willing to go back and look at and ask the Forestry Corporation to justify those fees for you?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Mr Roberts has just committed to taking the question on notice and to provide additional information.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Through us, I would like you to let those groups know that you will take a personal interest in making sure that you think those fees are fair.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: We have already said that we will take the question on notice.

ANSWER

The Forestry Corporation of NSW's (FCNSW) permit fees cover the cost of administration, consultation and site visits required to manage the social and environmental impact of activities, infrastructure management, and asset depreciation and land tax costs where applicable. FCNSW's Recreation and Tourism Policy 2010-2014 sets out standard state-wide conditions for issuing permits and annual fees for facilities. The fee structure for not-for-profit groups is based on cost recovery.

Bermagui Dirtsurfers Mountain Bike Club's fees are in line with this policy. In recognition of local conditions and the club's resources, FCNSW has offered grace periods in the past, waiving the permit fee completely during 2012 when the club completed track modifications during a nearby harvesting operation and adopting a reduced rate for the fees during 2013.

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Question from the Hon. Adam Searle MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Let us cut to the chase. I want to raise a particular instance of a company called Honest Tea.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Let me just say before you do, that the dispute resolution unit so far has received more than 10,000 calls and emails from small businesses accessing the advisory service.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I want to raise the particular example—

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Yes, one of the 10,000.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:—of Honest Tea, and I note that the proprietor, Annabel Braithwaite-Young, is actually in the room with us today. This company is having some difficulty with a larger commercial enterprise called Coca-Cola. Honest Tea contacted the Office of the Small Business Commissioner in December and again in January. Despite

the passage of eight months, the Office of the Small Business Commissioner has not been able to arrange any low-cost mediation. Can you explain why that is the case?

ANSWER

The dispute resolution service provided through the Office of the Small Business Commissioner creates an opportunity for willing parties to resolve disputes pre-litigation.

It was not, and is not designed to mediate dispute post the commencement of litigation.

In the case of Teavolution Pty Ltd (and the trademark dispute over 'Honest Tea') the OSBC accepted an offer to pursue in January 2013. Despite numerous offers to participate in mediation, Coca-Cola formal refusal to participate in mediation was received on 6 May.

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Question from the Hon. Adam Searle MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Why has clause 18 of the bill, which gives the commissioner the power to compel people to attend mediation, not been brought into effect? If there are procedures and things that need to be done, what are they? What is holding it up?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: I have answered the question.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: No, give us a straight answer. You just waffled, Minister. You said procedures need to take place. What are they? Name them.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: It takes time for things to commence. It just does.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: What things?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: Whatever it is.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: You are a Minister of the Crown and we are asking you why you have not brought into effect a piece of legislation for which you are responsible. You say, "Things need to be done."

What things? Can you name them?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: I am sure the Office of the Small Business Commissioner is working through the bill at the moment to make sure that they have the right staff in place to undertake the procedures necessary. I am also very confident that the 1,852 disputes that the unit has handled so far is an admirable figure. To be able to informally mediate 80 per cent of those matters at no cost to the parties is an extraordinarily good outcome. **In relation to the Coca-Cola matter that you have here, I will take that question on notice.** But I really think that they are doing an outstanding job in that area overall.

ANSWER

Mediation is a process where willing parties discuss the issue between them. The parties were invited to participate in the process and the invitation was declined by Coca-Cola.

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Question from the Hon. Adam Searle MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Minister, apart from these mysterious things that need to be done, can you list them—things that are holding up the legislation?

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: The Small Business Commissioner just mentioned the Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal [SOORT] process.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: It takes three months to get a Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal determination.

Ms KATRINA HODGKINSON: That is one. I can take the question on notice.

ANSWER

Under the legislation, the power to fine parties that do not agree to mediation resides with the Small Business Commissioner.

There are four steps in the process of appointing the Small Business Commissioner as an Independent Statutory Officer.

- (1) An independent review of the appropriate remuneration for the position must be completed;
- (2) This review must be considered by the Statutory and other Officers Remuneration Tribunal (SOORT) and approved by the Premier;
- (3) A candidate for the position is put to Cabinet for their consideration/approval; and
- (4) The Small Business Commissioner would then be appointed by the Governor.

At this point, The Parliamentary Counsel is then notified that the Act has been proclaimed by the Governor, therefore enabling Parliamentary Counsel to make the Act law.

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Question from the Hon. Adam Searle MLC during hearing and taken on notice

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: Last year the panel mediators were only those people who had previously been engaged in connection with the retail tenancies unit. I think your evidence was that as the needs of the unit were changing, you would be engaging people with other skills outside the retail tenancies area. Can you update the Committee on what you have done in that area?

Ms KING: The director of our dispute resolution manages this process, and we have people who come to us identifying that they have particular expertise in small business or particular areas that are relevant to matters that we handle and that they have mediation training. We then put them through a process and examine whether they are able to mediate. We co-mediate with them and observe them. If suitable, they are utilised where appropriate. We have increased the number beyond what existed previously.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: How many were there and how many are there in the mediation space?

Ms KING: I would need to take that on notice as to how many mediators, but I established before I came today with the director of dispute resolution whether we had additional mediators on board and she indicated yes.

ANSWER

At the end of the 2011-12 financial year there were 26 mediators.

At the end of the 2012-13 financial year there were 35 mediators.

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The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: I think that the Minister indicated there had been 1,800 mediations in the past year, or thereabouts. Is that correct?

Ms KING: That is informal and formal.

The Hon. ADAM SEARLE: What is the breakdown? I am happy for you to come back.

Ms KING: I am happy to give that information to you on notice. I prefer to take that question on notice to give you the accurate breakdown.

ANSWER

Applications for 1852 disputes were received during 2012-13.

Total number of applications - 1852

Total number of applications for formal mediations - 350

Total number of applications for informal mediations – 1502

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Primary Industries

Hudson Pear cactus

The Western CMA has recently alerted the government to Hudson's Pear outbreaks in Broken Hill and the flood plains around Nyngan. The \$11m to control noxious weeds to improve agricultural productivity and protect the environment as outlined in BP3 p 8-5 is the same as in previous years.

1. What specific budget has been allocated to funding the control and eradication of the Hudson Pear cactus?

ANSWER

Funding through the \$10.8 Million NSW Weeds Action Program is given to regional partners to deliver regionally prioritised weed control. Hudson pear has been identified as a *Weed of National Significance* and therefore may attract specific federal funding. The NSW Government has invested \$256 000 in bio-control research for 2013-15 and is currently assessing the control agent cochineal.

2. What control measures and programs are in place, and which body is responsible for coordinating them?

ANSWER

Hudson pear is a class 4 noxious weed across NSW. The control measure is: *The growth of the plant must be managed in a manner that reduces its numbers spread and incidence and continuously inhibits its reproduction and the plant must not be sold propagated or knowingly distributed.* Local Government is the local control authority under the Noxious Weeds Act and therefore responsible for compliance activities.

3. In regards to the potential spread of Hudson pear by opal mining operators around the Lightning Ridge area:
 - a. Is it a licence requirement of opal miners to prevent the spread of noxious weeds, such as the Hudson Pear cactus? If yes, how is it being enforced? If not, why not?
 - b. Are there driver/operator training programs aimed at preventing the spread of Hudson Pear via mining equipment?
 - c. When will your government implement the recommendations of the Wilcox Report?

ANSWER

- a. Lease holders are required to pay a security bond which stipulates that Noxious Weeds must be controlled. This is enforced.
- b. There have been awareness campaigns conducted to educate drivers of the risk of weed transfer. Signage is also in place at the entrance and exit of all mining areas. Vehicle cleanliness advice is available on the NSW DPI website.
- c. Part 103 of the Wilcox report (referring to the transfer of invasive weed seed by vehicles) has been acknowledged as a recognised vector for weed spread. The NSW Government has sought amendments to the *Noxious Weeds Act 1993* through the 2011 statutory review (of the Act) to allow for

the regulation of mining drilling rigs and support vehicles where necessary. The general government response to the Wilcox report is available at: http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0007/473029/Wilcox-Report-Final-Government-Response.pdf

4. Is the \$30m referenced in the Minister's press release (18 June) for "new catchment action funding" ¹ http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/469760/strengthen-primary-industries.pdf simply a rebadging of existing money from DPI being transferred to OEHL (BP3 p.8-12)?

ANSWER

The \$30 million referenced in the press release dated 18 June refers to new Catchment Action funding for 2013-14. These funds are not a rebadging of existing money and are a new allocation from the Waste and Environmental Levy.

5. What were these funds used for previously as Minister Parker's press release ² <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/resources/MinMedia/MinMedia13061801.pdf> says they are to be used for "natural resource management, including threatened species, aboriginal culture and native vegetation"?

ANSWER

The funds are a new allocation from the Waste and Environment Levy collected on behalf of the Government by the Environment Protection Authority (EPA). The Minister responsible for the EPA is Minister Parker.

6. What is the purpose of moving these funds?

ANSWER

These funds have not been moved and are a new allocation from the Waste and Environment Levy.

7. How will future funding allocations be identified if OEHL is not listed under the premier and cabinet cluster?

ANSWER

For 2013-14 the \$30 million forms part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet's budget paper 3 Regional Operations and Heritage – Grants and Subsidies allocation of \$344 million.

Future Catchment Action funding allocations for the remaining three years of the NSW Government's four year Catchment Action investment will be included in Grants and Subsidies allocations for those years.

Pests – feral pigs

8. It has been widely reported that feral pig numbers are on the increase, because of a boom in the population cycle due to the rain earlier in the year. BP3 p.7-6 shows \$38m to manage pest animals which appears to be similar to previous year's commitments. What resources, personnel, and research services have been made available to monitor and control feral pigs in NSW?

ANSWER

On 21 August 2013 the Minister for Primary Industries Katrina Hodgkinson announced the establishment of the Tamworth Regional Feral Pig Taskforce to assist with the effective management and control of feral pigs. A pilot program will begin on the Liverpool Plains and if successful will be rolled out across other regions in NSW. The pilot program will seek to develop and implement an innovative cross-tenure campaign that involves all relevant local agencies and landholders in its development and delivery and is based on utilising existing resources in a co-ordinated manner.

9. The \$4.8m to support biosecurity programs in BP3 p.8-6 is the same as previous years. Given the rapidly expanding wild pig numbers what monitoring of *Brucella suis* will occur in the coming year?

ANSWER

Existing resources in Department of Primary Industries, the Catchment Management Authority, the Livestock, Health and Pest Authority, State Forests, National Parks and Wildlife Services and other agencies, together with private lease holding is adequate to monitor and report feral pig numbers.

10. Why were submissions concerning the abolition of the Snowy Scientific Committee and the establishment of a Snowy Advisory Committee not made public?

ANSWER

A total of 28 submissions were received and all were thoroughly reviewed. The content of many of the submissions was much the same. There was no undertaking given that the submissions would be made public, however the Office of Water will publish a synopsis of the submissions on its website.

11. Can the Minister confirm that releases scheduled to take place from Guthega dam in 2007/08 and from below Island Bend dam in 2009/10 to replenish the montane sections of the upper Snowy River above Jindabyne dam have not taken place?
- a. If so, can the Minister provide an explanation as to why?

ANSWER

The Snowy Water Inquiry Outcomes Implementation Deed (SWIOD) requires environmental water to be delivered to five locations in the Snowy Montane rivers. The water recovery target under the SWIOD of 212 gigalitres for the Snowy River was achieved by the joint enterprise Water for Rivers in July 2012. For a number of years prior to this during the extended drought, the need to secure water for basic

human needs and critical industries prevented the allocation of water to the recovered water entitlements, and hence delivery of water to the montane rivers.

The three partner governments of NSW, Victoria and the Commonwealth, in association with Snowy Hydro Ltd, have been developing a strategy for environmental releases to the Snowy Montane rivers. Environmental water is now being released to four of the five nominated sites under the SWI/OID on an ongoing basis, namely, the Murrumbidgee River below Tantangara Dam; the Goodradigbee River below Goodradigbee Weir; the Geehi River via Middle Creek Weir; and the Snowy River between Guthega and Jindabyne dams.

The allocation to the fifth location (Snowy River in the Perisher Range) is currently being discussed between the NSW Office of Water and Snowy Hydro Ltd. The implementation of environmental water delivery in the upper reaches of the Snowy system is complex as there are multiple locations that require infrastructure works in order to release the desired yields to maximise environmental outcomes.

12. Can the Minister confirm that releases to the Snowy River below Island Bend Dam will be occurring in the 2013-14 year?
- a. If so, how much will be released?

ANSWER

Releases to the Snowy River between Island Bend and Jindabyne Dam commenced in May 2013. The releases are occurring from weirs on Tolbar and Diggers creeks, just downstream of Island Bend

- a. The yield from these sources will deliver, on average, 18.9 gigitalitres per annum to the Snowy River. While this is less than the prescribed 29 gigitalitres that was to be delivered from Gulgarlin weir, it results in an additional 5 kilometres of the Snowy River being watered, than if the releases were to have occurred from Gungarlin. The remaining 10 gigitalitres is currently allocated to the upper Murrumbidgee River below Tantangara.

13. Given that the ACCC has severely criticised the Australian Egg Corporation's attempt to register free-range standards with stocking densities of up to 20,000 chickens per hectare, as violating consumer expectations, will the Minister:
- a. Move to legislate the standards of stocking densities in NSW, or
 - b. Approach the appropriate Ministerial council to work towards national stocking standards, or
 - c. Do nothing while free-range consumers continue to be deceived?

ANSWER

- a. Stocking densities are already legislated in NSW. *The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Regulation 2012* specifies the maximum densities for laying fowl in both cage and non-cage housing systems. These densities are consistent with the national Model Code for the Welfare of Animals – Poultry (Fourth Edition).
- b. The National Model Code for the Welfare of Animals – Poultry (Fourth Edition) is being reviewed by a working group of the Standing Council on Primary Industries, to ensure that it delivers the intended outcomes. The Legislative and

Governance Forum on Consumer Affairs has also discussed food labelling issues.

- c. The model code sets out the nationally agreed standards for the welfare of poultry; however consumers may have a variety of different demands or expectations. The NSW Food Authority has looked at the "free-range" certification schemes that are widely available in NSW, and posted information about these on its website so that consumers can make informed decisions and purchases in line with their budget and expectations.

14. Regarding animal welfare:

- a. In the 2013/14 budget there is \$1.1 billion allocated for primary industries. How much of this allocation is going towards animal welfare, animal protection or the prevention of animal cruelty?
 - i. Please provide a list of programs that will be/ are being funded and the budget allocation?
- b. How many programs is the Government undertaking to increase the level of education and awareness of primary producers on animal welfare and animal protection issues?
 - i. Please provide a list of programs that will be/ are being funded and the budget allocation?
- c. What research programs does the DPI have on improving animal husbandry and primary production with regards to animal welfare and animal protection, particularly with reference to alternatives to intensive production?
 - i. Please provide a list of these programs with budget allocations
- d. What research programs does the DPI have on non-lethal or more humane invasive species and feral/pest animal control and management?
 - i. Please provide a list of these programs with budget allocations

ANSWER

a. The Department of Primary Industries animal welfare unit has been allocated \$1,841,603. Other parts of DPI and Government also have involvement in animal welfare.

i. DPI animal welfare unit programs include:

- Participation in the development and implementation of national and state animal welfare legislative and policy frameworks in consultation with interest groups and the wider community. The budget allocation is estimated at \$392,581.
- Implementation of regulatory schemes to underpin animal welfare standards using both government and non government agencies. The budget allocation is estimated at \$1,383,592.
- Facilitation of targeted education and research programs to assist animal users to deliver expected animal welfare outcomes. Budget allocation is estimated at \$65,430.

b. Education and awareness occurs through a range of programs such as engagement during policy and legislation development and implementation, publications, training and field days.

c. DPI does not have a specific animal welfare research program, but some animal husbandry and production research conducted has animal welfare elements. DPI

engages in the National Primary Industries Research and Development and Extension Framework, including animal welfare.

d. DPI has a lead role in the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre which has committed over \$80 Million over 5 years (including \$25M in cash) to create new technologies and integrated strategies to reduce the impacts of invasive animals. In particular this collaboration is developing tools to prevent and detect new invasions and humane management strategies for major pests including foxes, wild dogs, feral pigs, rats and mice, cane toads, feral cats and rabbits. For 2012/13 this includes the following DPI-led projects and investment:

Project name	2012-13 (incl In-kind) \$
Incursions response system: Mobile devices and web-mapping tools for pest species	131,191
Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease (RHD) Boost: Release, pre- and post-monitoring and evaluation	1,465,000
Impacts of wild dogs on agro-ecosystems	732,620
Wild dog co-management solutions	417,823
Training and building regional capacity and capability: NRM facilitator	141,192

15. Regarding pigs:

a. Is there any plan or research underway to introduce a phase out or ban of sow stalls or farrowing crates?

ANSWER

The pig industry is voluntarily phasing out sow stalls by 2017 and funds research into group housing. NSW legislation requires that sows cannot be confined in farrowing crates for more than 6 weeks in any one reproductive cycle and that from 1 July 2017 pregnant sows must not be confined in stalls for more than 6 weeks in any one gestation period.

16. Regarding kangaroos:

a. The Budget has included \$4.8 million to deal with biosecurity threats posed by pests, weeds and diseases. Does this plan include the mass "culling" of kangaroos for deemed ecological purposes?

i. If yes, please provide a list of such programs including geography, estimated culling numbers and budget.

b. How much funding does the NSW Government provide or plan to provide for the marketing, promotion, maintenance and development of NSW's kangaroo industry in Australia and overseas?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

17. Regarding animal protection law enforcement:

a. Does the government provide funding to non-government animal protection agencies?

i. Please provide a list of these agencies with their funding allocations

ANSWER

a. Yes.

i. Government has provided a \$7.5 million grant to RSPCA NSW for redevelopment of their Sydney shelter and provides a \$424,000 annual grant. Annual grants are provided to Animal Welfare League NSW \$75,000, WIRES \$15,500, Cat Protection Society \$15,500, Domestic Animal Birth Control Cooperative Society \$3000.

18. In regard to the Game Council:

a. The Government allocated \$4.3 million to the Game Council in 2013-2014. Where will this funding be reallocated following its abolishment and when?

ANSWER

The recurrent budget to fund the activities of Game Council is \$2.6 million with the balance derived from license fees. This will be transferred to the Department of Primary Industries to fulfil the requirements of the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* once this Act has been amended.

19. Regarding Marine Parks

a. How many revocations or amendments related to specific marine parks have occurred under this government.

i. Please provide a list of all revocations and amendments to marine parks and marine parks plans of management since 2011.

ANSWER

This Government has abolished changes to the zoning plans for the Jervis Bay and Solitary Islands marine parks that were rushed through in the dying days of the former Government.

The Marine Parks (Zoning Plans) Amendment (Solitary Islands and Jervis Bay Marine Parks) Regulation 2011 was disallowed by the Legislative Assembly of NSW Parliament on 26 May 2011.

As announced in March 2013 there will be an amnesty allowing shore based line fishing from ocean beaches and headlands in mainland marine park sanctuary zones with the exception of identified sites for the protection of threatened species. The Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel is undertaking a six month assessment of recreational fishing access to these areas, before a decision is taken on future access arrangements.

The Government has also recently lifted a moratorium on reviewing zoning plans and altering sanctuary zones to improve marine park management of the State's marine environment. The moratorium on marine parks will remain in place until further advice is received from the Marine Estate Expert Knowledge Panel.

Forestry

20. Given the NSW Environment Protection Authority identified 634 breaches of logging rules by the Forestry Corporation in the last financial year, what steps have been taken to ensure breaches do not continue?

ANSWER

Forestry Corporation of NSW continually monitors compliance with the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOA). The majority of breaches are administrative and have caused no environmental harm. FCNSW is working with the Environment Protection Authority to review administrative conditions and improve the clarity of licence conditions under the IFOAs.

21. Given the average of 16 breaches of licence rules identified for each forestry site visited, has consideration been given to increasing resources to visits to identify breaches?

ANSWER

The nature of breaches recorded is often administrative with little or no environmental harm involved.

Considerable resources from FCNSW and EPA are directed towards environmental compliance monitoring.

FCNSW employs a three-tiered process including operations monitoring and reporting, quality assurance auditing and independent (contract) auditing.

Under the recently revised FCNSW Compliance Monitoring System, every operation is subject to monitoring and reporting requirements as well as quarterly quality assurance audits. Further to this, contractors are held accountable for their environmental compliance as part of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) attached to their contracts.

The independent audit is used to ensure that FCNSW environmental compliance systems are functioning properly at all levels of the corporation.

Further to all of this FCNSW is subject to an independent audit under the Australian Forestry Standard.

Both FCNSW and EPA have recently independently revised their programs to consider the risk of environmental harm in the allocation of monitoring resources.

22. Given only 3-4% of logging operations are audited, what is the estimated number of breaches and non-compliances that are occurring but are not identified?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

23. When breaches are identified by environmental groups and reported to the NSW Environment Protection Authority what steps are taken?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

24. What is the average time from receiving a report from an environmental group identifying a substantial breach and carrying out a site visit?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

25. A number of logging breaches in Royal Camp State Forest were identified by the North Eastern Forest Alliance over a year ago and reported to the Minister, what steps have been taken in relation to this?

ANSWER

Allegations raised by the North Eastern Forest Alliance have been thoroughly investigated by Forestry Corporation of NSW in conjunction with its regulators the Environment Protection Authority and Fisheries NSW.

26. Penalty notices have been issued in some cases for logging within Koala High Use Areas, why is no remediation or additional habitat protection required in such circumstances?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

27. Has consideration been given to imposing penalties other than penalty notices for illegal logging?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

28. When imposing penalties for logging breaches, what consideration is given to the need to deter future breaches?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

29. What monitoring is there of Forestry Corporation fulfilling requirements to conduct scat searches?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

30. Are there current plans to declare Royal Camp State Forest as a koala reserve?
a. If so, what are these?
b. If not, why not?

ANSWER

No. Existing forest management practices have maintained healthy koala populations for many years. There is no intention to change proven successful land management practices.

31. Has any research been undertaken to assess the suitability of current penalties under the Protection of the Environment Act and the National Parks and Wildlife Act?
a. If so, what was the outcome of this?
b. If not, why not?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

32. On what date was the current Wood Supply Agreement for hardwood between South East Fibre Exports and the Forestry Corporation or its predecessor signed?
a. For what duration?
b. Why was a new agreement entered into before the previous agreement had expired – when it had possibly as long as 10 years still to run?

ANSWER

The current Wood Supply Agreement for hardwood between South East Fibre Exports and the Forestry Corporation was signed on 5 March 1999. It was for a 20 year term and expires on 31 December 2018.

The new agreement was entered into following the completion of the Comprehensive Regional Assessment (CRA) process in Eden and the subsequent restructuring of the Eden Management Area. The new agreement provided for the supply of pulpwood from the Eden management Area.

33. What was the total royalty payments (for hardwood and softwood separately) made by South East Fibre Exports to the Forestry Corporation (and its predecessors) in each of the last 10 years?

ANSWER

Hardwood royalties are outlined in the table below. Sales of softwood logs to South East Fibre Exports Pty Ltd are made on the basis of a delivered price only, therefore there are no separate royalty payments made by South East Fibre Exports Pty Ltd to the Forestry Corporation of NSW (and its predecessors).

Total Softwood delivered Payments for each relevant year were 2011 \$3,894,740; 2012 \$10,799,404; 2013 \$6,209, 538.

Financial Year	Total Hardwood Royalty Payments
2004	\$5,552,174
2005	\$5,074,069
2006	\$5,228,172
2007	\$5,367,479
2008	\$4,884,998
2009	\$4,318,466
2010	\$4,734,922
2011	\$4,696,159
2012	\$4,399,237
2013	\$3,710,078

34. It is a requirement under the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals that Forestry Corporation NSW prepare annual plans of logging operations for each financial year by June 1 of the preceding financial year?
- If so, where are these plans currently available? If they are not currently publicly available, what plans are there to change this?
 - Has a plan for 2013-14 been prepared?

ANSWER

Forestry Corporation of NSW has prepared annual plans for logging operations and these are available on request.

35. Regarding the monthly Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals monthly reports, prepared by each region, which are intended to be an accurate record of logging operations – what confidence is there that the detail in these is accurate and up to date?

ANSWER

Forestry Corporation of NSW provides advice each month indicating the current and intended future operational areas both roading and harvesting. This advice is accurate at the time of update.

36. Are there procedures in place so that groups or individuals who have documentary evidence of irregularities in monthly reporting could provide such information and have it be investigated?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

37. Are requirements that Forestry Corporation notify regulatory agencies when logging ceases in particular compartments currently being complied with?

ANSWER

Yes.

38. What concerns, if any, are there that logging operations are being deliberately left 'open or ongoing'?

ANSWER

None.

39. What information has the Minister received regarding BORAL's application for FSC Controlled Wood?

ANSWER

That Boral commenced steps towards certification under the FSC scheme.

40. Did BORAL not obtain FSC Controlled Wood classification because it was unable to demonstrate that FCNSW operations do no harm to high conservation values?

ANSWER

Boral advised FCNSW that it was divesting its woodchip export business before completion of its application for FSC Certification. FCNSW's forest operations and management processes applied under the IFOAs had not limited Boral's progress towards FSC certification.

41. Is the Government or its agency/corporation involved in discussions with BORAL about reducing their timber quotas for NE NSW?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is in the process of reviewing aspects of native wood supply on the NSW north coast.

42. Does the department continue to rely on the logging technique known as Australian Group Selection?
a. If so, why?

b. If not, why not?

ANSWER

There has been no change to the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals (IFOA) conditions around Australian Group Selection, and Forestry Corporation may use this silvicultural technique to achieve forest regeneration where suitable.

43. Under this Minister how many peer review research papers have been published by FCNSW staff on the effects of logging on threatened species?

ANSWER

Forest Research by Forest Corporation NSW is undertaken by both FCNSW staff and Department of Primary Industries Forest Research staff.

Since 2011, Forest Research staff have published 6 peer reviewed papers including logging effects on Threatened species.

In addition a further 3 papers are in press waiting publication, and a further 3 papers are in preparation.

44. What active monitoring or research programs has been conducted by FCNSW into the impacts of logging on native fauna and flora, and in particular those listed under the Threatened Species Conservation Act?

ANSWER

Forest Research staff are currently undertaking 11 specific research programs covering the impacts of logging on native flora and fauna. In addition Forestry staff are undertaking 3 species specific monitoring programs in the southern part of the state.

45. What areas and locations of Koala habitat has been protected in accordance with the provisions of the Integrated Forest Operations Approvals since March 2011?

ANSWER

Koala high use or intermediate use areas are identified when planning and undertaking specific operations and appropriate operational controls are in place in identified areas for the duration of those specified operations.

46. Since removal of the Pine Creek State Forest Koala Management Plan is it confirmed that the NSW Forests Corporation are now planning to log remaining native forest in Pine Creek State forests in the next 12 months?

ANSWER

Harvesting in and around Pine Creek State Forest has occurred consistently in the past and is scheduled to continue. The principles of the Pine Creek State Forest Koala Management Plan have been incorporated into all relevant harvesting plans.

47. Can the Minister confirm that logging in State Forest Flooded Gum plantations in the Bellingen Shire has been suspended or curtailed?
- If so why?
 - If so, what impact will this have on the koala populations in those areas?

ANSWER

Harvesting of Flooded Gum Plantations in the Bellingen Shire is continuing. There has been no cessation or suspension. A slight reduction in production has occurred due to reduced market demand. Koala populations are managed under the Koala Management Plan.

48. Can the Minister provide any information on the costs associated with logging and reestablishment of former Flooded Gum Plantations on State Forests in the Bellingen Shire, for example the cost of logging operations, income from the products obtained and cost of re-establishment?

ANSWER

The costs associated with harvesting and re-establishing plantations varies based upon geographic location, soil types, species, type of equipment used, and number and types of fertiliser and herbicide applications. The cost of re-establishment for the area in question is approximately \$2,800-\$3,100 per hectare. The royalty from previous harvesting averages between \$6,000-7,000 per hectare. Logging costs are generally fully recouped from timber customers. The plantations in the Bellingen area are being replanted with species of higher end use and value.

49. When will the Minister publicly release the URS report into the state of timber resources in North East NSW?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is in the process of reviewing aspects of native wood supply on the NSW north coast.

50. Has the interdepartmental steering committee considering the state of timber resources in North East NSW provided its recommendations to Government, and if so, what options were presented?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is in the process of reviewing aspects of native wood supply on the NSW north coast.

51. What is the estimated sustainable yield of large high quality sawlogs until 2100 from State forests in each of the NSW CRA regions of Lower and Upper North East NSW?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is in the process of reviewing aspects of native wood supply on the NSW north coast.

52. What action will the Government take to reduce the current harvesting of large sawlogs down to the estimated long-term sustainable level?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is in the process of reviewing aspects of native wood supply on the NSW north coast.

53. Given that market demand for hardwood products from NSW's forests is currently down, what action has the Government taken to reduce commitments from State Forests in line with company commitments to take minimum volumes specified in Wood Supply Agreements?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is in the process of reviewing aspects of native wood supply on the NSW north coast.

54. Will the Government allow logging in any currently existing national parks, nature reserves, or state conservation areas to satisfy resource commitments?

ANSWER

The NSW Government is in the process of reviewing aspects of native wood supply on the NSW north coast.

Game Council

55. How much of the \$4.35m appropriation for the Game Council will be channelled into professional feral animal control programs?

ANSWER

The recurrent budget to fund the activities of Game Council is \$2.6 million with the balance derived from license fees. This will be transferred to the Department of Primary Industries (DPI) to fulfil the requirements of the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* once this Act has been amended.

56. How much of the \$4.35 million appropriation will go to:
a. Feral pest control in State Forests?
b. Feral pest control in National Parks?

ANSWER

The NSW Government has suspended hunting in State Forests and on Crown Lands pending the transfer of functions to DPI and the outcome of a risk assessment, which includes assessment of volunteer hunters. Once the risks have been assessed, it is the intention to restore feral animal hunting in State Forests as quickly as possible and where appropriate. The trials scheduled to be undertaken in National Parks is separate to hunting in State Forests. These trials will be managed by the Office of Environment and Heritage. How recurrent funding will be apportioned to activities in State Forests and National Parks will be determined by

the outcomes of risk assessments and the transfer of Game Council activities to DPI.

57. Which National Parks are currently being proposed for recreational hunting trials and when will such trials commence in these parks?

ANSWER

This matter falls under the administration of the Hon Minister Robyn Parker MP, Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be directed accordingly.

Small Business

1. How many formal mediations were conducted by the Office of Small Business in 2012-2013 Financial Year?

ANSWER

177

2. How many were between small businesses in dispute with each of:-
a. other businesses;
b. government;
c. local Councils?

ANSWER

The Dispute Resolution unit does not capture this information by the above categories.

3. How many resulted in an agreement between the disputing parties, by the above categories?

ANSWER

Whilst the life of a dispute does not neatly fit within a financial year, the resolution rate for all matters is approximately 90%.

4. How many simply resulted in the small business getting achieving no positive result, in total and by the above categories?

ANSWER

The exact number is unknown as certain mediations are ongoing.

5. Last year you indicated that you were not able to answer the above question at the level of categories set out above. If this remains the case, will you change your data collection so you are able to break down mediations in this way? If not, why not?

ANSWER

The Dispute Resolution Unit does not currently have a business need to capture this information by the above categories. Investment in creating reports is being prioritised by business need.

6. How many new persons, not previously engaged to mediate in connection with the former Retail Tenancies Unit, have been used as mediators in 2012-13 in connection with the Office of Small Business Commissioner?

ANSWER

Nine.

7. When were those persons selected?

ANSWER

At various times throughout 2012-13.

8. What process was used to select those mediators?

ANSWER

The selection process for the internal mediator positions included: advertising; a written application; and, an interview with a selection panel.

The selection process for the external mediator positions included: a written application; an interview with a selection panel; and, a supervised mediation.

9. What criterion was used to select those mediators?

ANSWER

External mediators must demonstrate that they have experience and skills in mediation, and that they have an understanding of and experience in working with small business disputes.

10. Where are those persons based?

ANSWER

Sydney and Tamworth.

11. How many new persons, not previously engaged to mediate in connection with the former Retail Tenancies Unit, will be used as mediators in 2012-13 in connection with the Office of Small Business Commissioner?

ANSWER

Nine.

12. How many persons are on the panel of mediators used by the Office of the Small Business Commissioner? How many of those persons were on the panel for 2012-13?

ANSWER

35. This is the same number as in 2012-13.

13. You indicate that "the [dispute resolution] unit has handled a total of 1,852 disputes" and has been able to "informally mediate 80 per cent of those matters at no cost to the parties." Is that for the financial year 2012-13 or for some other time period? What exact number have been 'informally mediated' and what number have been 'formally mediated'.

ANSWER

Total number of applications - 1852

Total number of formal mediations - 350

Total number of informal mediations – 1502

14. How many mediations will be conducted by the Office of Small Business in 2012-2013? Or how many do you expect to be conducted?

ANSWER

177.

15. Last year you indicated the Small Business Commissioner would raise with you examples of unfair market practices that you would then take action on. How many examples of unfair market practices engaged in by private sector entities towards small businesses has the Small Business Commissioner raised with you in 2012-13 and since July 2013? What were they? What have you done about them to date?

ANSWER

During 2012-13, the Commissioner raised six specific examples of industry sectors in which unfair market practices were impacting on small businesses. No examples have been raised since July 2013.

The industry sectors where issues were raised included:

- Motor Vehicle
- Motor Vehicle Accident Repair
- Construction

- Dairy
- Wine Grape Growing
- Hotel Accommodation

16. You indicated during the Estimates Hearing that the Office of the Small Business Commissioner had received some 10,000 calls and emails. Over what time period? The 2012-13 financial year, or some other time period? If some other time period, what period?

ANSWER

2012-13 financial year.

17. The July 2013 advertisement for sponsorship of Small Biz Connect including the Small Biz Bus. Leaving aside the sponsorship of the buses, how much do you expect to raise in sponsorship? Will this money be in addition to the money allocated in the 2013-14 Budget?

ANSWER

There is no set target of funds. This money will be in addition to the money allocated in the 2013-14 Budget.

18. At what locations have mediations been conducted by the mediators engaged by/through the Office of the Small Business Commissioner in 2012-13?

ANSWER

Most mediations are held in the Sydney office; others are conducted near the business at a location convenient to the parties. Mediations were conducted in the following locations during 2012-13 (some used more than once): Albury, Mittagong, Dubbo, Port Macquarie, Griffith, Gosford, Tweed Heads, Penrith, Wagga Wagga, Coolangatta, Ballina, Raymond Terrace, Yamba, Newcastle, Wollongong, Inverell, Armidale.

19. At what locations will mediations be conducted by the mediators engaged by/through the Office of the Small Business Commissioner in 2013-14?

ANSWER

As needed by the small business sector.

20. Does your department provide recurrent grant funds to non-government organisations?
If yes,
- a. What are the names of all organisations in receipt of funding?
 - b. What is the total amount of funding received by each organisation including goods and services tax?
 - c. On what date was the funding advanced?
 - d. What was the purpose for each grant or funding advance?
 - e. Was any funding withheld or returned?

- f. If so, what were the reasons for withholding or requiring the funding to be returned?
- g. What is the indexation rate applied to non-recurrent grant funds in 2013/2013?
- h. What are the details of any costs involved in each study, audit, taskforce or review?
- i. Have any provisions been included in grant agreements to prohibit these organisations from criticising the Government or any of its policies?

ANSWER

NSW Government agencies provide grants to local government councils and a range of non – government, non – profit organisations for the purpose of providing a service to the community or undertaking a project of benefit to the community.

Grants administration in NSW occurs within the legal and regulatory framework in which the NSW Government operates.

All Government Departments and authorities are required to publish details of grants made to non – government organisations in their annual report. The requirements are set out in Premier's Memorandum 91 – 34.

Grant fund amounts are typically based on a funding submission or specific criteria and not indexed.

21. Is your department currently undertaking any feasibility studies, audits, taskforces or reviews? If so; then;
- a. What are the terms of reference or details of each study, audit, taskforce or review?
 - b. Who is conducting the study, audit, taskforce or review?
 - c. Was each study, audit, taskforce or review was publically advertised seeking expression of interest or competitive tenders?
 - d. Is there a contract in place detailing terms of engagement for the study, audit, taskforce or review?
 - e. What is the timeline of each study, audit, taskforce or review?
 - f. What are the details of any costs involved in each study, audit, taskforce or review?

ANSWER

As with previous NSW Governments, the Government undertakes feasibility studies, audits, taskforces and reviews to inform government decision making. A number of feasibility studies, audits, taskforces and reviews are currently being undertaken across the NSW Government.