



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 4

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-2010

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 4

Health (Cancer)

Thursday 17 September 2009

Answers to be lodged by: Tuesday 13 October 2009

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Hearing date	Portfolio	Answer to be lodged by
16 September 2009	Fair Trading, Citizenship	12 October 2009 [21 days]
16 September 2009	Emergency Services, Small Business	12 October 2009 [21 days]
16 September 2009	Planning, Redfern Waterloo	26 October 2009 [35 days]
17 September 2009	Transport, Illawarra	27 October 2009 [35 days]
17 September 2009	Science and Medical Research	13 October 2009 [21 days]
17 September 2009	Health (Cancer)	13 October 2009 [21 days]
17 September 2009	Tourism, Hunter	13 October 2009 [21 days]

Questions relating to the portfolio Health (Cancer)

17 September 2009, 2.55 pm – 3.45 pm

Questions from Mr Gay

1. In May 2009, the Cancer Council NSW reported that in some parts of NSW, the only radiotherapy treatment centre is private (Riverina and Central Coast). In these areas, local residents have to choose between paying the costs charged by the private provider, or travelling further afield for treatment. The Cancer Council recommended that NSW Health should establish a funding mechanism to purchase treatment from private providers in those areas so that patients are not required to pay the 'gap fee'.
 - a. Does NSW Health have data on the number of patients who travel out of area because they cannot afford to use the private centres closer to home?
 - b. Has NSW Health developed a model for purchasing services from the private providers so that cancer patients can access radiotherapy treatment locally without incurring financial hardship?
2. The Audit Office, in its report 'Tackling Cancer with Radiotherapy' recommended that NSW Health establish centralised booking systems for radiotherapy by December 2009. Can you advise:
 - a. Whether implementation of this recommendation is on-track
 - b. What the cost of the centralised booking system is
 - c. Whether these funds have been made available in the current budget.
3. What is the expected completion date of development of the cancer centre at Orange Base Hospital, including the estimated date from which radiotherapy services will be provided to cancer patients?
4. What is the expected completion date of the Integrated Cancer Centre at Lismore Base Hospital and the estimated date from which radiotherapy services will be provided to cancer patients?
5. As part of the development of the cancer care centre at Lismore Hospital, what provision has been made for patient accommodation?
6. The Audit Office report listed geographic areas of need for radiotherapy as the Central Coast, Hunter New England and the Illawarra Shoalhaven. What provision has been made to address the need for radiotherapy in these areas, in the budget appropriations and forward estimates?
7. On 31 August, the NSW Government announced the appointment of a project management firm to plan for the expansion of radiotherapy services on the Central Coast. When does the NSW Government expect that expanded radiotherapy services will be available for the residents of the Central Coast?
8. In relation to Breast screening services:
 - a. Are you aware that in April this year, then Acting Premier Carmel Tebbutt and Minister assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer) Jodi McKay launched a new \$1.5 million awareness campaign promoting the importance of regular mammograms?
 - b. Are you familiar with the press release issued on June 19 2009 on release of the 2009-10 budget, that Minister assisting the Minister for Health (Cancer) Jodi McKay highlighted

- Cancer Institute NSW funding including: \$46.7 million for screening programs to better detect breast, bowel and cervical cancers enabling early intervention and treatment?
- c. Do you agree with them that having regular mammograms is important in enabling early intervention and treatment?
 - d. Are you aware that the Cancer Incidence and Mortality Report shows that death rates from Breast Cancer have also declined by 15 per cent over the past 10 years but would decline further if more women over 50 years had a bilateral screening mammogram every two years?
 - e. Does it alarm you that, despite the BreastScreen 'Program's aim is to achieve a participation rate of 70% among women aged 50-69', NSW Budget papers show that the participation rate of women in this age-group has dropped from a high of 60% in 2000-01 to 54.3% in 2008-09?
 - f. Are you aware that BreastScreen, nationally advises that: it targets 'well women without symptoms aged 50-69, although women aged 40-49 and 70 years and older are able to attend for screening,'
 - g. Did you know that even though breast screening is targeted at the 50 to 69 age group, 23 per cent of breast cancer cases were in females aged under 50 at diagnosis and 25% were aged over 70?
 - h. In light of these statistics, based on data in the Cancer Incidence and Mortality Report 2006, showing that 48% of all breast cancer cases are outside the target group, and since you agree that screening is important in enabling early intervention and treatment – will you reverse your government's policy announced in December 2004, not to reinvite women for BreastScreens unless they were 50-69?
 - i. Further, in light of these statistics, will you reject recommendations following review into BreastScreen Australia, that women under 45 and over 75 are barred from routine screening?

Questions from Miss Gardiner

- 9. Radiotherapy Waiting Times - The Australian Council of Healthcare Standards (ACHS) clinical indicator for radiotherapy wait times is currently 14 days. In addition, The ACHS defines the Radiotherapy Waiting Time as the time taken from the 'Ready for Care' date to the Start of Radiotherapy Treatment. With respect to this:
 - a. Does NSW Health use The ACHS clinical indicator for radiotherapy wait times and The ACHS definition for Radiotherapy Waiting Time as its benchmarks for radiotherapy treatment?
 - b. If not, what benchmarks does NSW Health use?
 - c. What are the current waiting lists as of 21 September 2009 that have exceed the above benchmarks at the following Radiation Oncology Treatment Centres (ROTCs):
 - i. Illawarra Cancer Care Centre, Wollongong Hospital, Wollongong
 - ii. Nepean Cancer Care Centre, Penrith
 - iii. Calvary Mater Newcastle, Department of Radiation Oncology, Newcastle
 - iv. Prince of Wales, Institute of Oncology, Randwick
 - v. Northern Sydney Cancer Centre, Royal North Shore Hospital, St Leonards
 - vi. Royal Prince Alfred Hospital, Camperdown
 - vii. South Western Sydney Cancer Service, Liverpool and Macarthur
 - viii. St George Cancer Care Centre, St George Hospital, Kogarah
 - ix. St Vincent's Radiation Oncology, St Vincent's Hospital, Darlinghurst
 - x. Westmead Hospital, Department of Radiation Oncology, Westmead
 - xi. North Coast Cancer Institute, Port Macquarie and Coffs Harbour

- d. Does NSW Health plan to establish a centralised database of ROTC waiting times in the future?
 - e. If so, when? If not, why not?
10. Radiotherapy Services - NSW Audit Office's performance audit of radiotherapy Services in NSW, Tackling Cancer with Radiotherapy highlights the draft Tamworth Health Services Plan 2008-2012 as providing information in relation to planning for future services at Tamworth and identifies Hunter/New England as a "geographical area of need".
- a. What plans does NSW Health and/or Hunter New England Area Health Service have for Radiotherapy services in the Hunter/New England area?
 - b. The NSW Cancer Council report Improving Radiotherapy Where to from here? A roadmap for the NSW Government identifies that Tamworth and Dubbo are locations that "should be considered for new or expanded radiotherapy services."
 - i. Will the NSW Government make radiotherapy services in Tamworth and Dubbo a priority?
 - ii. Are there plans for the NSW Government, the Greater Western Area Health Service or the Hunter New England Area Health Service to tender for a share of the \$560 million of federal money for "best-practice regional cancer centres" to provide radiotherapy facilities in Dubbo and Tamworth?
 - iii. If so, please list details.
 - iv. If not, why not?