

Questions relating to the portfolio of the Illawarra
24 October 2011, 12.00 pm – 1.00 pm

Questions from the Hon Mr Veitch, MLC

- 1 Minister, How many submissions and representations have you made to Cabinet as the Minister for Illawarra?

Answer

As under the previous government there are no acts administered by the Minister for The Illawarra.

- 2 How many staff are employed in your office to support you in your role as Minister for Illawarra?

Answer

All of my staff play a role in supporting me in the Illawarra

Questions from the Hon Ms Fazio, MLC

- 3 The Illawarra
- When was the last occasion you met with the DPC staff who are based in the Illawarra office?
 - How many Ministerial staff have you got dedicated to Illawarra matters?
 - On how many occasions have you visited the Illawarra since becoming Minister?
 - You said you would visit the Illawarra at least "once every week or two". Have you visited the area at that rate?
 - In March you stated that "*the minister could not get a real sense of the issues faced by the region without stepping foot in it.*" Do you still hold that view?
 - How often will you visit the region from now on?
 - On how many occasions have you met with the Wollongong Business Chamber?
 - On how many occasions have you met with the Mayor of Wollongong, The Reverend Gordon Bradbery?

Answer

I regularly have engagements throughout the Illawarra in contrast to the previous Minister for The Illawarra and the current shadow Minister for The Illawarra

- 4 Illawarra Advantage Fund and Job Creation
- Why did you axe the Illawarra Advantage Fund?
 - How much of the state-wide funding pool will be dedicated to the Illawarra?
 - Why has Wollongong been left out of the Government's payroll tax rebate policy which you say will kick start growth in regional areas?
 - What action will you take to ensure that Wollongong gets to share in the 40,000 jobs in regional areas, rather than have to compete with Sydney and Newcastle for 60,000 jobs?

Answer

I refer to my answer on 8 September 2011.

5 Port Kembla

- a. Can you give a guarantee that Port Kembla will not be privatised under an O'Farrell Government?

Answer

This question should be referred to the Minister for Roads and Ports.

6 Bulli Hospital

- a. Given the Government's commitment prior to the election to improve services at Bulli Hospital, how do you explain closing down the Emergency Department (ED) without any additional funding for the proposed Urgent Care Centre?
- b. You may be aware that the hospital's ED treated over 7800 people last financial year. Given this fact, how do you plan to treat these people at Wollongong Hospital given your own Statement of Strategic Intent admits that Wollongong Hospital is "densely developed and has significant constraints which severely limits the scope of any future service developments"?
- c. Why will the Government not commit to the \$9.4million Integrated Primary Health Care Centre, when this is what health experts recommended less than 12 months ago?
- d. What funding will be provided to Bulli Hospital to make it a Centre for Excellence in Aged Care?

Answer

This question should be referred to the Minister for Health

7 Regional Relocation Grants

- a. How many people have moved out of the Wollongong Local Government Area using the Regional Relocation Grants since they were announced?

Answer

There have been 11 Regional Relocation Grants provided to people relocating from the Wollongong Local Government Area (as at 7 November 2011).

- b. Given the Member for Heathcote publicly said that he would talk to the Treasurer about "tweaking this policy", what has been done to do this or did you ignore the Member for Heathcote?

Answer

This question should be referred to the Treasurer.

- c. Has there been an economic analysis undertaken that justifies paying people \$7000 to leave Wollongong?

Answer

This question should be referred to the Treasurer.

8 Lysaght Oval Upgrade

- a. Are you aware of the commitment that the Liberal Opposition made prior to the election that they would match the Labor Governments' commitment to allocate \$2.5million to upgrade Lysaght Oval?
- b. Why have you not allocated this money to Wollongong City Council to be held in trust until to ensure you honour a commitment to establish a home for soccer on the South Coast?

Answer

I refer to the answer provided to the Legislative Assembly on 10 October 2011

9 Coal Seam Gas

- a. What discussions have you had with community members about the issue of Coal Seam Gas and its impact in the Illawarra?

Answer

I discuss a range of issues with members of the public in the Illawarra during my many engagements in the Illawarra.

10 Schools

- a. Are you aware of the state of condition that the Figtree High School Library is in?
- b. Do you have any plans to commit to the urgent upgrade of the library at Figtree High School? If so, when will this take place?
- c. Are you aware of the requests from staff and parents to upgrade the science labs at Woonona High School?
- d. Do you have any plans for this upgrade?
- e. Will you commit to security fencing at Pleasant Heights Primary School?

Answer

This question should be referred to the Minister for Education.

11 Public Housing

- a. What is the Governments plan to expand the Handy Man Service for elderly residents to have minor repairs fixed quicker?

Answer

The Handypersons Program is currently operating through contracts expiring on 30 June 2012.

- b. What is the average waiting time for people calling the Public Housing Hotline to seek assistance?

Answer

This question should be referred to the Minister for Family and Community Services.

- c. What is the Government doing to reduce this wait?

Answer

See response to Question 11 (c) above.

- d. What is the Government's plan to assist those contractors who are out of pocket as a result of housing projects in Tarrawanna and Towradgi, carried out under the management of Pearle?

Answer

Senior NSW Public Works' officials have been working closely with the Liquidator and are committed to continuing this process.

12 F6 Freeway

- a. Do you think the F6 Freeway should be extended?
b. What action have you taken to get this project delivered

Answer

This question should be referred to the Minister for Ports and Roads

13 Maldon-Dombarton Rail Line

- a. Have you read the Commonwealth's feasibility report into the Maldon-Dombarton rail line?
b. What is the Government's response to the Commonwealth's recent announcement to bring the Maldon-Dombarton rail line into the pre-construction stage?

Answer

This question should be referred to the Minister for Transport

14 Feasibility studies, audits, taskforces and reviews

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

Answer

See answer to question 60