



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 1

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-2010

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 1

Finance, Infrastructure and Regulatory Reform

Monday 14 September 2009

Answers to be lodged by: Thursday 22 October 2009

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Hearing date	Portfolio	Answer to be lodged by
14 September 2009	Roads	22 October 2009 [35 days]
14 September 2009	Ports and Waterways	22 October 2009 [35 days]
14 September 2009	Finance, Infrastructure, Regulatory Reform	22 October 2009 [35 days]
14 September 2009	The Legislature	22 October 2009 [35 days]
15 September 2009	Treasury	23 October 2009 [35 days]
15 September 2009	Premier	23 October 2009 [35 days]
15 September 2009	Arts	23 October 2009 [35 days]

Questions relating to the portfolios of Finance, Infrastructure and Regulatory Reform

14 September 2009, 2.00 pm – 5.00 pm

Questions from Mr Mason-Cox

1. Regulatory Reform Minister, Joe Tripodi, says one of the biggest issues raised at the NSW Jobs Summit held earlier this year was concern about red tape. Given the Government is three quarters through addressing 74 actions recommended by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal to reduce red tape does the NSW Government accept these concerns at the NSW Job Summit about red tape as a failure, on its part, to properly address regulatory reform?
2. The NSW Government boasts that since 2007 when the Better Regulation Office was formed more than 100 red tape cuts have been made. Isn't the continuing concern from the business sector about red tape an indication therefore that the Government's attempts to reduce red tape have not been successful?
3. Why, two years after the formation of the Better Regulation Office, do members of the NSW Business Chamber still believe that complying with State Government regulations have a moderate to major impact on their businesses?
 - a. Does the Government accept this as a failure on its part to address business concerns about red tape and regulatory reform?
4. In April this year (2009) the Government announced, via its *April 2009 Progress Report (IPART Investigation into the Burden of Regulation in NSW and Improving Regulatory Efficiency)* it had delivered 49 out of 74 red tape reforms as recommended by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal as outlined in 2006 (October). Given that businesses are still complaining that red tape continues to have a significant impact on their operations, how successful have the reforms really been?
5. Presumably the NSW Government has looked at how other State Governments are addressing regulatory reform. Specifically, are you attracted to the Victorian approach, where reducing red tape is viewed from the end users perspective rather than the Government's perspective?
6. The NSW Government claims to be "on-track" to implementing 74 actions recommended by the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal (IPART) to reduce red tape for NSW businesses. What feedback has the Government had from business sectors about the real savings associated with red tape reforms?
7. New South Wales boasts it is the only state with a dedicated Minister for Regulatory Reform. But if you listen to organisations like the NSW Business Chamber, you would have to agree there has been little improvement in the amount of time business people spend complying with red tape and regulation?
8. "An effective and efficient regulatory environment creates the climate for a competitive and productive economy. Effective and light-handed regulation minimises the time businesses spend complying with regulatory requirements, increasing their ability to innovate, be entrepreneurial and respond creatively and quickly to market opportunities or threats." (*Guide to Better Regulation* April 2008). Does the Government believe it has/is currently providing an effective and efficient regulatory environment thereby creating a competitive and productive economy?

9. How will the Government measure its target of saving \$500-million in red tape by 2011?
10. How many times have you had discussions with Ron Medich on any matter?
 - a. When and what did you discuss?
11. Which developers, other than Roy and Ron Medich, have you met with, or had discussions with regarding possible rezoning of land anywhere in NSW?
12. How do you see the process for prioritisation of delivery of infrastructure?
13. Do you support having a planning system that determines priorities for opening up of new areas, or would you prefer a de-regulated system?
14. Have you ever used your Ministerial credit card to entertain developers or lobbyists and if so, at which venues?
 - a. Will you produce your credit card receipts and invoices to the Committee?
15. How many times have you had a meal at the Tuscany Italian Ristorante, in Leichhardt?
 - a. Have you ever met either Roy or Ron Medich at that restaurant and if so, how many times?
16. What percentage of the State's infrastructure budget is spent in western Sydney?
 - a. How can this low figure be justified when the government is actively pursuing policies to increase the population in the region?
17. The Government claims to be all about jobs, how can you justify the cancellation of important infrastructure projects during an economic downturn that would have created jobs during construction and opened new areas up to residents of western Sydney?
18. How many times have you met with Treasury officials to discuss the Infrastructure portfolio? (Please provide dates of meetings, issues discussed and who else was in attendance.)
19. Do you support the continuation of the current levels of infrastructure levies on developers given that NSW has by far the highest levies nationally and the lowest level of housing production in 50 years?
20. In December 2008 your Government reduced State Infrastructure Charges to \$75,000. Then in August this year, they announced new land release in Horsley Park and Eastern Creek would be slapped with a \$180,000 State Infrastructure Charge. What is your reasoning for this discrepancy in charges?
 - a. Were you consulted in the development of these charges?
 - b. Do you think developers will be happy to pay \$180,000 for land in Eastern Creek and Horsley Park when they can buy land at least than half that charge elsewhere in NSW?
21. Have you, or anyone in your Department, done a comparison of State Infrastructure Charges or levies with other States?
 - a. If so, what was the result of that study?
 - b. Why do you think levies in NSW are so much higher than other states?
 - c. Do you think the level of levies plays any contribution in developers leaving NSW and doing business in other States?

22. What processes have you or your Department undertaken to review the State Infrastructure Strategy?