

12 September 2014

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

Dear Mr Smith

Thank you for your letter of 25 August 2014 in relation to the Inquiry into Budget Estimates 2014-2015.

Please find enclosed:

- a copy of corrections made to the transcript of General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5 on 20 August 2014,
- responses to supplementary questions on notice lodged by members of the Legislative Council,
- responses to questions taken on notice during the Hearing, and
- a copy of the Ethanol Mandate Consultation Paper, as was requested to be tabled by the Chair.

As requested, a softcopy of these four documents have been sent to budget.estimateds@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Should you have any enquiries, you may contact my Chief of Staff, Tim James on 8574 5600.

Yours sincerely



Anthony Roberts MP
Minister for Resources and Energy
Special Minister of State

Encl.

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014-2015

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

RESOURCES AND ENERGY, SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE

20 August 2014

Answers to be returned by:	Thursday 12 September 2014
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BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

1. **Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM:** How many New South Wales councils have made a clear statement in opposition to unconventional gas in their local government areas?

ANSWER

Since 2011, 20 councils have written to the Minister for Resources and Energy and made a clear statement in opposition to coal seam gas and/or unconventional gas in their respective local government areas and/or water catchment areas.

2. **Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM:** What chemicals, heavy metals or other pollutants were in that water (Santos' Narrabri coal seam gas project pond water) you drank?

ANSWER

The following chemicals, heavy metals and other pollutants were in the water I drank:

Chloride
Sodium
Barium
Germanium
Strontium
Aluminium
Lithium
Boron
Iron
Fluoride
Ammonia
Petroleum hydrocarbons – NO BTEX
Bacteria

Despite Mr Buckingham's claim in Budget Estimates that "there was uranium at 20 times the State's drinking water guidelines stored in that water", no uranium was detected.

3. **Mr JEREMY BUCKINGHAM:** Are you aware of how many goldmining leases are active and generate royalties in New South Wales? How much was received in goldmining royalties in 2013-14?

ANSWER

In 2013-14, there were 25 mining leases that generated gold royalties for NSW, compared to 22 in 2012-13. In 2013-14 gold royalty received was \$39 million, compared to \$41 million in 2012-13.

Royalty rates on goldmining and minerals in NSW are a matter for the Treasurer. The royalty rate applicable to gold production in NSW is comparable with the royalty rate applied in other gold producing jurisdictions.

As well as delivering substantial royalties to NSW, mines that produced gold also provided direct mine employment to around 3,700 people, and indirect employment to many more in mine and non- mine related service industries. These mines also provide substantial economic investment to regional communities and towns across NSW.

4. **The Hon. STEVE WHAN:** What assessment did the department make of the number of mines other than Cadia that would have been affected had this legislation not been passed? Are you able to table the legal advice the department received on this issue?

ANSWER

Based on the information and legal advice provided at the time, it was the opinion of the Department that most of the more than 900 mining leases then active in NSW could have been affected and may therefore have had their validity called into question.

The Department declines to table any legal advice in relation to this issue.

5. **The Hon. STEVE WHAN:** I turn to the Mining Amendment (Development Consent) Bill 2013. Last year in estimates your predecessor told us that the Government had made it clear that it respects the independence of the court process.

This Government has made it clear as a matter of policy it respects the integrity of court processes.

A few weeks later the Minister asked the Parliament to urgently pass the Mining Amendment (Development Consent) Bill 2013 because, we were told, a failure to pass the legislation could result in Cadia and a number of other mines being affected. What assessment did the department make of the number of mines other than Cadia that would have been affected had this legislation not been passed? Are you able to table the legal advice the department received on this issue?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I pass that question to my deputy secretary, Ms Hargreaves. I am happy to take whatever we cannot answer on notice.

Ms HARGREAVES: We will take on notice your question about the number of companies. It was enough of a concern that it was a systemic issue that was undermining the sovereign

rights of the titling system. As a result it was a concern to us. As to the legal advice, we would not waive privilege on that.

ANSWER

Based on the information and legal advice provided at the time, it was the opinion of the Department that most of the more than 900 mining leases then active in NSW could have been affected and may therefore have had their validity called into question.

The Department declines to table any legal advice in relation to this issue.

SPECIAL MINISTER OF STATE

1. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In your capacity as Special Minister of State have any of your activities been audited?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: An individual who would be involved in auditing your activities.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

No.

2. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What additional staffing do you have allocated to your office as a consequence of being the Special Minister of State?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

I have no additional staff as the Special Minister of State. My office provides me assistance to carry out my responsibilities as Special Minister of State.

3. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can you also identify who these people are, when you take it on notice?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

Please refer to my previous response.

4. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Have there been any impacts from the Federal budget on any of your activities as Special Minister of State?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: What are the impacts of the 2013-14 Federal budget?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that question on notice.

ANSWER

The 2013-14 Federal budget does not refer to the NSW Special Minister of State.

5. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Have you had any discussions with any Federal Minister in relation to funding in the Federal budget in your capacity as Special Minister of State?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Which budget?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: The 2013-14 budget?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

No.

6. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Assuming you have some staff—which remains uncertain—how many BlackBerries are assigned to those staff members?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

204 phones have been issued to NSW Government Ministerial staff.

7. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many iPhones are assigned to your staff?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

204 phones have been issued to NSW Government Ministerial staff.

8. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many Androids are assigned to your staff? To be fair and reasonable, as this Committee always is, I will ask the Minister to take on notice how many mobile phones his office has.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I appreciate your assistance but I point out that matters relating to my ministerial office budget expenditure resources are a matter for the Department of Premier and Cabinet [DPC]. I understand that the former Government had similar policies and guidelines. So I am happy to take the rest on notice—iPhones, Androids and BlackBerries.

ANSWER

204 phones have been issued to NSW Government Ministerial staff.

9. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you. How many phones have been lost by your office and what is the cost of replacing those phones?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take it on notice.

ANSWER

9 phones were lost from the NSW Government Ministerial staff. The cost is the normal contract price and this cost is claimed through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund.

10. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many iPads does DPC assign and to whom have they been issued?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: That includes laptops?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Yes. We may as well make it iPads and laptops.

CHAIR: This is in the Special Minister of State portfolio, of course?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Yes. How many iPads and laptops have you purchased for your office and to whom have they been issued?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

96 iPads have been issued for the NSW Government Ministerial staff.

11. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many iPhones and mobile phones does DPC assign to your ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

204 phones have been issued to NSW Government Ministerial staff.

12. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many mobile phones have you purchased for your office and to whom have they been issued?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: You are asking the questions I used to ask. I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

iPhones or Smart Phones are supplied by DPC and have not been purchased by NSW Government Ministerial staff.

13. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I look forward to receiving similar answers. How many mobile phones have been lost in your office? How many iPads have been lost in your office? What is the cost of replacing these phones and iPads?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I am happy to take all those on notice. Would you like me to include any office rent?

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Yes, I would be delighted to receive that.

ANSWER

9 phones were lost from the NSW Government Ministerial staff. 0 iPads were lost from the NSW Government Ministerial staff. The cost is the normal contract price and this cost is claimed through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund.

In relation to rent, the existing lease at GMT is due to expire in December of this year and the affected parties are moving into more affordable accommodation. The move is estimated to provide net savings of \$90 million over the next 12 years.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: And vehicles as Special Minister of State?

14. **The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In fact, given the vagaries of the Minister's position, I suggest that I put the remainder of these questions on notice and the Minister can then go and consult with his staffer or staffers—because I am still not sure how many there may be—and then come back with the ephemeral staff of the Minister and we can receive those answers in due course.

CHAIR: That is very cooperative of you, Mr Primrose and the Minister is reminded that when he receives those questions he has 21 days to provide answers.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: Thank you.

ANSWER

I am provided a vehicle as a Minister, and do not receive an additional vehicle as the Special Minister of State.

15. **Dr JOHN KAYE:** You cannot tell the Committee whether you have any staff members who are there by virtue of your position of Special Minister of State. You cannot tell the Committee whether you do anything as Special Minister of State.

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

No question has been asked.

16. **Dr JOHN KAYE:** Let me take you at your word: What are the budget line items about your role as Special Minister of State?

Mr ANTHONY ROBERTS: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

This question should be directed to the Treasurer.