



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 3

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2012-2013

Supplementary Questions on Notice

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 3

The Legislature

Tuesday 9 October 2012

Answers to be lodged by: Friday 2 November 2012

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Questions relating to the portfolio of The Legislature

Tuesday 9 October 2012, 12.15 pm – 1.00 pm

Questions from The Hon. A. R. Fazio MLC

1. What was the cost last financial year of Deloitte auditing the expenditure of members' entitlements? When will this arrangement be reviewed?

The cost of auditing Members' Entitlements in 2011-2012 by Deloitte was \$78,711.64, excluding GST.

The scope of the internal audit and external audits of Members' Entitlements are being reviewed for 2012-13

2. How many people with a disability are employed by the NSW Parliament (excluding staff of members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly)?

As per responses from parliamentary staff to the Parliament's EEO survey, four members of staff (excluding staff of members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly) identified as having a disability.

All staff members are provided with the EEO Data Collection Form survey at the commencement of employment with the Parliament, and completion is optional.

3. Does the Legislature have a target for the employment of people with a disability and if so, what is it?

The Legislature does not have a specific target for the employment of people with a disability. The Parliament is an equal opportunity employer and encourages people with a disability to seek employment for suitable positions. Where necessary, the Legislature puts in place support mechanisms to assist people with both physical and intellectual disabilities.

The Parliamentary departments are currently undertaking a major review of Parliament's corporate policies and forms. The Equal Employment Strategy is part of this review, and is currently being updated.

4. How many people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background are employed by the NSW Parliament (excluding staff of members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly)?

As per responses from parliamentary staff to the Parliament's EEO survey, two members of staff (excluding staff of members of the Legislative Council and the Legislative Assembly) identified as having an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

As noted in response to answer 2 (attached), all staff are provided with the EEO Data Collection Form survey at the commencement of employment with the Parliament, and completion is optional.

One of the two Indigenous staff members is Ms Nyoka Friel. Ms Friel's joined the Legislative Council in November 2011 as a Cadet under the Indigenous Cadetship Program. Ms Friel is a member of the Barkindji people from the Wilcannia area of New South Wales. Ms Friel is in her third year of a five year Arts/Law degree at the University of New South Wales. She will work with the Council for 12 weeks a year for the remainder of her degree. Since she started Ms Friel has worked with the Chamber and Support team, the Committee Office and the Table Office, making a valuable contribution to each area.

Ms Friel is the Council's second cadet under this program, which is supported by the Commonwealth Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations. The Council is very pleased to be able to support Ms Friel during her university studies and to provide her with an opportunity to develop workplace skills and experience.

5. Does the Legislature have a target for the employment of people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background and if so, what is it?

The Legislature does not have a target for the employment of people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background. As demonstrated by the Indigenous Cadet program, the Parliament is keen to find innovative ways to encourage and increase employment for people from an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.

As noted in response to answer 3 (attached), the Parliamentary departments are currently undertaking a major review of Parliament's corporate policies and forms. The Equal Employment Strategy is part of this review, and is currently being updated.

6. How many school visits to Parliament occurred in 2011/2012 and how many are estimated for the current financial year?

There were 15,309 primary, secondary and TAFE student visits to Parliament in 2011/2012. The total number of visits hosted by the Education unit in 2011/2012 was 22,500, which includes school visitors, tertiary groups and community group events.

It is anticipated that the school visits, as well as other visitor numbers will remain constant for the current financial year. In terms of increasing school visitation to the Chambers generally schools require a role play and program in the Chambers which limits school visitation on non sitting days. Nevertheless, in 2013 the Education unit will explore innovative ways to increase access to the Parliament, particular for rural and remote school children, via new teleconferencing facilities at Parliament House.

7. Is the Parliament able to meet the demand for school visits?

The Parliament is currently able to meet the demand for school visits with a staffing component of three full time equivalent positions in the Parliament of NSW Education unit. In the event that the Parliament continues to be adequately resourced to meet the demand for school visits, the Education unit will be involved in a range of activities to enhance the visitor experience to the Parliament by school children. In addition to the daily delivery of information to school groups, the Education unit is involved in updating syllabus content and curriculum requirements in response to the National Curriculum and introduction of civics education as a separate subject. The Education unit is currently devising new role plays, evaluating content and training staff, including House Department chamber and support and attendant staff in new and varied approaches to interacting with school groups.

8. Are any outreach educational services provided by the Parliament and if so, please provide details of these?

The School Outreach Program involves staff from the Legislative Council's Procedure Office and the Department of Parliamentary Services Education Officers accompanying parliamentary committees conducting regional hearings to provide outreach and information sessions to local high school students. The sessions, which last for approximately two hours, include:

- an overview of the State Parliament and its relationship to the community and the government
- discussion of the role and function of the Legislative Council and its committees
- an explanation of the inquiry process, with particular reference to the relevant inquiry
- an opportunity to briefly attend the hearing
- a group workshop with a view to students either undertaking a role play of the public hearing, or writing a submission to the inquiry.

Sessions were held in Taree on 31 October 2011 and in Narrabri on 16 November 2011 as part of the General Purpose Standing Committee No 5 inquiry into coal seam gas, and in Parkes on 2 November 2011 and Broken Hill on 4 November 2011, as part of the State Development inquiry into economic and social development in central western NSW.

More recently, on 2 August 2012, the outreach program delivered a session to students from Deniliquin High School and Deniliquin Christian College. The session was held in conjunction with the public hearing held in Deniliquin for the General Purpose Standing Committee No 5 Inquiry into Public Land Management.

While this School Outreach Program is a great opportunity to reach out to schools outside the metropolitan area and should definitely continue where possible, it is only able to be offered infrequently and is constrained by the location and frequency of regional committee hearings. Given the now extensive use of video conferencing in both primary and secondary schools, the most cost effective way to reach regional NSW is through civics education programming via the connected classrooms facility.

As noted in response to answer 6 (attached), Department of Parliamentary Services' Education unit have started developing and resourcing a video conferencing program for delivery to schools children, particularly from rural and remote areas.

9. When will the selection of house wines for the Parliament be reviewed?

As has been the practice in past years, the Parliament will support and procure only New South Wales wines. A new selection for house wines will be available in early 2013.

10. Will the Parliament take action to stock distilled spirits made in New South Wales?

Parliamentary Catering endeavours to stock a range of locally produced, affordable alcoholic beverages such as apple cider and locally brewed beers. There are only a small number of distilled spirits that are made in New South Wales and that are available wholesale. Generally these spirits are at a higher price point and as a result, there is minimal demand. Parliamentary Catering is always willing to source and stock NSW products where there will be a clear demand.

11. What has happened to the needlework panels that formerly hung in the staff dining room? Will they be on placed on public display in future?

The Botanical Wall Hangings were originally commissioned in 1980 by the NSW Government Architect and Interior Design team. From 1980 until May 2011, these fabric wall hangings had not been cleaned nor conserved. In the latter half of 2011, a Fabric Conservation Expert was engaged in consultation with the artist Heather Dorrough to clean the 12 Botanical Wall Hangings. Since their return from the conservation work, several refurbished rooms within the Parliament have been considered as appropriate places to display the artworks but many do not have enough protection from light or space to guard against bumps and contact with the panels.

The combined length of the artwork is 10.8 metres wide. To display all twelve hangings with some required gaps would take at least 12 metres of wall space. Consideration has been given to hanging the works in several part displays and to rotating a selection of the panels over several years. Currently, other large artworks are occupying the available space. A suitable space for the needlework panels will be determined in the future, when space becomes available. In the meantime, the artworks are in appropriate storage within Parliament House.

12. Why does the Catering Section of the Department of Parliamentary Services use eggplant so frequently and is it true that they regard eggplant as the choko of the new millennium?

The Parliament has a standard policy to source local in-season produce for use in parliamentary dining. Parliamentary Catering regularly reviews its menus and welcomes feedback from Members and staff.