



Rob Stokes MP
Minister for the Environment
Minister for Heritage
Minister for the Central Coast
Assistant Minister for Planning

MD14/6192

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

Dear Mr Smith *Stewart,*

I refer to your letter of 25 August 2014 regarding the Budget Estimates resolution for the portfolios of Environment, Heritage and Central Coast. Please find attached the following documents:

- corrected transcript
- answers to questions on notice within the transcript
- answers to supplementary questions

If you have any questions please contact my Chief of Staff, Mr Tony Chappel on 9228 5434.

Yours sincerely

Rob Stokes
Minister for the Environment
Minister for Heritage
Minister for the Central Coast

11th September, 2014.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 1

Transcript page(s): 4 – 5

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: To be clear, the State target refers to energy consumption in New South Wales, not energy generation. Is that correct?

Mr ROB STOKES: I do not think it was specific in relation to consumption or generation but I can take that specific question on notice.

AND

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 2

Transcript page(s): 5

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: The first document I can find of this Government that refers to a target for the State arose from Morris lemma's greenhouse statement in late 2005 that led to a paper on the New South Wales Renewable Energy Target and made expressly clear that the target was by reference to consumption, not generation. I think it is the case that that policy goal has never changed. Do you agree with me?

Mr ROB STOKES: In relation to specifics about generation or consumption I am happy to take that on notice. But I think the general point, and something that I want to make clear is my commitment and this Government's commitment to see, in an affordable and effective way that brings the community with us, an increase in the use of renewable energy and certainly an increase in renewables as part of the overall energy mix of the State.

RESPONSE

The NSW Government supports the current national target of 20 percent renewable energy by 2020 (noting the NSW Government has recently made a submission to the Review of the Renewable Energy Target supporting extending the timeframe for the scheme). The NSW 2021 Performance Report for 2013-14 states that the metric for this target is "to be developed" because it is not yet defined.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 3

Transcript page(s): 6 – 7

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Minister or Mr Bailey, what is the latest figure you can provide of the total electricity consumed in New South Wales? How much is from renewable sources of electricity?

Mr ROB STOKES: I will refer to Mr Bailey. I want to make the point that part of it is difficult to estimate because we can talk about electricity that is generated from centralised power stations but the one that is tricky to refer to is the more than 240,000 separate—

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Off grid.

Mr ROB STOKES: —rooftop installations that have been installed because the benefit of rooftop solar is that it reduces demand for centralised energy consumption. It is difficult to quantify the impact that that has. We know from projections of the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] that that reduces demand. But the biggest proportion of the centralised contribution would obviously come from hydro power, primarily from the Snowy, but wind and now large-scale solar photovoltaics are starting to make a particular impact. I will refer to Mr Bailey for more information.

Mr BAILEY: The question that has been asked is very complicated and particularly complicated around the fact that the State does not have its own energy market anymore; it is part of a national market so the ability to be able to do the calculations is time-consuming in the amount of work that needs to be done there in its own right.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: But the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] gives us a figure on grid, to acknowledge the Minister's point, to acknowledge what grid consumption is each year, does it not?

Mr BAILEY: Yes.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: So surely that is a big help to you; it breaks it down by State level?

Mr BAILEY: There is no doubt that it is one of the contributing factors that we take into account in the measuring and reporting that we do. The absolute question I would have to take on notice in giving a percentage of charge. We do a series of calculations that assist us in understanding how our contribution exists and working on the numbers of households that will be picked up by the photovoltaic [PV] projects that are being run out of Nyngan and Broken Hill and how they contribute to our work towards capturing the components, as the Minister has mentioned, around the Snowy scheme, and then capturing the smaller components that exist at local community levels and the PV program on houses around New South Wales. The absolute percentage I will take on notice but there are a series of pieces that contribute to us having an understanding of how we are tracking against that 20 per cent.

Mr ROB STOKES: And I can add further, literally off the top of my head so this is a hazy figure but I am pretty sure, that it is around 14 per cent, I think was the latest figure I read. But again that can stand to be corrected on notice. It does obviously change from year to year depending on water volumes in particular, so the contribution of hydro in a wet year can be very significant. So it moves. Also, the other thing that is important to refer to that moves is electricity demand itself and that is perhaps the most powerful component in driving down electricity demand. It is a huge part. The megawatts, the energy we do not use is actually the most efficient form of energy.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: You and I are on a unity ticket on that one, Minister. The most recent figure I can find, gentlemen, is 7,881 gigawatt hours of electricity consumed in New South Wales from renewable generation in 2012. Does that sound about right to you?

Mr ROB STOKES: No, it does not. I suspect that is reflecting a dry year but again we can get you the figures. My other suggestion is that these matters of generation profile are probably more specifically directed to the Minister for Resources and Energy but nevertheless we can find you that information.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Do you think you will be able to assist me with figures more recent than 2012 or is there usually a lag of that time frame?

Mr ROB STOKES: I would have to take that on notice but again it may also be a matter that the Minister for Resources and Energy might be able to shed some light on as well as to actual energy generation and consumption.

RESPONSE

This is a matter for the Minister for Resources and Energy.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 4

Transcript page(s): 11-13

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: We started with the New South Wales 2021 State Plan and we agreed that you are explicitly accountable under goal 22 for the 20 per cent target for renewable energy by 2020. I am seeking to hold you to account by asking questions about what we are doing to achieve that goal. Is it not logical that in seeking to achieve that your office or the Government as a whole would have a projected figure for total electricity consumption for 2020 so that we can then project what 20 per cent would be and work out how we achieve that? Surely we measure this.

Mr ROB STOKES: You quoted a specific figure. Obviously I do not have the specific generation figures in front of me. From memory, the Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] projections were just that—they were projections based on economic growth and the measures were low, medium and high. That is what energy modelling tends to do.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Which one do we use?

Mr ROB STOKES: I will take many of the specifics on notice. While we did agree that the Government is accountable for an overall target, Minister Roberts has oversight of this State's renewable energy aspirations, and I will assist him in that.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: I am asking you about renewable energy consumption. I put it to you and the Minister that it is impossible to track how we will achieve the 20 per cent State target unless in the first instance you can tell us what the Government projects total energy consumption will be in 2020.

Mr ROB STOKES: This is getting technical and we will legitimately have to take the question on notice. However, from memory, the Renewable Energy Action Plan includes a graph that indicates on the basis of projected growth in energy consumption where we are going in terms of energy savings and renewable energy. I see you have it in front of you. From memory, there is a graph—

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: It is well thumbled.

Mr ROB STOKES: There is a graph that provides an indication. Again, the problem is we are in a market that is changing all the time and there are certain things we do not control. One of the biggest drivers is Federal policy, which we do not control. The sorts of things States do control are planning processes and energy-efficiency measures. The Energy Savings Scheme is well regarded as a leading white certificate scheme for energy efficiency.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Sure, but I am asking about measurement.

Mr ROB STOKES: In terms of big economic drivers, they are controlled—quite appropriately—by the Federal Government. We need to work within that context.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: I will get to them in a minute, but it is the case that in Federal legislation there is a gigawatt hour figure for 2020 of 41,000 gigawatt hours. There is a table in the legislation that delivers an annual target. You can construct a graph as there is a trajectory. The legislation the former Labor Government put before the last Parliament had a similar table. You made the point that legislation was not passed by the Parliament. Is it or is it not the case that the Government has a table somewhere that gives us a projected trajectory in order to meet your State Plan target? Do we have that?

Mr ROB STOKES: I can say this sort of data is simply not held within OEH. It is a matter for the Department of Resources and Energy. We can take that on notice and get that for you. These are portfolio issues that we have a strong interest in because of their environmental impact.

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: And Minister Roberts will be before the Committee this afternoon.

Mr ROB STOKES: There are technical specifics. I suspect Minister Roberts will have to take questions on notice because answers will need to provide specific data, which I assume will be held by the Department of Resources and Energy.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: I make the point again: Minister, it is your accountability under the State Plan. You made some very strong statements in your early months as Minister, and I applaud you for them. You are the self-styled Arnold Swarzenegger of Australia when it comes to renewable energy. Surely in order to meet the target you boast of somewhere we have to measure it and set out a trajectory to get there, or does New South Wales not do that?

Mr ROB STOKES: Yes, and that is a matter that I am working with the Minister for Energy and Resources on. I do not want to suggest questions for him, but I suspect the Minister will get his opportunity as well, and these might be questions you can put to him. I will seek that data. I understand it is not specifically within OEH but it is a matter for the Department of Resources and Energy, which is where the Renewable Energy Advocate sits.

The Hon. LUKE FOLEY: Can I put some ballpark figures to you for your comment? The Australian Energy Market Operator [AEMO] medium energy consumption forecast for 2020 for our State is 66,849 gigawatt hours. I think 20 per cent of that is 13,370 gigawatt hours. Earlier you were unable to give me a figure for renewable consumption at the moment or at a recent point in time. If we use the 7,881 figure—you said it might be a bit low, but if we cannot do any better we can start there—is it not the case that we need to ramp up renewables by about 5½ thousand gigawatt hours between 2012 and 2020? Is that ballpark correct?

Mr ROB STOKES: Again, we are talking a bit in the dark, because the specific figure you are after I need to get from the Department of Resources and Energy. You have given me a great opportunity to talk about some of the big projects we have underway. We have had incredible success in being able to work with the Federal Government to unlock funds from the Australian Renewable Energy Agency. I am very confident that each of the projects will be successful—and we know, in relation to the potential solar flagship projects in New South Wales, three of them are up and we have a very good shot, I suspect, of getting another one up, and is Capital Solar as well. That compares very favourably with performance in other States. We have some big projects underway.

RESPONSE

These issues are a matter for the Minister for Resources and Energy.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 5

Transcript page(s): 15

CHAIR: Order! Opposition time has now concluded. We will now move to the crossbench, but before I pass across to Dr Faruqi I will ask a series of short questions so that I do not enter into Dr Faruqi's time. You may care to take these on notice. My questions are related to the supplementary pest control program that you are running. I would like you to advise the Committee on the number of programs that have been completed, the number of animals that have been killed, the number of Office of Environment and Heritage staff involved in each of the programs and the cost of those programs to date.

Mr ROB STOKES: I can provide some reasonably specific information. I can confirm that five supplementary control operations have been conducted to date. They have been in the Cocoparra Nature Reserve, the Murrumbidgee Valley State Conservation Area, the Yanga National Park and Goonoo State Conservation Area. I am advised that all operations were successful and incident free, and a total of 207 pest animals were removed. In relation to the number of staff involved, I will have to take that on notice.

CHAIR: The number of staff and the cost.

Mr ROB STOKES: And the total cost.

Mr BAILEY: I wanted to clarify that the costs we can provide. I will also provide an explanation that the costs at this point in time reflect the fact that the program has been established and it is part of a three-year trial. So the costs reflect the fact that we are doing the trial and the assessment work to get a clear understanding of the program in the long term, and the efficacy of the program in the long term.

CHAIR: I understand that there will be establishment costs in there as well. I will now pass to Dr Faruqi.

RESPONSE

The total cost of the Supplementary Pest Control program, including establishment costs, in 2013/14 was \$1.416 million.

The table below shows dates, locations, and numbers of staff directly involved in managing on-ground shooting operations for each of the five operations undertaken to date.

Date of Operation	Location of Operation	Number of Staff	Number of pests killed
15 Feb 2014	Cocoparra NR	7	2
10/11 May 2014	Murrumbidgee Valley NP and SCA (Yanga)	9	175*
31 May/1 June 2104	Woomargama NP	Day 1: 6 Day 2: 5	nil
19/20 July 2014	Cocoparra NR	5	21
2/3 August 2014	Goonoo SCA	Day 1: 7 Day 2: 4	nil

* This figure was corrected from 184 to 175 as part of post-operation review process.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 6

Transcript page(s): 22

Dr JOHN KAYE: Minister, how many prosecutions has your department brought to court for the destruction of Aboriginal heritage items as a result of mining operations in the past 12 months?

Mr ROB STOKES: That is a specific question in relation to an operational matter of prosecutions and I do not have a direct role in directing prosecution. So I will refer that question to Mr Bailey.

Mr BAILEY: I take responsibility for all decisions associated with the commencement of any prosecutions. It is not a responsibility of the Minister.

Dr JOHN KAYE: How many have you brought to court?

Mr BAILEY: As to the specifics that you are referring to around mining prosecutions, my recollection, which I will correct if—

Dr JOHN KAYE: Yes, please.

Mr BAILEY: It is not for mining. We have not commenced any prosecutions associated with mining approvals.

RESPONSE

Nil.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 7

Dr JOHN KAYE: Have you had any investigations with respect to mining approvals and mining breaches?

Mr BAILEY: Every matter that is reported to us as an agency we have a requirement to investigate. So in the last year of 2013-14, 60 reports regarding Aboriginal cultural heritage were received.

Dr JOHN KAYE: With respect to mining or in general?

Mr BAILEY: In general; I do not have a specific on mining.

Dr JOHN KAYE: On notice, can you break that down by mining and agriculture and other activities?

Mr BAILEY: Yes, and I am referring specifically there to Aboriginal cultural heritage.

Dr JOHN KAYE: That is correct.

RESPONSE

In 2013/14, OEH investigated or commenced investigations into a total of 62 reports comprised of:

- 6 reports of Aboriginal cultural heritage (ACH) impacts from mining related activities;
- 4 reports of ACH impacts from agricultural related activities; and
- 40 reports of ACH impacts from other related activities, many of which were for residential development.

Twelve matters reported in 2013/14, of which five were for mining related activities, require further detailed investigation.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 8

Transcript page(s): 26

The Hon. Dr PETER PHELPS: The Hon. Amanda Fazio's question reminded me of the Coutts Sailors Home in Newcastle. Do you have any details about the progress of the refurbishment being undertaken to retain its heritage values? I refer specifically to the easement area around the home.

Mr ROB STOKES: We will take that question on notice.

RESPONSE

Coutt's Sailors Home site forms part of a composite heritage curtilage that is listed on the State Heritage Register, entitled *Enterprise Park and Coutt's Sailors House (former)*.

The Heritage Council is currently assessing a section 60 application under the *Heritage Act 1977* for the refurbishment of the Coutt's Sailors Home, including modification of an existing approval to reduce structural changes to the fabric of the building.

There is a 50 centimetre wide easement for water drainage on the western boundary of the Coutt's Sailors Home. An easement is not considered development under the *Heritage Act 1977*, therefore, an approval under the *Heritage Act 1977* is not required for the creation of an easement.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 9

Transcript page(s): 28

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I refer to the promise by the Coalition Government to the Gosford City Council that a State Government department will be relocated to the Central Coast. Can you advise which government department is being considered for relocation?

Mr ROB STOKES: I can advise that there are internal conversations underway with a range of possibilities being considered. I note that WorkCover has a significant presence on the Central Coast. I am not in a position to make any announcements today, but I can confirm that those conversations are ongoing.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Can we expect a time line for when those discussions and considerations will be completed?

Mr ROB STOKES: I will take that on notice.

The Government's Decade of Decentralisation policy initiative requires cluster agencies to contribute to achieving the Governments Phase 1 and Phase 2 decentralisation targets and commit to exploring, on an ongoing basis, future regional relocation opportunities.

Agencies are implementing a range of decentralisation strategies and developing plans for future relocation outcomes. Phase 1 of the Government's commitment to the Decade of Decentralisation policy initiative will see a reduction of government held Sydney CBD office accommodation of 100,000m² with 20,000m² already relinquished since May 2013.

Phase 2 will see over 1,500 positions relocated from the greater Sydney metropolitan area to regional NSW by 2021.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 10

Transcript page(s): 30

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Minister, can you name the women's refuges on the Central Coast that have lost funding under your Government and are scheduled to close?

Mr ROB STOKES: In relation to the Going Home Staying Home reforms, there is a significant injection of new money into homelessness services on the Central Coast—an additional \$112,000 is being provided this year.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: That is not my question.

Mr ROB STOKES: We have been through this. You might ask me a question; how I choose to answer it is a matter for me.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Can you name the women's refuges?

Mr ROB STOKES: In terms of specific refuges, there are quite a number. I am aware of at least eight that are operated by Coast Shelter alone. I am not in a position to be able to provide names for each of the refuges.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Do you want to take it on notice?

Mr ROB STOKES: I would be more than happy to take that on notice.

RESPONSE (DPC – CENTRAL COAST)

I can advise, based on the information provided to me by the Department of Family and Community Services, the following:

- Going Home Staying Home builds on decades of best practice by the homelessness sector, to progressively shift from a predominantly crisis-driven response to a well-rounded integrated service system that brings together early intervention, outreach and other supports, as well as crisis responses.
- Importantly, the Going Home Staying Home reforms will continue to include specialist service delivery for women, with or without children, escaping domestic and family violence.
- The specialised assistance needed by women escaping domestic and family violence is embedded into the new services throughout NSW.
- None of the 1,300 government-owned properties used to provide crisis or transitional services across the state will close – services will continue to operate under the new funding contracts.
- The successful service providers under the Going Home Staying Home reforms have demonstrated through the tender process their significant experience and their strong capability to provide the most effective services for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.
- Under the Specialist Homelessness Services program, nine new specialist homelessness service packages will be funded in the Department of Family and Community Services Central Coast District with more than \$5 million per annum over the next three years.
- In addition, an extra \$31.2 million over three years is also being provided across the state to extend the Start Safely program that provides stable, private rental housing for women and children escaping domestic violence.
- The Going Home Staying Home reform is building on the strengths of the current service system and providing a more contemporary approach to respond to the breadth and diversity of client need.

ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND CENTRAL COAST BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING
20 AUGUST 2014

I advise that the following is a list of women's refuges on the Central Coast:

- Kara Women and Children's Refuge provides crisis accommodation and support to single women and women with children. Service provided by Coast Shelter.
- Maya Young Women's Refuge is a specialised medium term youth refuge providing accommodation and support to young women who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Service provided by Coast Shelter.
- Elandra Women's and Children's Service - Toukley Women's Refuge For Domestic Violence. Service provided by Elandra Women & Children's Service.
- Katakudu Women's Housing Program. Service provided by Katakudu Women's Housing Inc.
- Woy Woy Women's and Children's Services provide safe supported accommodation for women and their dependent children who are escaping domestic violence or other intolerable living conditions. They can help with transport arrangements. Service provided by Woy Woy Women's and Children's Services.

In addition to the female only refuges the following also provide accommodation to young women:

- Woy Woy Youth Cottage is a crisis youth refuge which provides temporary accommodation and support to five homeless young women and men aged between 14 and 20. Service provided by Coast Shelter.
- Youth Angle is a youth refuge at Umina which provides temporary accommodation and support to six homeless young women or men aged between 15 and 20. Service provided by Coast Shelter.
- Rumbalara Refuge is a youth refuge which provides temporary accommodation and support for six homeless young women or men. Service provided by Coast Shelter.

The following provide a variety of services to support women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness:

- Pacific Link Community Housing Association
- Coast Shelter
 - Central Coast Homeless Family Brokerage Service - improves service delivery and housing security for homeless persons and those at risk of homelessness.
 - Wyong Accommodation Support Program - provides supported accommodation to homeless families in the Wyong Shire.
- Wesley Mission: Central Coast Independent Living Program
- Samaritans Outreach Team (SORT)
- Central Coast Tenants Advice and Advocacy Service

ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND CENTRAL COAST BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING
20 AUGUST 2014

The following provide a variety of services to support Aboriginal women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

- Bungree Aboriginal Association Inc
- Aboriginal Housing Association

In addition, the Regional Homelessness Action Plan 2010-2014, Central Coast outlines a number of strategies in place and actions that have been taken since 2010.

TRANSCRIPT QUESTION 11

Transcript page(s): 34

Dr JOHN KAYE: Let us go exactly to that with Gosford TAFE. I do not know whether you have spent a lot of time at Gosford TAFE; I have over the years. One phenomenon I have noticed recently is that you can get a parking space in the Gosford TAFE car park easily any time of the day now, whereas you could not before. It is a symptom that Gosford TAFE has gone into substantial decline under this Government. What will you do, given that, for example, as you said, there is 23.7 per cent youth unemployment on the Central Coast—that is exceptionally high; it is three times the statewide average—yet the Tertiary Preparation Certificate and the Higher School Certificate [HSC] are no longer available on the Central Coast through TAFE?

Mr ROB STOKES: There are a number of initiatives and reforms within the vocational training sector, including TAFE. But you have to remember that there are other education providers within the vocational sector. Specifically I refer to Chris Parker's excellent work with the Central Coast branch of Surf Life Saving NSW, which provides a range of vocational training opportunities. We are working to engage a whole range of new programs. There is one in particular that you would be interested in. I was speaking to one of the senior TAFE employees on Saturday night at the Central Coast Business Excellence Awards about the new associate degree in renewable energy technologies being offered by Hunter and Central Coast TAFE in coordination with the University of Newcastle. That course and the next year of study can be turned into a full degree. So there are a range of programs.

Dr JOHN KAYE: But you are not suggesting that somebody seeking a Tertiary Preparation Certificate should go to a surf life saving club, are you?

Mr ROB STOKES: No, certainly not.

Dr JOHN KAYE: So where will they go? With a high level of unemployment, surely having the Tertiary Preparation Certificate and the re-entrant Higher School Certificate available is a critical outcome for the Central Coast, yet they are losing that opportunity?

Mr ROB STOKES: In relation to that specific matter, I will take it on notice and seek a specific answer from the Minister for Education and Communities.

The people of the Central Coast continue to have the opportunity to enrol in the Certificate IV in Tertiary Preparation through Hunter TAFE, including at the Gosford and Wyong campuses.

This program is an equivalent course to the HSC and provides students with an entry pathway to university, TAFE or other tertiary study. It also provides an alternative pathway to tertiary studies for people without the HSC and is highly regarded by universities and other tertiary institutions.