



The Hon Michael Gallacher MLC

Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council
Minister for Police and Emergency Services
Minister for the Hunter

BUDGET ESTIMATES : 27 OCTOBER 2011

PART A - QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE AT HEARING

A1. PARSONS AUDIT REPORT

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: On what date did you receive the report, and are you going to release the full report to the public?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: In terms of the release of the report, that will be a matter for Government when it has had a full opportunity to consider it in consultation with the executive of the NSW Police Force. In relation to the date, I do not have it with me. I will take that on notice and get the date for you.

ANSWER :

I received the report of the audit of police numbers and resources on 1 September 2011.

I am obliged to present the report to the Cabinet. I will be making further announcements regarding the audit and the Government's response in due course.



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A2. NSW CRIME COMMISSION REVIEW REPORT

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Is that voluminous report a public document?

Mr BRADLEY: Some elements of it are public, I would say, yes.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Have they been made public yet?

Mr BRADLEY: No, I do not think they have.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: When might they be made public?

Mr BRADLEY: I would have to look at them and let you know.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Could you let us know?

Mr BRADLEY: Yes.

ANSWER :

The NSW Crime Commission has advised me :

None of the elements of the Report on the Commission's practices and procedures have been made public.

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A3. NSW POLICE FORCE VEHICLES

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: In the Delivering Our Commitments Budget 2011-12 document, I note provision for an extra 110 police vehicles for 2012-13. How many vehicles do the police have at the moment? How many were damaged during the last financial year, and at what cost?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: No surprise, I will have to take on notice the number of vehicles and the amount of damage occasioned to those vehicles, but I will get you an answer.

ANSWER :

The NSW Police Force has advised me :

As at 31 October 2011, there were 3,785 vehicles in the fleet. During the 2010-11 financial year, 2,062 vehicles were damaged. The cost has been estimated by the GIO at \$8.5 million.

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A4. POLICE PROPERTIES BUDGET

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: The budget commitment for police station replacement and upgrades includes only \$4 million for this year of the total of \$69 million over four years; have you any idea where it will be spent?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Where the money will be spent?

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Yes.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: As you would be aware, Mr Borsak, we have obviously conducted an audit of police resources, but I suggest the allocation of funds for resources within the NSW Police Force would fall primarily to the commissioner and his delegation to senior people within the NSW Police Force to determine their priority works and the timelines and the amounts required to fulfil those priority works.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Will we get that information? Will the commissioner provide that to us?

Mr SCIPIONE: We can take that on notice.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: We can take that on notice and get it for you.

ANSWER :

The Liberals and Nationals Government has committed \$69 million over the next four years to build, replace or refurbish police stations across the state.

This year's budget saw the first allocation of these funds, with \$4 million provided to the NSW Police Force to commence planning on the capital works projects.

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A5. NSW CRIME COMMISSION VS PIC LEGAL COSTS

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you accept that it is an extraordinary proposition that you would spend hundreds of thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money seeking to stop the Police Integrity Commission having a full and thorough investigation of an action of the New South Wales Crime Commission?

Mr BRADLEY: Firstly, we did not do that, and your figures are wrong.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How much was spent by the New South Wales Crime Commission?

Mr BRADLEY: Oh, I think those figures have been provided somewhere before. I do not have them with me.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The combined expenditure between the expenditure of the New South Wales Crime Commission and the Police Integrity Commission was of the order of hundreds of thousands of dollars, was it not?

Mr BRADLEY: It may be. I do not have the figures with me.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Could you take that question on notice and provide the answer?

Mr BRADLEY: Yes, I can do that.

ANSWER :

The NSW Crime Commission (NSWCC) has advised me that the following legal professional costs were incurred in actions against the Police Integrity Commission (PIC) :

Proceedings brought by the NSWCC : \$180,448.39 (ex GST)

Proceedings brought by two NSWCC officers : \$ 246,586.22 (ex GST)



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A6. REVIEW OF POLICE HOUSING – ASBESTOS

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Thank you, Minister. When did you first receive a copy of the review of police housing and accommodation in relation to asbestos? When did you first receive that?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: As to the date, I will give you an answer as soon as I am advised. I do not have the answer with me—the date with me.

ANSWER :

This question was answered in the hearing (see p13 of transcript).

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A7. SAFE STORAGE INSPECTIONS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Again to you Commissioner, and I do not expect you will have the answers at your fingertips, how many safekeeping inspections of licensed firearm owners were carried out in the 2010-11 financial year? How many of those were on the premises of licensed firearm dealers?

Mr SCIPIONE: The detail you are after I am told we do not have with us, but certainly we will take that on notice and make it available, sir.

ANSWER :

The NSW Police Force has advised me :

Police records indicate a total of 37,951 safe storage locations were inspected in the 2010-11 financial year. 66 firearms dealer premises were inspected in the same period.

These figures represent the total number of inspections that resulted in the location meeting safe storage requirements. They do not include cases where police were required to attend the same location multiple times in order for safe storage requirements to be met.

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A8. FIREARMS LICENSING OFFICER TRAINING

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Does each local area command have an identified firearms licensing officer? How many hours of training on firearms legislation and administration of that legislation were provided to firearms licensing officers over the last financial year and how many firearms licensing officers participated in that training?

Mr SCIPIONE: Likewise, sir, I will take the question on notice and provide that advice.

ANSWER :

The NSW Police Force has advised me :

The NSW Police Force has 98 authorised Licensing Officer positions. Each Local Area Command has at least one designated Licensing Officer, with some Commands having up to three.

Two licensing training packages are provided. One is a two day workshop incorporating four hours of firearms licensing specific training. This workshop is a prerequisite for attendance at the nine day long Licensing Education Program (LEP), incorporating 16 hours of firearms licensing specific training in Phase II. Training has been delivered at six workshops and three LEPs in the 2010-11 financial year, for a total of 72 hours. The six workshops provided training to 100 officers and the three LEPs trained 64 officers. Some officers may have attended both types of training in that period and not all officers were necessarily designated Licensing Officers at the time of their attendance. All police officers have the power to enforce licensing legislation.

In addition to the workshops and LEPs, presentations on firearms legislation are provided at the Police Licensing Conference. Ongoing support is also provided to Licensing Officers by the Firearms Registry and Alcohol and Licensing Enforcement Command.

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A9. FIREARMS RANGES

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Minister, I do not expect you to answer off the top of your head, but how many firearms ranges are currently approved in New South Wales and how does that compare with the number approved 12 months ago?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I will have to take that on notice, unfortunately; I am not aware of that figure off the top of my head.

ANSWER :

The NSW Police Force has advised me :

As at 29 October 2011 there were 350 approved firearms ranges in NSW.

The number of approved ranges as at 31 December 2010 was 346.

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A10. SHOOTING, HUNTING AND COLLECTING CLUBS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Minister, how many shooting clubs, hunting clubs and collecting clubs are approved in New South Wales and how does that compare with the number 12 months ago?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: The Hon. Amanda Fazio would know it, but I do not, unfortunately, and I will have to get that figure and come back to you.

ANSWER :

The NSW Police Force has advised me :

As at 29 October 2011, a total of 1,028 approvals were issued to 613 clubs in NSW for the following activities :

- o 230 clubs were granted approvals for pistol activities
- o 442 clubs were granted approvals for shooting activities
- o 219 clubs were granted approvals for hunting activities
- o 137 clubs were granted approvals for collecting activities

As at 31 December 2010, a total of 1,018 approvals to clubs in NSW for the following activities (police systems cannot ascertain the total number of clubs historically) :

- o 229 clubs were granted approvals for pistol activities
- o 437 clubs were granted approvals for shooting activities
- o 217 clubs were granted approvals for hunting activities
- o 135 clubs were granted approvals for collecting activities

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A11. CLOSURE AND SALE OF POLICE STATIONS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Is it a fact that since 2005 the State Government has closed 65 police stations across the State and, if so, what percentage of those was in rural and regional areas? Has the Government sold more than \$74 million worth of police stations and residences since 1999 and, again, what proportion of them was in rural and regional New South Wales?

Mr SCIPIONE: I am happy to take that on notice in terms of the percentages you are after.

ANSWER :

I am advised that readily available records date from 2006 when United Group Limited was contracted to manage police properties.

I am advised that in that time, of the police stations closed and sold, approximately half of these were in regional NSW.

I am further advised that for residences, all of those sold were in regional NSW.

The 2004-05 Police Annual Report states that NSW Police operate from 'over 500 police stations'. The 2009-10 Police Annual Report states police 'operate from more than 435 police stations'.

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A12. ACCIDENTAL DISCHARGE OF GLOCKS

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: In relation to the Glock pistol—this is an old favourite of ours—how many accidental discharges were reported in police stations across the State in the last 12 months?

Mr SCIPIONE: I will take that on notice and make sure you get the accurate information you are after.

ANSWER :

The NSW Police Force has advised me :

A search of police information systems has disclosed one incident of a confirmed accidental discharge of a police issue Glock pistol in the last 12 months.

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A13. RURAL FIRE SERVICE BUDGET

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: The budget papers show the actual expenditure on the Rural Fire Service for 2010-11 was nearly \$291 million. This year the projected expenditure is \$285 million. When was the last time the Rural Fire Service budget dropped?

Mr FITZSIMMONS: It has not dropped this year.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: So what is the actual figure for this year?

Mr FITZSIMMONS: The budget papers have been tabled, but for the rural firefighting fund the total expenses are \$285 million and the rural firefighting fund will be in the order of \$271million, which is indicative of about a 5 per cent increase on last year.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: The budget papers from last year show the actual expenditure at \$291 million. What is the reason for the difference in that?

Mr FITZSIMMONS: I will take that on notice but fundamentally there are variations between money that is spent that is ultimately claimed back through emergency funding as well.

ANSWER :

The Rural Fire Service has advised me :

The primary reason for the higher expenses in 2010-11 was expenditure related to disaster responses, including the RFS's response to various natural flood disasters in NSW and Queensland.

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A14. EMERGENCY SERVICES FUNDING REVIEW

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Minister, have you or anyone in the Government initiated a review of the funding system for the emergency services and can you tell us what your personal view as Minister is on the funding model that the emergency services currently has?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: ... The Liberal-Nationals Government has committed to a review of the funding arrangements for emergency services ... I am advised that a steering committee for the review has recently been formed, comprising NSW Treasury, the Ministry for Police and Emergency Services as well as representatives from Fire and Rescue NSW, the NSW Rural Fire Service, NSW State Emergency Service and the Division of Local Government. This Government's commitment to stakeholder consultation remains unchanged and no changes to the current funding arrangements will take place without appropriate consultation with stakeholders occurring first.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Do you have a time frame for that review?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: It has started, and it is underway, and if I can get some time frames for you I will report to you on that.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Could you take that on notice and let us know?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Yes, if there are time frames available I will most certainly get them back to you.

ANSWER :

I am advised that the timeline for the Review is dependent on the critical consultation processes I mentioned at the hearing (see above) and may vary as a result. It is currently expected that a public consultation paper will be released in the first half of 2012.

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A15. QUEENSLAND FLOODS REPORT

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Minister, given that we have just heard there is some input going into a response to the Queensland floods interim recommendations, do you have a timetable as to when that might be released?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: ... This Government is committed to ensuring that the New South Wales response to the recommendations is both well informed and commensurate with the needs of the New South Wales community, and will announce its response shortly.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Is there any approximate time frame for when the public might expect that?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: Unfortunately, I do not have those with me.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Would you be able to take that on notice?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I will take on notice, if we have some time frames.

ANSWER :

The Government is soon to consider an analysis and report by the State Emergency Management Committee and will announce its response shortly thereafter.

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A16. SES VOLUNTEER RETENTION STRATEGIES

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: You talk a lot about your success with recruitment in the cadet level but in relation to retention do you use any specific strategies?

Mr KEAR: Again those strategies are at a local level, so it varies across the State.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Will you take that question on notice and provide answers in relation to some of the key areas?

Mr KEAR: Certainly.

ANSWER :

The NSW State Emergency Service has advised me :

The SES has implemented key recruitment and retention strategies to increase volunteer members in under-represented segments of the workforce, including the introduction of a cadet program to attract younger volunteers, professional development of volunteer leaders and programs aimed at engaging indigenous and culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

The SES has also implemented a Controller Development Program as a key retention strategy and has been delivering the Looking After People program since 2009, which provides people management skills to volunteer Controllers and their Deputies.

Overall volunteer numbers for the past five years have been stable.

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A17. FIRE & RESCUE NSW CAPITAL WORKS

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Commissioner Mullins, what were the top five capital works bids for new stations submitted to this year's budget process and to last year's budget process?

Mr MULLINS: Cabramatta fire station is the first project on the list, and it will cost about \$3.25 million. The list also included the new call centre in Newcastle at a cost of about \$2.9 million. We also bid for new fire stations at Jerilderie and Brewarrina. I am doing this from memory.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: How did this year's list differ from last year's? Although I am sure Brewarrina deserves a fire station, I do not recall it being on last year's list. When was it added?

Mr MULLINS: I will take that question on notice. It has been one of our forward projections, but I am not sure about the priority.

ANSWER :

Fire & Rescue NSW has advised me :

The capital strategy has not changed since 2010-11.

Brewarrina fire station was one of a group of five fire stations (the others being Tea Gardens, Merriwa, Lake Cargelligo and Bankstown) identified for 'pre-planning' in the 2010-11 financial year. Minor capital expenditure of \$150K was allocated in the 2010-11 program for pre-planning, with execution of final design and construction works at four of the locations to be undertaken in 2011-12. Work at the fifth location (Lake Cargelligo fire station) will be undertaken in 2012-13.

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A18. HUNTER : ASHTON COAL MINE

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Minister, are you aware that, due to the large backlog of development applications with the Department of Planning, at least one coalmine—the Ashton coalmine—recently laid off 16 workers? Are you concerned about that, and what are you doing to try to speed up the processing of those applications?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: ... I am not aware of the details in relation to problems that they are having within the context of planning, but I will take that question on notice and get an answer for you.

ANSWER :

These are matters for the Minister for Planning and Infrastructure, and Minister Assisting the Premier on Infrastructure NSW, the Hon. Brad Hazzard MP.

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A19. MINISTER'S VISITS TO THE HUNTER

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Since you were appointed as Minister for the Hunter, how many times have you visited the Hunter and what electorates have you visited?

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I would have to refer to my diary. Sadly, I do not have it with me.

The Hon. STEVE WHAN: Feel free to take that on notice.

The Hon. MICHAEL GALLACHER: I will take it on notice.

ANSWER :

I can assure the Member that since I was first appointed Shadow Minister for Hunter Development (subsequently Shadow Minister for the Hunter) in 2003, I have made a large number of trips to the Hunter, a vast deal more than the current Shadow Minister for the Hunter and Member for Canterbury.

Since I was appointed the Minister for the Hunter in April I have maintained a regular presence in the Hunter.

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