



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5

# **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2011-2012**

## **QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

### **General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5**

Resources and Energy

Friday 28 October 2011

Answers to be lodged by: 23 November 2011

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Hearing date	Portfolio	Answer to be lodged by
28 October 2011	Resources and Energy	23 November 2011 [21 days]

**Questions relating to the portfolio of Resources and Energy**

**28 October 2011, 9.00am – 1.00pm**

**Questions from Dr John Kaye MLC**

1. What is the current status of the works on the substation at Empire Bay?
2. Does the location of the substation infringe or contradict Land and Environment Court orders?
3. Is the Minister aware that Gosford City Council now believes that the Empire Bay substation does in fact infringe on Land and Environment Court orders?
  - a) If not, will the Minister now admit that an alternative site for the substation should have been chosen, and offer his personal apologies to the local community who attempted to highlight the flaws in the location?
  - b) Will the Minister conduct an investigation into this matter?
  - c) What steps has the Minister taken to identify the mistakes made to prevent similarly environmentally damaging, unnecessary and expensive energy infrastructure from being placed in an inappropriate and illegal position?
4. What is the current status of the Avoca-Kincumber-Empire Bay power line?
5. What is the current estimated cost of the Empire Bay substation and the Avoca-Kincumber-Empire Bay power line?
6. Regarding the re-establishment of the Snowy Scientific Committee,
  - a) has the Minister requested two nominations from Victoria, and if so what date was that request made?
  - b) has the Minister received the nominations from Victoria?
  - c) has the Minister requested the four NSW nominations from the relevant NSW authorities and departments?
  - d) what is the Minister's timeline for the re-establishment and start of operation for the Snowy Scientific Committee?
7. Has your department has developed a concept for introducing a "grandfather clause" in which new rooftop solar panel customers can be guaranteed that they can be rolled over into any new scheme following the completion of the IPART review?
  - a) If so, please provide details of this concept.
  - b) Has this concept been submitted to the Premier?
  - c) If so, what was the Premier's response to this submission?
  - d) Will your department be pursuing the "grandfather clause" as a way to keep the rooftop solar industry alive until the outcome of the IPART review is known?
8. How many wind farms have been approved since the government came to power?

9. Are you concerned that the effective moratorium on new wind farms is deterring investment and the growth of jobs in NSW?
10. What evidence do you have of harmful health impacts or otherwise of wind farms. Please provide details of the studies.
11. Has the Minister caused there to be an assessment of changes to legislation, regulation or other instrument to allow small generators to access the local distribution network to distribute and trade energy outside of the national energy market?
  - a) If not, will the Minister consider doing so?

### **Questions from the Hon Amanda Fazio MLC**

12. In relation to Resources
  - a. Minister, are you concerned that Ashton Coal has recently had to lay off 16 workers because of delays in granting approval for the continuation of their mining operation?
  - b. As Minister for Resources are you concerned about the current delays in planning consideration for major resource projects?
13. In relation to Resources
  - a. Is it correct that the Government's moratorium on granting new Petroleum Exploration licences does not apply to the renewal of licences?
  - b. Do you expect renewal of these licenses to be considered and decided before they expire?
  - c. If no, do you find it acceptable that exploration activity will continue after a license has expired until its future has been determined?
14. In relation to Resources
  - a. How many Petroleum license applications are currently outstanding with the Department?
  - b. What has the moratorium meant for those applicants?
  - c. Did all work cease on consideration of the applications or has assessment of the applications continued?
15. In relation to Resources
  - a. Minister, there appears to be approximately 41 Mining Lease applications awaiting decision –
    - i. Has the Government's planning changes delayed the process of considering these applications?
    - ii. What is the impact on employment of any delays?

16. In relation to Resources

- a. Minister, when you are considering renewal of Exploration licenses, will you be requiring an Agricultural Impact Statement?
- b. If so, at what point in the process will these statements be required to be produced?

17. In relation to Resources

- a. Minister, what has been your direct involvement in the development of the Coal and Gas Strategy and the Overarching Coal and Gas Policy?
- b. What has been your direct involvement in the development of the Strategic Regional Land Use Plans?
- c. What has been your Department's direct involvement in the development of the Coal and Gas Strategy and the Overarching Coal and Gas Policy?
- d. What has been your Department's direct involvement in the development of the Strategic Regional Land Use Plans?

18. In relation to Resources

- a. Minister, what has been your direct involvement in the development of the Aquifer Interference Policy?
- b. What has been your Department's direct involvement in the development of the Aquifer Interference Policy?

19. In relation to Resources

- a. Minister, what has been your direct involvement in the development of the Aquifer Interference Regulation?
- b. What has been your Department's direct involvement in the development of the Aquifer Interference Regulation?

20. In relation to Resources

- a. Since the Government has placed a moratorium on coal seam gas exploration until 31 December 2011, what is the process for dealing with licenses that have already expired since making that decision on 21 July 2011?

21. In relation to Resources

- a. Minister, are you aware that since coming into Government, 13 Petroleum Exploration licences have expired and another three will expire before the 31 December 2011?
- b. What is the current process for dealing with these expired licences?
- c. Do you intend on approving all these licences on the 1 January 2012?
- d. Do you already have the licences drawn up?
- e. What action will you be taking with respect to the nine licences that will expire in the first quarter of next year?

22. In relation to Resources

- a. What social, economic and business infrastructure is being put in place to support the development of resource projects in NSW?

23. In relation to Resources

- a. What consultation or discussion did representatives from your Department have with peak mining organisations before the announcement of the increase in State mining royalties in the 2011-12 Budget?
- b. Was any such consultation or discussion held before 6 September 2011?
- c. What consultation or discussion did representatives from your Department have with individual mining companies before the announcement of the increase in State mining royalties in the 2011-12 Budget?
- d. Was any such consultation or discussion held before 6 September 2011?

24. In relation to Resources

- a. What specific amount of money has been allocated in the 2011-12 Budget for conducting or sponsoring scientific research into the geological and water issues associated with coal seam gas mining?
- b. Over the forward estimates what specific amount of money has been allocated for conducting or sponsoring scientific research into the geological and water issues associated with coal seam gas mining?

25. In relation to Resources

- a. What specific amount of money has been allocated in the 2011-12 Budget to develop the royalties' regime that will operate for the coal seam gas industry in this State?
- b. Over the forward estimates what specific amount of money has been allocated to develop the royalties' regime that will operate for the coal seam gas industry in this State?

26. In relation to Energy

- a. Can the Minister confirm that the merger taskforce reporting on options for Essential Energy, Endeavour Energy and Ausgrid will release its report to the public by 1 December 2011?

27. In relation to Energy

- a. Can the Minister confirm that the merger taskforce reporting on Essential Energy, Endeavour Energy and Ausgrid as part of the proposed \$400 million savings, will not include recommendations for either voluntary or forced redundancies?

28. In relation to Energy

- a. Can the Minister confirm that the merger taskforce reporting on Essential Energy, Endeavour Energy and Ausgrid as part of the proposed \$400 million of savings will not include recommendations for the discontinuation of any contractor services?

29. In relation to Energy

- a. Can the Minister confirm the amount of liquidated damages that have become due payable by Eraring Energy as a result of the fire on 28 October 2011?

30. In relation to Energy

- a. What work is being done inside your Department or by outside consultants engaged by your Department, to examine the issue of nuclear power generation in this State?

31. In relation to Energy

- a. Is it the Minister's preferred position that the "polls and wires" in this State remain in public ownership?

32. Phones

- a) How many blackberries does DPC assign to your Ministerial staff and to whom have they been issued?
- b) How many iPads does DPC assign to your Ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?
- c) How many iPads have you purchased for your office and to whom have they been issued?
- d) How many iPhones does DPC assign to your Ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?
- e) How many iPhones have you purchased for your office and to whom have they been issued?
- f) For each phone or device, how much was each bill from April to October?
- g) How many phones or devices have been lost in your office?
- h) What is the cost of replacing those phones or devices?

33. Media/public relations

- a) How many media or public relations advisers are employed for each of your portfolio agencies?
- b) What is the forecast for 2011-12 for the number of media or public relations advisers to be employed and their total cost?
- c) How many media or public relations advisers are employed in your ministerial office?

34. Overseas trips

- a) Have any of your overseas trips in the past year been paid for in part or in full by using public money?
- b) If so, did any of your relatives or friends accompany you on these trips?

35. Office costs

- a) What is the annual remuneration package for your chief of staff?
- b) What is the annual remuneration package for your head media advisor?
- c) What is the annual remuneration package for each of your staff?
- d) What is the estimated expenditure for your office budget in 2011-12?
- e) Have any office renovations or fit outs been undertaken in your ministerial office since April?
- f) If so, could you give details of contracted costs?
- g) What is your office budget?
- h) How many political advisors are in your office?
- i) How many administration staff?
- j) How many Department Liaison officers are assigned to your office?
- k) How many staff in the Department are assigned to Ministerial support duties?

36. Cab charge

- a) In terms of your ministerial office, how much did your office spend on taxi fares, including Cab charge since April?

37. Restructure

- a) Are any of your portfolio agencies undergoing a restructure?
- b) How many jobs are expected to be cut as a result of that restructure?
- c) How many people are expected to have their wages cut as a result of that restructure?
- d) How many voluntary redundancies are expected to be offered as a result of that restructure?

38. Agency costs

- a) What is your agency's catering budget?
- b) Since April, has the agency changed its branding?
- c) How much was spent on rebranding the agency?
- d) How much has been spent on stationary?



39. Correspondence

- a) How long is the average turnaround for responding to correspondence in your agency?
- b) How many pieces of correspondence have been outstanding for more than 60 days?

40. Paying bills on time

- a) Since April, on how many occasions has the agency not paid a supplier or contractor for more than 30 days?
- b) How many bills have been outstanding for longer than that period?

41. In relation to Grants to Non-Government Organisations

- a) Does your department provide recurrent grant funds to non-government organisations? If yes,
  - i. What are the names of all organisations in receipt of funding?
  - ii. What is the total amount of funding received by each organisation, including goods and services tax?
  - iii. On what date was the funding advanced?
  - iv. What was the purpose for each grant or funding advance?
  - v. Was any funding withheld or returned?
  - vi. If so, what were the reasons for withholding or requiring the funding to be returned?
- b) What is the indexation rate applied to non recurrent grant funds in 2011/2012?

42. In relation to feasibility studies, audits, taskforces and reviews:

- a. Is your department currently undertaking any feasibility studies, audits, taskforces or reviews, If so;
  - i. What are the terms of reference or details of each study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - ii. Who is conducting the study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - iii. Was each study, audit, taskforce or review was publically advertised seeking expression of interest or competitive tenders?
  - iv. Is there a contract in place detailing terms of engagement for the study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - v. What is the timeline of each study, audit, taskforce or review?
  - vi. What are the details of any costs involved in each study, audit, taskforce or review?

43. Parliamentary Secretary

- a) Can you please list all travel related costs for your Parliamentary Secretary incurred in their capacity as Parliamentary Secretary since 1 July 2011:
  - i.kilometres travelled
  - ii.accommodation,
  - iii.air fares
  - iv.meals/entertaining?
- b) Can you please provide details of the following activities undertaken by your Parliamentary Secretary since 1 July 2011
  - i.meetings attended in their capacity as Parliamentary Secretary?
  - ii.functions attended in their capacity as Parliamentary Secretary?
- c) How often do you meet with your Parliamentary Secretary?
  - i.Are these meetings documented?
  - ii.Who attends these meetings?
- d) Who provides instructions and direction to your Parliamentary Secretary, you or your Chief of Staff?
- e) Has the Parliamentary Secretary been provided with Speech, Voice or Media Training since becoming Parliamentary Secretary? If so:
  - i.Who conducted the training?
  - ii.When was it conducted
  - iii.Where was it conducted
  - what were the costs of the training?
  - iv.Who paid for the training?

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**There were no additional questions on notice lodged by members relating to the portfolio of Resources and Energy.**