



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 1

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2008-2009

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 1

Ports and Waterways – supplementary hearing

Monday 17 November 2008

Answers to be lodged by: Thursday 11 December 2008

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Questions relating to the portfolios of Ports and Waterways

17 NOVEMBER 2008, 11.15 am – 1.00 pm

Questions from Mr Gay

Port Botany Expansion

In regards to the Port Botany expansion, the NSW Government said in the mini-budget that they'd spend \$750 million on the Port Botany expansion.

1. Will the new port access road raise concerns as far as putting more trucks on already congested feeder roads, including the M5?
2. Are there any plans to install noise barriers along the routes, in particular next to the Port Botany freight railway and along the northern side of the foreshore road?
 - a. Are there any compensation measures being put in place for nearby residents and businesses that will be affected by the noise?
 - b. Was a dilapidation survey completed prior to the start of construction? If not, why?
3. What are the plans for the M4 East if the truck tunnel doesn't go ahead?
4. What are the plans for the operation of a third stevedore at Port Botany?
 - a. What sort of interest has there been?
 - b. What is the Government looking for in potential operators?
 - c. What role do you think competitiveness will play in the selection process?

Mooring Fees

As a result of the mini-budget, mooring fees for Sydney Harbour moorings, east of the Sydney Harbour Bridge have increased.

5. Can you explain why this is the case and how this arrangement came about?
6. Can you explain why a boat owner in Birchgrove is being charged 3 times as much for shore side mooring than people with swing mooring for a boat of similar length in the same locality?
 - a. Do you think this is fair considering swing mooring takes up much more space than shore side mooring?
7. The Government appears to be 'double dipping' by charging a mooring fee based on the value of land rather than the facility in the water. Why is this the case?
8. How does NSW Maritime justify its pricing structure and why there is such a vast difference for boats of similar lengths in the same location?
9. Does NSW Maritime have the authority to charge land rates and taxes in addition to controlling the use of water space?

10. Do you accept NSW Maritime needs to alter its pricing structure?

Pasha Bulker

NSW Maritime's Investigation Report into the Grounding of the Pasha Bulker left critical issues unaddressed relating to why radio communications (which may have led to charges against the ship's master) were not recorded.

11. Do we know yet why was this the case?
a. Does NSW Maritime feel this a critical aspect of the report?

The report found one of the reasons the Pasha Bulker ran aground was because it was not ballasted for heavy weather.

12. Can the Department provide any more detail as to why this was the case?

An Australian Government press release in May stated "the substantial ship queue of 57 ships increased the risk in the anchorage and another near grounding, a near collision and a number of close-quarters situations at the time.

13. Why was this not brought to light through investigations by State Government agencies?

The final ATSB Transport Safety Investigation Report said, "Newcastle Vessel Traffic Information Centre did not cancel the scheduling berthing of any ship even after weather conditions had become severe. This may have compounded the confusion of some masters about the appropriate time to leave the anchorage."

14. Should this have also been identified earlier?

Life Raft Inspections

The issue of life raft inspections for vessels travelling up to 20 miles out to sea is of increasing concern to many operators. Inspections now have to occur every 12 months as opposed to the previous arrangement of two years.

The cost to the operator for the annual life raft inspection is \$2,500 per life raft.

15. Can you state why these inspections are required to be carried out annually?
16. Although a price can't be put on safety, can you detail the reasons for the change, given the procedure is of considerable expense to marine charter operators?

CBS Scheme

You will recall The Australian Competition and Consumer Commission was forced to grant interim authorisation to Port Waratah Coal Services in March last year to immediately reinstate an amended capacity balancing system after a queue of 70 vessels were banked up at Newcastle Port.

You will also recall that last year the ACCC again granted interim authorisation for Newcastle Port to use the capacity balance system until December 31 this year.

In December last year the ACCC very clearly warned that the solution was only a band aid one and that a long term solution was desperately needed to properly address the constrained capacity problem.

The ACCC has now announced it will ban the current CBS allocation scheme from January 1 because it breaches trade practices rules.

17. Are we going to see a repeat of what happened last year because the Government has refused to sign off on the Nick Greiner plan?
18. What concerns did your department have with the Greiner plan?
19. What plans have the department been developing to cover this situation?

White Bay/Port Kembla

On the weekend the last car carrier to visit Sydney Harbour delivered its cargo at Glebe Island.

Your Minister Joe Tripodi said;

“Although this is the last car carrier to visit, Sydney Harbour will remain a working port.”

20. Apart from cruise lines ships, how else is Sydney Harbour still going to be a working port?
21. What’s your reaction to claims the move to Port Kembla could result in some imports shifting to ports in other states, while impacting employment in NSW?
22. How many jobs- including stevedores jobs - were lost as a result of moving the car carriers to Port Kembla?
23. Was alternative employment arranged for them? Were they looked after?
24. It’s been estimated the relocation would add up to 50,000 truck movements a year to the roads linking Sydney to Wollongong, has your department been working on a plan to ease the impact on the road system?
25. If so when will the plan be implemented?

(The CEO of the Port Kembla Port Corp Dom Figliomeni said this month;

“It will be inevitable that there will be more traffic on the road, but we are working very closely with one particular proponent to look at the movement of cars by rail in the medium term.

“There is a fair bit of work underway, but unfortunately that won’t be ready for a couple of years.”

Harbour safety patrols

In our last Budget Estimates Hearing the Minister said night - time patrols on Sydney Harbour had increased by 100% and would increase a further 100% at the start of the boating season (Hansard attached).

The Minister did not tell us what the base figure was of patrols increased by 100%.

26. Given we are now in the busy summer boating season and in wake of the harbour tragedy we saw earlier this year where six young people died, do you agree harbour safety is a very important issue?
27. Can you then tell me exactly how many night patrol officers you have on Sydney Harbour?
28. How many do you have during the day?
29. Are the night time patrol staff newly hired or were they taken from the day time shift?
30. There was a 4% funding cut to NSW Maritime in the State Budget funding this year.
31. What impact has the funding cut had on the department? What areas have suffered as a result of the funding cut?