

**GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO.6
2015/16 Budget Estimates**

**Answers to Questions on Notice – 4 September 2015
Local Government Portfolio**

Local Government Misc.

Question 1

What governance structure are you proposing to put in place for any forcibly amalgamated councils following your 'Fit for the Future' process, until elections are eventually held?

- a) Are you going to appoint administrators?
- b) How are they going to be selected?
- c) Will there be any role for current mayors and general managers?

Answer

The Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal will be submitting its report on councils' Fit for the Future proposals in October for the Government's consideration.

Question 2

What steps will the government take to ensure employees of any amalgamated councils are offered the same five year guarantee of no forced redundancies?

Answer

There are no plans to remove the current employment protection provisions from the Local Government Act.

Question 3

A number of the forcibly amalgamated councils in Queensland have now de-amalgamated. Now a number of areas in the amalgamated city of Auckland in New Zealand are also seeking to de-amalgamate, and the process has been backed by the High Court. Under your Fit for the Future forced amalgamations, what legal and administrative process will you put in place if communities wish to de-amalgamate at some stage in the future?

Answer

Please refer to the response to Question 1.

Question 4

How much has been spent by local councils in NSW to comply with the requirements of the Fit for the Future policy, including making the submissions that are being assessed by IPART?

Answer

Business case studies were completed by a number of councils during the Fit for the Future process. The Office of Local Government also provided support and matched funding for these studies.

Question 5

Will the NSW Government force through the council mergers against the wishes of the councils involved?

Answer Please refer to the response to Question 1.

Question 6

Given that nationally around 14,000 dog bite victims present at hospitals each year, and four people every day are hospitalized, what action have you taken to ensure that a nationally consistent approach is put in place to reduce the harm caused by dangerous dogs, including a register of dog bites to track incidents and record the value or otherwise of actions such as banning specific breeds?

Answer

New South Wales has the only state wide government managed central register of companion animals in Australia. The NSW Government is committed to enhancing existing systems to make them publicly available so that NSW pet owners can be responsible for their own pets and manage records including pet registration, notification of changing address and notification of change of ownership of pets.

For those animals that cause harm, NSW has a rigorous regime for dealing with aggressive and dangerous animals. In 2013 the NSW Government introduced a new category of control for menacing dogs in addition to existing nuisance and dangerous categories. The Companion Animals Act provides stringent control requirements for those animals that fall within any of the categories and strong penalties can apply to owners who fail to meet the control requirements.

NSW has declared 4 breeds of Dog to be restricted. They are the American Pitbull or pitbull terrier, the Dogo Argentino, the fila Brasileiro and the Japanese Tosa. Any dogs restricted by the Commonwealth under the *Customs Act 1901* are also restricted in NSW.

Question 7

In relation to your 'Cogs' advertising campaign regarding local councils:

- a) What factors were considered to determine that Saatchi and Saatchi's proposal considered the best?
- b) Was Saatchi and Saatchi's proposal the least expensive?
- c) What was the brief given to Saatchi and Saatchi?
- d) What was the budget for the entire Cogs campaign?
- e) What was the budget for the Saatchi and Saatchi part of the campaign?

Answer

The public information program complies with all necessary requirements. Costs are published in the annual report.

Question 8

Given the issue of cost shifting from other levels of government onto local councils, why are the proposed lower interest loans proposed to be made available by Government, not currently available to local councils?

Answer

Councils who are deemed Fit for the Future and meet TCorp's credit criteria will be able to access the State debt financing facility once established. All councils will also have access to financial advice from TCorp.

Question 9

What progress has the government made in implementing the 58 out of the 65 ILGRP recommendations that it supported or partially supported? Will the government provide an implementation report on each one?

- a) In particular, what are the details of the implantation of the 11 recommendations which relate to the funding model for local government?

Answer

This government is committed to long-term meaningful reform in local government.

We are:

- Working to build more sustainable councils by providing access to cheaper finance for those who have demonstrated responsible financial management, improving councils' skills with treasury management and long-term financial planning.
- Working to build more accountable councils, with oversight from the Auditor General and a more consistent and meaningful system of performance measurement.
- Working to build more efficient councils, with greater emphasis on service review, achieving savings and performance improvement.
- Simplifying the relationship between the NSW Government and local government to remove obstacles and enable the integration to deliver infrastructure and services to our communities.
- Streamlining the legislation guiding local government and cutting red tape.
- Consulting on the first amendments to the Local Government Act, which will enable many of the Independent Panel's recommendations for change to be introduced – recommendations for more stable civic leadership through longer terms for Mayors.

Question 10

Have there been any meetings within government to consider cutting the number of local councils in Sydney from 41 to around 22?

- a) If so, when were these meetings held?
- b) Who was involved?
- c) What was the outcome of the discussion?

Answer

The Independent Local Government Review Panel recommended reducing the number of councils in Sydney to 15-18.

The Fit for the Future process asked councils to consider these recommendations as a starting point for their Fit for the Future proposals.

Government has received suggestions for local government reform from councils, stakeholders and members of the community and will consider these alongside the IPART report on council Fit for the Future proposals.

Question 11

Was your office first made aware of concerns relating to Auburn Council and the operation of section 451 of the Local Government Act in December last year?

- a) If not, when did your office become aware?
- b) What action do you propose to take?
- c) Why has it taken you so long to take any action?

Answer

On 16 September 2015 the *Local Government Amendment (Councillor Misconduct and Poor Performance) Bill 2015* was introduced into Parliament. This Bill addresses a number of issues including the operation of s 451 and matters related to Auburn Council.

Question 12

On how many times since it was enacted have the disclosure provision of sections 451 (4) and (5) been used?

- a) In what councils were they used, and on how many occasions in each case?

Answer

This information is not collected or held by the NSW Government and is a matter for each Council.

Ministerial Office Administration

Question 13

How many staff are in your ministerial office?

- a) What was the average salary for staff members in your office during 2014-15?
- b) What is the average salary for a ministerial staffer in your office based on current appointments?

Answer

1. Ministers' staff numbers and salary bands are available on the DPC website.

Question 14

How many blackberries/smart phones are assigned to your staff?

- a) For each phone, how much was each bill in the past financial year?
- b) How many phones have been lost or replaced due to damage in your office?
 - i. What is the cost of replacing those phones?

Answer

1. There were 227 phones in use across all Ministers' offices in 2014/15. The total usage cost of these smart phones and other mobile devices was \$354,992, a 37 per cent reduction on 2008/09 expenditure of \$578,691. There were 10 lost devices (phones and iPads) across the Ministry in 2014/15. The cost of replacing any lost or stolen devices is claimed through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund.

Question 15

How many iPads or tablets does DPC assign to your Ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?

- a) What is the cost of providing iPads or tablets to your Ministerial Office?
- b) How many iPads or tablets have been replaced due to lost or damage?
 - i. What was the cost of replacing these devices?

Answer

1. There were 130 iPads in use across all Ministers' offices in 2014/15. There were 10 lost devices (phones and iPads) across the Ministry in 2014/15. The cost of replacing any lost or stolen devices is claimed through the NSW Treasury Managed Fund.

Question 16

Did any your or your Ministerial staff incur data charges on a mobile phone or tablet device greater than \$1000 for a single billing period?

- a) If so, how many times did this occur?
 - i. What was the individual cost of each data charge over \$1000 for a single billing period?

Answer

The total usage cost of mobile devices such as smart phones and iPads across all Ministers' offices including data charges was \$354,992 in 2014/15, a 37 per cent reduction on 2008/09 expenditure of \$578,691.

Question 17

Has any artwork been purchased or leased for display in your office?

- a) What is the cost of this?

Answer

No

Question 18

Have any floral displays or indoor plants been hired or leased for display in your ministerial office?

- a) If so, what was the cost of these items?

Answer

No

Question 19

What is the total cost of all subscriptions by you and your staff to online news services, newspapers, magazines, journals and periodicals?

- a) What are these services/newspapers/magazines/journals/periodicals?
i. Who is the subscriber for each of these?

Answer

The office subscribes to a modest number of publications, the cost of which is managed within the office's budget.

Question 20

What was the total value of all gifts purchased for use by you and your office?

- a) What were the gifts purchased?
i. Who were they gifted to?

Answer

Nil

Question 21

Do you purchase bottled water or provide water coolers for your office?

- a) What is the cost of this?

Answer

No

Question 22

Can you advise the names of all contractors/consultants employed and/or paid for by your office, under any agreement, contract or fee-for -service arrangement in 2014-15?

- a) Do they have ABN's?
i. If so, please provide details?
b) Details of paid or unpaid invoices and amounts?
c) Details of services and fees provided by each contractor and or consultant?

Answer

None

Question 23

Details of the agreement between your office and any contractors/consultants engaged by your office?

Answer

N/A

Ministerial and Office Travel

Question 24

Have any of your overseas trips in the past year been paid for in part or in full by using public money?

- a) If so, did any of your relatives or friends accompany you on these trips?

Answer

Details of overseas travel including costs are published on the Department of Premier and Cabinet's website.

Question 25

Have you undertaken any official overseas travel that was privately funded?

- a) What were the nature of these trips?
b) Who paid for these trips?

Answer

No

Question 26

What was the total bill for your office in 2014-15 for:

- a) Taxi hire
b) Limousine hire
c) Private hire care
d) Hire car rental

Answer

Expenditure on taxies across the Ministry in 2014/15 was \$84,257. This compares with 2009/10 expenditure of \$175,776.

Question 27

Have you ever used Uber?

- a) If yes, were any of these occasions in an UberX vehicle?

Question 28

Have you or anyone in your office used Uber services travelling to or from work-related events, meetings or functions?

- a) Were any of those services in an UberX vehicle?

Question 29

Have you or anyone in your office sought reimbursement for using Uber services to travel to or from work-related events, meetings or functions?

- a) What is the value of those reimbursements?

Question 30

Have you used Airbnb?

Question 31

Have you or anyone in your office used Airbnb as an accommodation solution whilst travelling on official business?

Question 32

Have any planes or helicopters been chartered by you or your office and paid for with public money?

- a) If yes, will you please detail each trip, the method of transport and the cost?

Answer 27-32

No

Question 33

What non-standard features are fitted to your ministerial vehicle?

- a) What is the cost of each non-standard feature?

Answer

Nil

Labour Hire Firms

Question 34

Do any Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities utilise the services of Labour Hire Firms? If yes, please advise in table form:

- a) The names of the firms utilised
- b) The total amount paid to each firm engaged
- c) The average tenure period for an employee provided by a labour hire company
- d) The longest tenure for an employee provided by a labour hire company
- e) The duties conducted by employees engaged through a labour hire company
- f) The office locations of employees engaged through a labour hire company
- g) The highest hourly or daily rate paid to an employee provided by a labour hire company

Answer

Staff numbers are included in the annual report.

Media And Public Relations

Question 35

How many media or public relations advisers are employed for each of your portfolio agencies?

Answer

One.

Question 36

What is the forecast for the current financial year for the number of media or public relations advisers to be employed and their total cost?

Answer

There are currently no plans to increase the number of staff undertaking media or public relations activities.

Question 37

What is the total cost of media monitoring services used by Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities?

Answer

The NSW Government purchases all commercial media monitoring centrally through the Department of Premier and Cabinet which delivers significant savings through aggregated procurement. The total cost of the whole of government service in 2014/15 was \$1,775,042 compared to \$2,394,973 in 2009/10.

Question 38

Have you had media training or speech training?

- a) If yes, who paid for it?
- b) If paid by taxpayers, what was the amount?

Answer

No

Consultants, Lobbyists And Former Parliamentarians**Question 39**

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Chris Hartcher in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 40

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Andrew Stoner in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 41

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Tim Owen in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 42

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Craig Baumann in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 43

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Andrew Cornwell in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 44

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Chris Spence in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 45

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Darren Webber in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 46

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Garry Edwards in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Question 47

Have you, your office or your Departmental Officers had any meetings with former MP Bart Bassett in the time since he has left the Parliament?

- a) Who attended those meetings?
- b) What was the nature of those meetings?
- c) What was discussed?
- d) Were any records of those meetings kept?

Answer 39-47

Information regarding scheduled meetings held with stakeholders, external organisations and individuals are published in accordance with Memorandum 2015-07 Publication of Ministerial Diaries.

The Government has disclosed 3,934 meetings since the policy commenced in July 2014.

Question 48

Has the consultancy company Premier State done any consultancy work for the Department? If so what projects was Premier State consulted on?

- a) What was the cost of the consultancy work for each project?
- b) Was there a tender process for these projects?

Question 49

Does Premier State currently have any contract work with the Departments/agencies under your portfolio responsibility?

- a) If yes, what is their role in the project?

Answer 48-49

No

Consulting**Question 50**

How much have the Department/agencies under your portfolio responsibility spent in legal costs?

- a) For what specific purposes or matters was legal advice sought?

Question 51

Have Department/agencies under your portfolio engaged any consultants to provide the following services or advice:

- a) Social media
 - i. And the cost of these services
- b) Photography
 - i. And the cost of these services
- c) Acting training
 - i. And the cost of these services
- d) Ergonomics
 - i. And the cost of these services

Answer 50-51

Financial statements, including Legal Services expenditure and expenditure on consultants, are available in agency annual reports.

Department/Agency Administration

Question 52

How many redundancies were processed by Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities during 2014-15?

- a) Of these redundancies, how many were:
 - i. Voluntary
 - ii. Forced
- b) What was the total cost of all redundancies?

Answer

Voluntary redundancies are a component for agencies to achieve their efficiency dividends. The number of voluntary redundancies achieved by May 2015 was almost double the Government's original target of 5,000 positions by June 2015, as announced in the 2011/12 Budget. The Labour Expense Cap introduced in the 2012/13 Budget also continues to give Secretaries as much flexibility as possible to achieve these savings in the most appropriate ways to meet the service requirements of their agencies. Nurses, police officers and teachers in schools have been quarantined from this measure.

Question 53

Have any staff who received a redundancy in the last two years undertaken any paid work or provided any paid services for the agency with which they were formerly employed?

- a) What was the nature of these works/services?
- b) What was the total cost of these works or services?

Answer

No

Question 54

Are any staff formerly employed by your ministerial office now employed by Departments/agencies under your portfolio responsibility?

Answer

No

Question 55

How many staff were dismissed from Departments/agencies under your portfolio responsibilities in 2014-15?

- a) What were the reason/s for each dismissal?

Answer

Nil

Question 56

How much was spent on corporate hospitality by Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities during 2014-2015?

Answer

Costs are managed within each agency's recurrent budget.

Question 57

How much was spent on indoor plant hire and maintenance by Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities during 2014-2015 year?

Answer

Nil

Question 58

How much did Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities spend on restaurant bills during the year 2014/2015?

- a) How much of these bills were alcohol?

Answer

Costs for restaurant meals incurred by employees of the Department in the conduct of official business are managed within the agency's recurrent budget.

Question 59

Were instances of internal fraud detected by Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities during 2014-2015?

- a) What was the sum total of any such fraud and what was the result of any investigations?

Answer

No

Question 60

How large is the Department's vehicle fleet?

- a) What is the composition of this fleet in terms of engine size?
 b) How many of the fleet were involved in an accident during the year 2014-2015?
 c) What was the total cost of insurance claims and repairs?

Answer

6

- a) Two 3.5 litre engines, two 2.2 litre engines, one 2.5 litre engine, one 1.8 litre engine
 b) Nil
 c) Nil

Question 61

How much did departments/agencies spend on newspaper and journal subscriptions during 2014-2015?

Answer

\$43,261

Question 62

How many SES employees are employed within departments/agencies under your ministerial portfolio?

- a) What is their remuneration band?
- b) For each SES employee, how many have:
 - i. 0 staff reporting to them;
 - ii. less than 2 staff reporting to them; and
 - iii. less than 5 staff?

Answer

- a). 1 x SES Grade 2: \$195,601 - \$209,800
1 x SES Grade 4: \$238,301 - \$259,850
1 x SES Grade 7: \$336,851 - \$422,500
- b). (i) Nil
(ii) Nil
(iii) 3

Question 63

How many sick days, leave days or days attributable to workers compensation were lost for each department/agency within your portfolio responsibility during 2014-15 for:

- a) workplace bullying;
- b) stress leave; and
- c) sick leave?

Answer

- a). Nil
- b). Nil
- c). 120

Question 64

Do any of the departments/agencies under your portfolio area employ actors for staff training?

- a) If so, what is:
 - i. the size of the contract for the provision of actors for staff training in your departments?
 - ii. the term of the contracts for the provision of actors for staff training in your departments?
 - iii. the tender numbers for each of the contracts

Answer

No

Department/Agency Travel**Question 65**

What was the total expenditure in 2014-15 by Departments/agencies within your portfolio on:

- a) Taxi hire
- b) Limousine/private car hire
- c) Hire car rental

Answer

- a). \$1,662
- b). Nil
- c). \$10,393

Question 66

Do the Departments/agencies within your portfolio have a policy on utilising Uber services for travel on official business?

Answer:

No

Question 67

Have staff in your Department/agencies either paid for with departmental funds or been recompensed for official travel using Uber services?

- a) Were any of these payments for UberX services?

Answer:

No

Question 68

Have staff in your Department/agencies either paid for with departmental funds or been recompensed for official travel using Airbnb services?

Answer

No

Question 69

Did any officers within departments/agencies under your ministerial portfolio use charter aircraft during the year 2014-2015?

- a) If so what was the purpose and cost?

Answer

No

Departmental/Agency IT

Question 70

Do the Departments/agencies within your portfolio have an iTunes account?

- a) What was the total expenditure in 2014-15 on iTunes?
 - i. What applications/subscriptions/services were purchased through iTunes?

Answer

No

Question 71

Do the Departments/agencies within your portfolio have an Android account?

- a) What was the total expenditure in 2014-15 on Android?
 - i. What applications/subscriptions/services were purchased through Android?

Answer:

No

Question 72

How many Department/agency mobile phones, tablets and laptops were replaced due to loss or damage during 2014-2015?

- a) What was the total cost of replacing these items?

Answer

Nil

Question 73

Did any staff within departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities incur data charges on a mobile phone or tablet device greater than \$1000 for a single billing period?

- a) If so, how many times did this occur?
 i. What was the individual cost of each data charge over \$1000 for a single billing period?

Answer

No

Efficiency Dividend**Question 74**

What was the efficiency dividend required of the department in the 2014/15 financial year?

Question 75

What is the efficiency dividend required of the department in the 2015/16 financial year?

Question 76

What savings measures were implemented by the Department for:

- a) 2014/15 financial year
 b) 2013/14 financial year
 c) 2012/13 financial year?

Question 77

What actual savings were achieved by each strategy in:

- a) 2014/15 financial year
 b) 2013/14 financial year
 c) 2012/13 financial year?

Question 78

What reduction of staff occurred and at what cost as a result of each strategy in:

- a) 2014/15 financial year
 b) 2013/14 financial year
 c) 2012/13 financial year?

Question 79

For the 2015/16 financial year:

- a) What savings measures will the Department save?
 b) What is the expected saving to be achieved for each measure?
 c) Will they require a reduction in staffing?
 d) How many positions within the Department remain unfilled due to the imposition of savings measures?

Answer 74-79

In the 2015-16 Budget, the Government has committed to deliver savings by implementing further efficiency and savings measures as well as policies to eliminate duplication in Government operations and reduce procurement costs. Savings measures are detailed in the Budget Papers. Voluntary redundancies are a component for agencies to achieve their efficiency dividends. The number of voluntary redundancies achieved by May 2015 was almost double the Government's original target of 5,000 positions by June 2015, as announced in the 2011/12 Budget. The Labour Expense Cap introduced in the 2012/13 Budget also continues to give Secretaries as much flexibility as possible to achieve these savings in the most appropriate ways to meet the service requirements of their agencies. Nurses, police officers and teachers in schools have been quarantined from this measure.

Section 451 of the Local Government Act**Question 80**

How many current term councillors is the Minister or Department aware of who also work as property developers, real estate agents or conveyancers in their local government area?

Answer

The Office of Local Government's *NSW Councillor and Candidate Survey* from the 2012 council elections indicate that 0.3% of elected councillors (4) identified their occupation as "property developer", while 1.6% (23) identified their occupation as "real estate agent". Nobody identified their occupation as "conveyancer".

Question 81

Can the Office of Local Government provide a copy of the advertising compliance certificate for the Fit for the Future advertising campaign?

Answer

Please see attached.

Question 82

What was the original quote for the entirety of the work by Saatchi and Saatchi for the work they have done and are doing on the Fit for the Future advertising campaign?

Answer

Costs are published in the annual report.

Question 83

Given it is likely that the cost of the Fit for the Future advertising campaign (including the costs of Saatchi and Saatchi) will exceed \$1,000,000 why was section 7 of the Government Advertising Act 2011 not complied with.

Answer

The public information program did not exceed \$1,000,000.

Question 84

Who undertook the peer review of the Fit for the Future advertising campaign?

Answer

The NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Question 85

Can the Minister advise if his government distributed a list of Sydney's councils with a proposal to reduce the number of councils from 41 to 22?

- a) If no, why did the Minister not deny reports to this effect in the Sydney Morning Herald and Daily telegraph to your government distribute a list of Sydney's councils with a proposal to reduce the number of councils from 41 to 22?
- b) If yes, please provide the committee with a copy of the list.
- c) If yes, which councils were on the list as being proposed for merger and with which councils were they proposed to be merged?

Answer

Please refer to the response to Question 10.

10/50 clearing code of practice

Question 86

How many hazard complaints have local councils received regarding the 10/50 tree clearing code of practice?

- a) What are the resource implications for councils receiving hazard complaints?

Answer

The Office of Local Government does not collect this information.

Question 87

How many compliance investigations have local councils undertaken directly related to the 10/50 tree clearing code of practice?

- a) What are the resource implications for councils undertaking these compliance investigations?

Answer

The Office of Local Government does not collect this information.

Question 88

As Local Government Minister have you made any representations to the RFS about the code to seek to allow Local Councils to seek exemptions from the code?

Answer

No

Question 89

Can the Minister explain the inconsistent treatment of dangerous and menacing dogs under the *Companion Animals Act 1998*?

Answer

The control requirements for menacing dogs and dangerous dogs are different. They are part of a tiered system of response and control for dealing with dogs that have demonstrated aggressive behaviour.

Question 90

Can the Minister advise why there are currently no local court appeal rights for dogs that are declared "menacing", despite the fact that the more dangerous classification of "dangerous" dog does allow for a local court appeal process?

Answer

Before a dog is declared a menacing dog, the owner has the opportunity to make representations to the council as to why the declaration should not be made. The authorised council officer must consider these representations before making the decision. The level of control for a menacing dog is less onerous than that required for a dangerous dog.

Local Council Pounds**Question 91**

What steps are being taken to ensure that Council Pounds are managed to comply with:

- a) The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979?
- b) The NSW Animal Welfare Code of Practice No 5 - Dogs and Cats in Animal Boarding Establishments?
- c) The Companion Animals Act 1998?
- d) The Impounding Act 1993?

Answer

Councils manage their own operations through the General Manager under the direction of the elected body.

Question 92

How many complaints regarding incidences of non-compliance in Council Pounds have been lodged in the last financial year?

Answer

Councils report annually on pound activities including rehoming and euthanasia rates. Any non-compliance with the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 or Animal Welfare Codes of Practice are reported to the RSPCA or Animal Welfare League.

Question 93

How many Council Pounds have been declared non-compliant in the last financial year?

Answer

None.

Question 94

What steps are being taken to ensure that all councils comply with providing the mandatory pound reporting data to the Office of Local Government?

Answer

Councils manage their own operations through the General Manager under the direction of the elected body. The Local Government Act 1993 provides reporting requirements for Councils on pound activities annually.

Question 95

Are the RSPCA, Animal Welfare League or the NSW Police compelled to notify the Minister for Local Government where there is any incident or instance involving breaches of Acts or complaints concerning a council pound?

- a) If not, why not?
- b) If yes, which council pounds have been investigated following complaints?

Answer

The RSPCA and Animal Welfare League report to the Minister for Primary Industries.

Question 96

How many grants have been provided under the Responsible Pet Ownership Grants Program for local councils in NSW?

- a) Which councils have these grants been provided to?
- b) What is the total amount of money that has been provided through these grants?

Answer

Information on the Responsible Pet Ownership Grants Program can be found on the Office of Local Government website.

Question 97

Can the Minister confirm that discounted registration fees will apply to all animals from groups registered under Section 16(d) of the Companion Animals Act, as recommended by the Companion Animals Taskforce?

Answer

The 50% discounted registration fee applies to cats and dogs sold by eligible pounds or transferred from an eligible pound or shelter to a rescue group holding an exemption from registration provided by clause 16d of the Companion Animals Regulation 2008.