



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE NO. 5

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2009-2010

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

General Purpose Standing Committee No. 5

Climate Change and the Environment

Thursday 17 September 2009

Answers to be lodged by: Tuesday 13 October 2009

Budget Estimates Secretariat
Telephone 9230 3528
Fax 9230 2981
budget.estimateds@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Hearing date	Portfolio	Answer to be lodged by
17 September 2009	Primary Industries, Mineral Resources	13 October 2009 [21 days]
17 September 2009	Commerce	13 October 2009 [21 days]
17 September 2009	Climate Change and the Environment	13 October 2009 [21 days]
18 September 2009	Energy	14 October 2009 [21 days]
18 September 2009	State Development	14 October 2009 [21 days]
18 September 2009	Water, Regional Development	14 October 2009 [21 days]
18 September 2009	Housing, Western Sydney	14 October 2009 [21 days]

Questions relating to the portfolio of Climate Change and the Environment

17 September 2009, 2.00 pm – 6.00 pm

Questions from Ms Robertson

1. NSW Environmental Trust
 - a. What is the Government doing to support the many community organisations, local councils and businesses around NSW to address environmental degradation and sustainability in the state?
2. Catchment Management Authorities
 - a. Can the Minister advise on NSW Catchment Management Authorities' achievements in protecting and enhancing the State's natural resources?
3. Contaminated Land Management
 - a. How effective has the NSW Government's framework for the management of contaminated lands been in cleaning up these sites and what is the NSW Government doing to prevent land contamination?
4. Carbon Neutrality and Government Sustainability (incl DECCW)
 - a. How will the NSW Government deliver on its commitments to improve sustainability and become carbon neutral by 2020?
5. Improvements in National Parks
 - a. What improvements have been made to National Park products and destinations to increase visitation and enhance the visitor experience?
6. Solaria Regulation
 - a. What is the Government doing to protect the community from the harmful effects of artificial sun-tanning machines?
7. Additions to the Reserve System
 - a. What additions have been made to build a diverse and resilient system of parks and reserves under the National Parks & Wildlife Act?
8. Environmental Water Recovery and Management
 - a. How is NSW progressing with the recovery of water for the environment and how will this benefit important wetlands?
9. Native Vegetation Reforms
 - a. Have the native vegetation reforms been successful at curbing broad scale land-clearing in NSW?
10. Captive Breeding Program-Zoo
 - a. Can the Minister please provide the latest information on the Taronga and Taronga Western Plains Zoos' captive breeding programs?

Questions from Ms Cusack

11. National Parks

- a. Please provide details of the regional allocations for National Parks over the past 5 financial years, and the budgeted expenditure for 2009-10.
- b. Please list revenues by National Park for the past three financial years, together with budgeted revenues for 2009-10 (Please break down the information by individual Park).

12. Blue Mountains

- a. What is the cost of maintaining a Park Office at Govett's Leap Rd in the Blue Mountains?
- b. What statistics do you have on visitor usage to the Office and how does this compare with visitor usage of the Blue Mountains Council information Centre at Echo Point?
- c. How many tourists are estimated to visit Echo Point each year?
- d. While I appreciate the precinct is owned and managed by Blue Mountains Council, does DECCW have any role in managing the area that is possibly the most popular National Park lookout in Australia?
- e. For example, is it appropriate for pedestrians egress to double as a bus turning circle? (When I visited the lookout on 12 April 2009 - Easter Sunday - I found hundreds of pedestrians, dozens of parked cars and three busses attempting to turn, all sharing the same conflicted space. When buses were wedged between illegally parked vehicles and pedestrians the solution seems to be to sound the horn unremittingly - thus the noise and sense of chaos was incredible. Certainly there were adverse impacts on visitor enjoyment of the lookout. Presumably local residents and businesses could benefit from better management. I am interested to know if DECCW has any issues with this management of the site, particularly arrangements for visitor safety, and any ideas or plans to improve the situation.)
- f. Are there any plans to upgrade DECCW's manual visitor bookings system and the 'honesty box' system for payment of visitor and camping fees in National Parks? What costing if any have been done to establish more modern means of processing payments?

13. Grey-Headed Flying Foxes

- a. The new 'Standard Operating Procedure' which DECCW has mandated in its system of permits to shoot threatened Grey Headed Flying Foxes requires the shooter to travel to the original flying fox camp to identify orphaned young, and to kill them as well. Please explain:
 - i. How do shooters correctly identify which camp the deceased Grey Headed Flying Fox came from?
 - ii. Once they have worked out which camp to attend, for example the Royal Botanic Gardens or Gordon Bat Colony; do you envisage these visits to kill orphaned young will occur that same night while the adult bats are away, or during the day when all the bats are present? If during the night, what arrangements have you made to facilitate access for shooters to the Royal Botanic Gardens for the purposes of killing young endangered Grey Headed Flying Foxes? Will these shooters be expected or otherwise permitted to take their firearms into the Botanic Gardens?
 - iii. What method do you suggest shooters use to correctly identify young orphaned flying foxes? Can you give examples as to where this method has been trialed and used successfully?

- iv. In the case of an authorized shooter required by the SOP to attend the Royal Botanic Gardens in the middle of the night, for the purposes of identifying and killing orphaned young, can you explain the means by which they will capture orphaned young that are hanging upside down from branches 10-20 meters from the ground? Has the method you recommend been assessed in terms of occupational health and safety?
- v. Will the Royal Botanic Gardens exempt shooters from their rules prohibiting the climbing of trees? Who will be liable for meeting expenses under this policy associated with damage to trees or park property and/ or accidental injury to shooters required by the Government to correctly identify and retrieve orphaned flying foxes? Will taxpayers be liable for accidental injury caused to staff at the Botanic Gardens or members of the public, such as visitors to the Royal Botanic Gardens (i.e. in the event you require orphaned young in the park to be killed during the day) or conservationists studying the Gordon Bat colony during the night?
- vi. Once the orphaned flying fox has been located, identified and captured, what specific means do you envisage will be used to kill them? Which of the following methods are legal or illegal under the SOP?
 - 1. shooting
 - 2. strangulation
 - 3. clubbing
 - 4. drowning
 - 5. other (please specify)
- vii. How does the SOP for killing Grey Headed Flying Foxes comply with the recovery plan for saving the species from extinction?
- viii. What funding will be provided to support volunteers seeking to rescue and rehabilitate flying foxes inadvertently injured by shooters who fail in the difficult task of making a clean headshot on an in-flight flying fox at night? Will additional resources be available for counseling services for distressed volunteers?
- ix. What compliance activity will be undertaken to ensure the requirements of the SOP such as killing orphaned young are fulfilled? What is the penalty for failing to kill orphaned young? Is there a penalty for killing young flying foxes who are not orphaned? How will the compliance officers verify whether the shooter has correctly identified that baby flying foxes he is required to kill are in fact orphans?
- x. What is the timeframe for relocating the flying fox camp at the Royal Botanic Gardens? What has been expended on the project to 30 June 2009 and what additional funds are budgeted to be spent post 30 June 2009? Where will the flying foxes be moved?

14. Wilderness

- a. Given the resilience of wilderness land to withstand the ecological impacts caused by human accelerated climate change, has the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water's elevated the priority of wilderness acquisition in the agencies' land acquisition strategy?
- b. Can the Government ensure that wilderness lands acquired by the agency, and particularly by donations and gifts, will be declared as wilderness under the Wilderness Act, 1987 as soon as possible, including those acquired at Green Gully in 2003 and those acquired through the White Wilderness Legacy in 2007?

- c. Can the Minister advise on the level of agency funds and resources allocated to undertake wilderness assessment processes?
 - d. Can the Minister outline the amount of funding and the extent of wilderness assessment program?
 - e. Does the Government have funding arrangements in place for the wilderness assessments regarding the environment groups' 2005 Southern wilderness nominations, the Sandon and Wooli wilderness nominations in the Yuraygir National Park, the Murruin wilderness nomination in the Blue Mountains National Park, and the Moors wilderness nomination in the Myall Lakes National Park, noting that all these nominations are overdue in relation to the designated two year time period for wilderness assessments in the Wilderness Act, 1987?
 - f. As two million hectares of the national parks estate are also declared as wilderness, has the Government considered the establishment of a Wilderness Branch within the Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water to elevate the priority of wilderness protection and ensure sympathetic and consistent wilderness management across the agency?
 - g. Has the Government considered amending the Forestry and National Parks Estate Act to permit the more operation of Wilderness Act processes and wilderness management for those wilderness areas considered not to contain commercial timber value?
15. Homebush Marina
- a. Has DECCW made any assessment of the environmental impacts of the proposed marina development at Homebush for which an Expression of Interest has been released?
 - b. Is the Department monitoring water and sediment pollution at the site?
 - c. What pollution of concern is located at the site?
 - d. Are levels of pollution at the site above recommended levels?
 - e. Are levels of pollution at the site above levels deemed safe?
16. Floodplains - In the Government's Floodplain Development Manual, Gazetted in May 2005, the Flood Prone Land Policy provides for "technical support from the State Government to local councils in ensuring that the management of flood prone land is consistent with flood risk and that such development does not cause undue future distress to individuals nor unduly increase potential flood liability to them or the community":
- a. Have professional engineering staff in the floodplain management branch of her department have reduced to a third of those a decade ago?
 - b. Is this below the critical mass for such a specialist group needed to assist local government in meeting its obligations under that Policy?
 - c. How many projects have received funds from the Regional Floodplain Mitigation Program and NDMP in the last 5 years?
 - d. What is the quantum of funding for projects from the Regional Floodplain Mitigation Program of the last 5 years?
 - e. How many projects have received funds from the Natural Disaster Mitigation Package in the last 5 years?
 - f. What is the quantum of funding for projects from the Natural Disaster Mitigation Package of the last 5 years?