

GENERAL PURPOSE STANDING COMMITTEE No. 4

Wednesday 15 October 2008

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

PLANNING, REDFERN WATERLOO

The Committee met at 2.00 p.m.

MEMBERS

The Hon. J. A. Gardiner (Chair)

The Hon. A. Catanzariti
The Hon. D. Harwin
Ms S. P. Hale

The Hon. R. A. Smith
The Hon. H. S. Tsang
The Hon. L. J. Voltz

PRESENT

The Hon. K. K. Keneally, *Minister for Planning, and Minister for Redfern Waterloo*

Department of Planning

Mr S. Haddad, *Director General*

Mr R. Pearson, *Executive Director, Rural and Regional Planning*

Mr C. Wilson, *Executive Director, Major Project Assessments*

Mr J. Perica, *Executive Director, Strategic Sites and Urban Renewal*

Mr P. Despinidic, *Director, Finance and Business Services*

Mr M. Ray, *Acting Executive Director, Metropolitan Planning*

Sydney Olympic Park

Mr A. Marsh, *Chief Executive Officer*

Growth Centres Commission

Mr A. Dawson, *Chief Executive Officer*

Redfern-Waterloo Authority and Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority

Mr R. Domm, *Chief Executive Officer*

Landcom

Mr S. O'Toole

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

CHAIR: I declare open to the public this inquiry into budget estimates 2008-09. I welcome Minister Keneally and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Planning, Redfern Waterloo. Before we commence I will make some comments about procedural matters. In accordance with the Legislative Council's guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings only committee members and witnesses may be filmed or recorded; people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photographs.

In reporting the proceedings of this Committee, members of the media must take responsibility for what they publish or what interpretation they place on anything that is said before the Committee. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available on the table by the door. Any messages from attendees in the public gallery should be delivered through the Chamber and support staff or the Committee clerks. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and to refer directly to your advisers while at the table. I remind everyone to turn off their mobile phones. Minister, the Committee has agreed that there will not be any particular time allocation for parts of the portfolio areas.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Could we consider that, given the wide range of portfolio areas under my administration? I have Planning, Redfern Waterloo, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Growth Centres Commission, and the World Youth Day Coordinating Authority.

CHAIR: We just did Transport, a much bigger portfolio, and it worked fine.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I then make a request for more people to be sworn in at the beginning and available to me at the table.

CHAIR: That is fine. The House has resolved that answers to questions on notice must be provided within 21 days, or as otherwise determined by the Committee. The Committee has not made any change to the resolution of the House, so it is 20 days. The transcripts of the hearing will be available on the web from tomorrow morning. All witnesses from the departments, statutory bodies or corporations will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

PETER DESPINIDIC, Director, Finance and Business Services, Department of Planning,

SAM HADDAD, Director General, Department of Planning,

CHRIS WILSON, Executive Director, Major Project Assessments, Department of Planning,

ANGUS DAWSON, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Olympic Park Authority,

ALAN MARSH, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Olympic Park Authority, sworn, and

JASON PERICA, Executive Director, Strategic Sites and Urban Renewal, Department of Planning, and

ROBERT PETER DOMM, Chief Executive Officer, Redfern Waterloo Authority, affirmed and examined:

CHAIR: Mr Ray and Mr O'Toole are here if need be, is that correct?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes.

CHAIR: I declare the proposed expenditure for the portfolio of Planning, Redfern Waterloo open for examination. As there is no provision for a Minister to make an opening statement before the Committee commences questioning, we will begin with questions from the Hon. Don Harwin.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, would you agree that if Labor Party headquarters indicated to development companies that a substantial donation was made to the Labor Party then that would enable access either to the previous planning Minister, Mr Sartor, or to you, or that if a substantial donation was made to the Labor Party then that would enable you to consider the development applications. Would you consider that to be corrupt?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: The Minister can hardly answer a question about what the Australian Labor Party head office might or might not do. Questions need to be relevant to the Minister and to her portfolio.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: To the point of order: I was asking the Minister for an answer to how she perceives corruption. I was not asking for an answer on anything to do with the matter that was raised in the point of order.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Further to the point of order: The words used in the member's question were "If Australian Labor Party headquarters indicated". He was asking what the Australian Labor Party head office might do.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: To the point of order: Mr Harwin was not asking about what the Australian Labor Party office was doing; he said it was a hypothetical question. I think it is important to ascertain the Minister's attitude to sources of potential corruption.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is a question about how she deals with development applications, and which of those she considers to be corrupt. It is as simple as that.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Further to the point of order: The member's question commenced with the words "If Australian Labor Party headquarters indicated", which was not a hypothetical question. Those were the words that were used in the question. The Minister can hardly answer a question relating to what the Australian Labor Party head office might or might not do.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: The question asked what she would do in the event that the Australian Labor Party head office was to do something.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Even that version is inappropriate.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is not inappropriate at all. Rather than taking up the time of the Committee I ask the Chair to rule on the point of order.

CHAIR: Order! I think it is a reasonable question to ask the Minister in the recent context of this huge issue and the planning department.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Following that debate I ask the Hon. Don Harwin to restate his question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Certainly. Minister, if the Labor Party headquarters were to indicate to development companies that a substantial donation was made to the Labor Party that would then enable access to you or to your predecessor, or enable you or your predecessor to consider the development applications, would you consider that to be corrupt?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: That is a hypothetical and I think an offensive question in the absence of any allegation you want to put to me of that nature. I would have thought corruption would have been something for the Independent Commission Against Corruption to determine. That is its role. I assure the members of this Committee and the people of this State that development applications that come to me will be assessed on their merit. In relation to the matter of access, it is my policy as the Minister to meet with developers or with proponents only when I have an official from the Department of Planning in the room with me. That policy will be applied without fear or favour, whether it involves a commercial developer, a charity, a church, or a union. A proponent of a development application will gain a meeting with me only when an official from the Department of Planning is in the room.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Are you prepared to give a guarantee to the Committee that nobody at Labor Party headquarters is indicating to development companies in New South Wales that it is necessary to pay substantial donations to the New South Wales Labor Party in order to get to meet with you and discuss their developments?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: My point of order again is about the Minister's ability to comment on an organisation outside her portfolio. It is not appropriate to ask the Minister questions about what people may or may not be doing outside her portfolio.

The Hon. HENRY TSANG: To the point of order: The Minister already has answered questions dealing with the Labor Party's conduct. It has nothing to do with her portfolio. I ask that you please rule on what we are supposed to be doing, which really is a budget estimates committee.

CHAIR: In ruling on the point of order, I think it would be relevant to the planning Minister if such a set of circumstances arose. I think the Committee would be interested in hearing the Minister's response to the question.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: It is a hypothetical question about something outside the Minister's portfolio about people completely outside the Minister's control, portfolio and area of responsibility on what they might or might not do. There is no way that the Minister can answer that question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I just do not know what the Labor members have to hide.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Well, that is an easy cheap shot.

CHAIR: I have ruled on the question. Minister, have you an answer?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Again, following that debate, I would appreciate it if Mr Harwin would restate his question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Will you give a guarantee to the Committee that nobody at Labor Party headquarters is indicating to development companies in New South Wales that it is necessary to pay substantial donations to the Labor Party in order to get to meet with you and discuss their developments?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: It is not for me to say what the Australian Labor Party headquarters is or is not doing, but I would say to you, Mr Harwin, and to anyone on this Committee and, indeed, anyone in New South Wales, that if they have an allegation of that nature to make, they should take it to the Independent Commission Against Corruption [ICAC] as a matter of priority. I can tell you that I have not met with any

proponent at the request of the Australian Labor Party. It is not my policy to meet with people because they have made donations. In fact, the new laws that we have introduced, that I signed into effect and which came into effect on 1 October, bring a greater degree of transparency into the role of political donations to those proponents of a development application who have made a donation to Labor, the Liberal Party, the Greens or any other political organisation.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Will you now implement the September 2007 ICAC recommendations to have development applications dealt with as designated developments or at least sent to the Planning Assessment Commission [PAC] if the Labor Party or you have received donations from the developer whose application is being considered?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The role of the Planning Assessment Commission is a decision that rests squarely with me. Members of this Committee would be aware that the Planning Assessment Commission was brought in as part of the planning reforms introduced by the former Minister and passed by the Parliament in June this year. The former Minister did not define the delegation to the Planning Assessment Commission. He has made comments about the percentage of applications that he thought might be handled by the Planning Assessment Commission, but he had not defined its delegation. It is my role to do so. Since becoming the Minister for Planning I have taken the opportunity to meet with a wide range of the stakeholders in this portfolio: the Property Council of Australia, the Urban Taskforce, the Housing Industry Association [HIA], the Urban Development Institute of Australia [UDIA], the Local Government and Shires Associations, TTS, the Total Environment Centre, the New South Wales Business Chamber of Commerce and the Sydney Chamber of Commerce.

I have taken the opportunity also to meet with members of Parliament and individual councils to discuss their views on the planning reforms. I have also had the opportunity to meet with the Implementation Advisory Committee, which is a group representing many of the stakeholders in the planning portfolio set up to advise the Minister on the implementation reforms. I have met as well with the Local Government directors group, which also was set up to advise the Minister on the implementation reforms. In the course of all that consultation I have heard a wide variety of views about what the role of the Planning Assessment Commission should be. But let us be clear about one thing: when I make that decision about delegation to the Planning Assessment Commission it will have one intent, that is, to remove the politics from the planning system, to depoliticise the planning system, so that it is clear that developer donations, that is, donations from property developers, play no role in the decision of development applications.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not sure whether that is a yes, or a no. Are they going to go to the Planning Assessment Commission, or are they not?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: "They"? Could you define the word "they"?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Let me put it this way: You are suggesting that you may not send the Sartor-promised 80 per cent of development applications to the Planning Assessment Commission. Do you realise that a grab by you of a greater number of development applications starts to sound like a corrupt process?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: That starts to sound like a question written by Mr Hazzard. You may do well in the future to write your own questions. I think what Mr Hazzard misunderstands is that the percentage is not the issue. Whether it is 10, 20 or 80 per cent or 90 per cent that goes off to the Planning Assessment Commission is not the issue. The issue is the delegation—the definition of the delegation to the Planning Assessment Commission—because it is the definition of the delegation that will determine what projects go to the Planning Assessment Commission. In defining the delegation, it will be done in such a way to be clear that where political donations are involved, there would be a role for the Planning Assessment Commission to play. That is where the importance of the definition comes in.

I understand that many people are excited, including Mr Hazzard, that the previous Minister used a figure of 80 per cent. He did not define how he intended to get to that. What I am saying is that I am not going to be held up by whether it is 10 or 80 per cent. What I will be seeking to do in defining the delegation is ensure for the people of New South Wales that we take the politics out of the decision making; that we are clear that donations have no role in the decision making. What I am not going to do, Mr Harwin, is sit here today and define for you what the delegation will be because I am still in consultation with the stakeholders in the planning portfolio.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You have made it exactly clearer. Thank you for that; it was the answer I was seeking. Can you explain the reason for the delay in finalising the housing codes that were meant to be up and running by now and that were coming out of your Government's June planning reforms? Can you also explain whether you have any idea what cost has been occasioned to taxpayers by your department's spending of inordinate amounts of time trying to get the housing codes finalised?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The complying development housing codes are an important reform because they represent a great opportunity to save days, and thereby also to save time and money, for ordinary users of the planning system—that is, the mums and dads in the community. There is potential here to take the average amount of time, which I understand for both a development application and a construction certificate at the moment, on average, is approximately 130 days, and reduce that to 10 days for complying developments. That saves an extraordinary amount of time and an extraordinary amount of money for not just the users of the planning system but also for the State as a whole.

There are a few issues regarding the complying development code, and I am happy to run through those with you. We have draft code for single-storey dwellings on 600 square metre blocks. That code was trialled in 11 council areas. What we found with the trial of that code is that initially we did not have the take-up of complying development that we had hoped for. But in examining why that happened, we realised that if we had adjusted the code slightly in some areas—for example, in relation to ceiling height—we would be able to capture many more development applications that would come in under the complying code. That was really a question about the requirements of the code and whether it captured a wide enough number of development applications.

Arising out of that trial, though, came two other issues, and these are the issues that I am considering quite carefully. One is that the code is user friendly. We do not want to introduce a code that is complicated for people to use, or is not one whose applicability can be easily understood. In order to achieve the targets that we want to achieve of complying development, we need to have a code that people are happy to use. This is an issue that was raised with me by the Local Government Directors Group and by the Local Government and Shires Associations; indeed, it has been discussed by the implementation advisory committee. I think it would be fair to say about the vast majority of members of the implementation advisory committee will support the view that the code needs to be user friendly.

The other issue about the code is that there is concern by some members of the community, particularly across various local government areas, that the code allows for regional variation. While most people accept and understand that we want to achieve a statewide code—and in fact I think there is support for that out there now—various regions are saying to us, "We think, in our area, we can improve upon the code", or, "We think, in our area, there are some variations we can make that will make it even more acceptable to our community." That is precisely the issue I am looking at as well. Are we able to, or I will be able to, develop a code whereby we achieve a statewide code and have a high take-up in the community, but whereby we also allow, in areas where that is appropriate, for regional variations?

It is my advice that Victoria has a set-up similar to that. We will look at that. We were given a paper last week or it may have been two weeks ago by the Local Government Directors Group and I understand that the Local Government and Shires Associations has had input into that. We will consider that quite carefully.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: How many submissions did you receive on the housing code? Why have they not been made public yet? Can you understand that people are worried that their concerns will not be taken into consideration unless they are made public?

Mr HADDAD: Could I am maybe just explain? I am sorry, I do not have the exact number of submissions. I am happy to take it on notice and come back. I just want to support the statement that we have been concerned, including as a result of the trials, to ensure that the code is not only user friendly but that the code delivers the outcome. That is all.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I appreciate that you have taken the issue of number on notice, and I am grateful for that. Minister, can we come back to the question why they have not been made public, and will they be made public?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: My understanding is that we are currently considering the submissions and considering as well, as I have just indicated, detailed advice that I have received from the Local

Government and Shires Associations and the Local Government Directors Group. I am happy to consider making it public. I am not aware of why we have not done so yet. I am six weeks into the role. I will seek advice from the department and see if we can have that done as soon as possible.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Is there any reason why the public cannot be looking at them while you are considering them?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I am not aware of any but, as I said, this trial was conducted prior to my becoming the Minister. I am happy to seek advice from my department.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I can perfectly understand that. Mr Haddad, given the Minister has had the portfolio for only five weeks—

Mr HADDAD: I am happy to advise her.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Can you—

Mr HADDAD: I am sorry to interrupt you. I am not aware of any reason why the submissions that we have received have not been made available, but I will have to take advice. The reports were made publicly available, we have received submissions, we have conducted a number of public and other meetings and we have consulted widely on that. I am more than happy to make them public. There is no reason why the submissions cannot be made available.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: On that basis, can you guarantee to make them available?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: If it makes you happy, Mr Harwin, I will have them delivered to your office.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Thank you very much. I would be delighted if you did so.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Oh!

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Would you like a copy too, Ms Hale?

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I thought the emphasis was on public availability.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I understand, Ms Hale. You are correct. I will make them publicly available, but I am committed also to have a copy delivered to Mr Harwin. If you like, I will copy some to you too.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Indeed.

The Hon. HENRY TSANG: How charming you are.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Mr Tsang, you can have a copy, too.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, can you explain what has gone wrong with the model local environment plan [LEP] template implementation that Minister Sartor indicated would be in place by now? Are you aware how frustrated local councils are with a process that will see many of them trying to fit their local environment plans into the template local environment plan, only then to be advised by the department that there are further changes required by the department? Do you have any idea when the template will actually be finalised?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will ask the Director General to take that question.

Mr HADDAD: The templates for the definitions have been finalised and we have amended them. We are frustrated with getting out what we call the comprehensive LEPs [local environmental plans]. The process is much more difficult than what was anticipated. It is resource intensive. We have been working hard at it. There are two components. One is the strategic component. We are doing all that so that we minimise the number of

spot rezonings in the future and provide certainty to the community and everybody. I think we have been travelling reasonably well in discussing with councils and getting strategic agreements.

The difficulties we are having are more of a legal nature. We are balancing too much, trying to fit in the definitions and interpreting the strategic context. I think a policy decision was made not to put the plans on exhibition until Parliamentary Counsel agreed to us doing so. That is causing concern and delays. Now that we are more comfortable with processing the draft LEPs, I am looking at amending this policy to enable the plans to go on public exhibition, and then to go back to Parliamentary Counsel after the exhibition process. The process is very resource intensive. It is causing the department a lot of repetitious issues. I am meeting with senior staff on a weekly basis, trying to juggle the resources to work on it. Honestly, it is not proving to be an easy task.

We need to find another way of doing it. When I tell councils that we may need to reprioritise the program, many local councils ask us not to do that but to continue with it. On the other hand, they are as frustrated as we are in terms of the delivery. We may need to make some adjustments. Another adjustment we are looking at is whether we need to have comprehensive plans everywhere throughout the state. In some areas of the State I may not be able to justify the resources in delivering the comprehensive plans in due course, and I will be advising the Minister when I have completed the review.

The Hon. ROY SMITH: Your predecessor, Mr Sartor, indicated to me some time ago that some local councils had made representations to him to approve changes to their LEPs in respect of firearms dealers and where they may or may not be located. He did undertake to come back to me at a later date but has not done so—perhaps he will not have the opportunity. Has the department received any applications from local councils to change their LEPs so as to restrict where small businesses—in this case licensed firearms dealers or firearms outlets—may operate?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I understand that currently four local environment plans are proposed that would seek to regulate gun shops differently to other shops. They have been proposed by Wollongong, Willoughby, Kogarah And Ku-ring-gai. The department is examining each of these proposals on its planning merit according to the provisions of the planning legislation. As you would be aware, there is no need for any separate or additional licensing regime under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act for gun shops. I can understand why some people have raised this issue, but the planning Act does not licence any individuals. We look at the environmental, economic and social impacts of the physical developments. We will be examining these local environmental plans on their merits.

The Hon. ROY SMITH: I understand that there is absolutely no evidence of incidents involving the firearms dealerships that already exist around the State. As for safety and other issues, they are much safer and more secure than a host of other businesses that operate in our local communities on a daily basis. When making determinations on these matters, will the Minister consult with the industry groups involved and perhaps the Firearms Dealers Association or other associations that might have some input into these matters? It will affect their industry down the track when they open a business or a dealership in those areas.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: First, I note that these LEPs will go on public exhibition. If you would like me to give an undertaking that we will alert you or perhaps the industry associations when the plans go on exhibition, I am happy to do that. Certainly, anyone in the public can make comment on those LEPs. I note—I am sure the Hon. Roy Smith is aware of this—that outside the separate regime for licensing gun shop owners under the Firearms Act, the planning legislation requires proposals for gun shops to be generally considered in the same way as any other shop selling other products that is of similar bulk and scale and has similar physical impacts. Specialised shops like gun shops would be generally located in commercial zonings, along with other specialised shops. In the case of these LEPs, I am happy to give you an undertaking that industry associations will be able to make comment, because the plans go on public notice.

The Hon. ROY SMITH: What is the current position with respect to planning approval for the Hilltop shooting complex? We are waiting with bated breath.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I could say that I am surprised you asked that question, but I am not allowed to mislead the Parliament. The Southern Highlands Regional Sport Shooting Complex is a \$5.1 million expansion by the Department of Sport and Recreation of the existing range located near the town of Hilltop. I have provided advice to the Governor on the rezoning. I am advised that the Governor has approved that

recommendation. However, it does not become operational until the decision has been gazetted. As a result, I cannot consider the application until that time.

However, I can advise the Committee that the application was subject to an Independent Hearing and Assessment Panel [IHAP], which was formed by the previous Minister on 2 May 2008. The IHAP panel comprised Mr Ian Armstrong as the chair, Mr Najah Ishac as a noise expert and Mr Vince Berkhout as a planning expert. The terms of reference were to consider and advise on noise impacts, impacts on residential amenity, operational management of the shooting complex, ongoing management and mitigation of environmental impacts on the whole site, and relevant issues raised in submissions with regard to the above impacts; to provide advice on the adequacy of the proponent's response to the issues raised in submissions; and to identify and comment on any other related significant issues raised in submissions or during the panel hearings.

The IHAP recommendations supported the approval of the project with the following conditions: a restriction of operating hours on outdoor ranges from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., four days a week; operation of outdoor ranges only permitted between 9.00 a.m. and 10.00 a.m. and 5.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. daylight savings time if shooting is inaudible at private property boundaries; indoor range can be used seven days a week from 10.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. and on evenings three days per week from 5.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m.; and no use of the facility on public holidays. In terms of noise management, IHAP recommended quarterly noise monitoring for the first year and annual noise monitoring thereafter, and use of acoustically absorbent materials on all proposed external range shelters.

Further to these recommendations, IHAP also recommended minimising the environmental impact of the project, traffic management and bushfire management mitigation measures. In terms of compliance, IHAP recommended that reporting take place every year for the first three years, and every three years thereafter, by an independent auditor chosen by the Department of Planning to demonstrate compliance with the conditions of approval.

Copies of the report would be required to be posted on the website and submitted to the Department of Planning and council. The IHAP report also supported the comprehensive environmental offset package that delivered a net increase of 1,795 hectares of land to the State conservation area—that is a broad ratio of three new hectares of conservation area for every one used for this facility. As I stated earlier, I cannot consider this application until the rezoning of the land is gazetted. I will consider the recommendations of the IHAP report, as well as any subsequent advice I receive from the Department of Planning before making my decision.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I was delighted to hear you undertake to make publicly available the submission on the housing codes. Given that councils make public submissions on all development applications they receive, will you make public, presumably on the web, all the submission that you receive in relation to part 3A applications? If not, why not?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The director-general has indicated he is happy to answer that question in the first instance.

Mr HADDAD: As you know we post on our website as part of our assessment reports the issues raised. I understand that this is not adequate. We thought of doing whatever difference, but the fact of the matter is that on some proposals we receive many thousands of submissions. We have advice to say that some people write things in those submissions that they do not want us to make public, for whatever reason, and we have to respect that. The option that I have is either to put resources into checking, including a legal check, of every submission I receive before making it public because if it was public, without the writer wanting me to know what he wrote about this company or about that notice or whatever, then there is something, or, in the alternative some legal protection from somebody to say "You can't do it". Apart from the resources, I have to look at another system that I can convey more credibly how those submissions are dealt with in a way that is better than what is done now.

We have a very strict system of trying to encourage our people to really put all those submissions—and when you look at any of our assessment reports you will always find the issues raised, and how we resolve them. But I can fully understand that also people want to see what is written. I am just sharing the issue that we have, and that is what we have tried to examine. We have more issues in trying to do that if those issues can be resolved. The issue of resources, plus understanding the legal—I did try when advertising, telling people "If you want your submissions not be made public, please let us know". Some people do but many do not. I am happy to

share that. They just do not do it, and then they bring me in the submissions, and I have the practitioners here and we read them and there are things that may lead us into some legal issues or confidentiality issues. Those are the reasons for that.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Mr Haddad, you would agree that the Parliament has no problem in making submissions public and it is a concern when people mark a request "confidential", it is made confidential, and they are checked. Similarly, councils check the legal implications of any submissions they receive and do not make all of them public. If you have requirement imposed upon councils, surely the least that one can expect is that the same requirement be imposed upon the Government, particularly as you say, the majority of these part 3A proposals are extraordinarily contentious and of great public interest. Would you agree?

Mr HADDAD: Yes.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I am mindful of the response of the director-general and I am also mindful of the comparison with councils. Before giving you that undertaking I want to seek advice from the department as to the numbers of submissions we are talking about and the resources required to do that. I am happy to come back to you on the advice I receive and what determination I make. I might say too that if it is not a feasible thing for us to release every submission we receive, I would be quite happy to talk to you further about a way to better report on the issues raised in the submissions, and perhaps better indicate the scale or scope of interest in any one particular issue, or the types of comments raised. There may be a way that we can approve the accountability, if we are not able to make every submission public, either due to resourcing or other issues. I understand the intent of your question. I think it is a fair one. As a new Minister I would want to take some advice from the department in the first instance but I am also happy to talk to you about how we might improve the reporting that we already do provide.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: May I point out that I have absolutely no faith in the assessments that are done, given that I have made submissions and have found that many of the issues that I have raised on behalf of constituents have been ignored in those assessments. I do not think the assessment process in any way meets the need. Minister, how many part 3A development application applications have been refused since the part was introduced?

Mr HADDAD: My advice is that probably between 80 and 90 development applications have been refused.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: How many have been granted or approved?

Mr HADDAD: Including modifications, probably 800 to 850. I am happy to come up with the exact number. It is in the range of about 850 to 900, and about 80 to 90 that have been refused. I will qualify "refused", if I may. When I say that I am talking about numbers that have been refused after the decision. Of course, one aspect of part 3A is that we do not open the gates before we are satisfied that there is adequate documentation. We have an adequacy test and we have changes to projects in many cases before they hit the public exhibition stage. So whether that is a refusal or what category we put them in, but many of the development applications that we determine are not necessarily the ones that came immediately to the department. That is taking a long time and an appropriate time before they hit the exhibition period because we have introduced what we call an adequacy test, which we do not have under part 4.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Not to correct my director-general, but I might clarify that the numbers that he spoke of referred to major project approvals. I am advised that since August 2005 the Government has processed 995 major project applications, including 226 lodged under the new part 3A system. The results, I am advised, that 915 were approved, and are expected to create 87,735 new jobs and \$28.9 billion capital investment value for New South Wales. Of those 915, 583 were projects in regional areas valued at \$10.65 billion, creating 24,415 jobs. The other 332 approvals were in the metropolitan area worth \$18.25 billion and generating 63,320 jobs. I am advised that 80 major project applications were refused and withdrawn.

I will take on notice how many of those 80 were under part 3A. During 2007-08 there was a high level of public involvement in assessing processes. There were more than 14,000 public submissions lodged, with an average of 14,000 hits a month on the website of the Department of Planning. That harps back to the previous question about the number of submissions that we receive. I am also advised that 19 projects were declared to be of local significance and handed back to the council.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: You said 80 were either refused or withdrawn?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes, and I indicated I would take on notice how many of those 80 were Part 3A.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Given that people rarely write if they essentially approve of a proposal, the volume of submissions must surely give rise to concern at the level of public disquiet about the number of Part 3A applications, and particularly the overwhelming quantity of those that are refused?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: It may just indicate the success of parties like the Greens in running community-based campaigns.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I would be delighted if that were the case; we do our best. Given that the information about donations is regularly made available at the State and Federal level—

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: You are talking about political donations?

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Yes, to a political party, and the Labor Party specifically, how many applicants that have had or are in the process of having their development applications considered under Part 3A are regular donors to the Labor Party?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: This is within the Minister's—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It is not within the Minister's portfolio area to know who has donated to the ALP. She would not have an extensive list of that.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: To the point of order: I think this is relevant because clearly this is an aspect of the way in which decisions are made in this State. It is of huge concern to the community. The Greens, for example, have been able to find only one instance where a very minor donor to the New South Wales ALP has had its Part 3A application refused completely.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Further to the point of order: That is exactly my point. The aspersions that are being made are completely outside the Minister's portfolio. There is no way that the Minister could list every donation—and nor would you want her, as Minister for Planning, to be able to list those things. The allegation that in fact she should know that because that is the way that planning is done in this State is outrageous.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: It has been of sufficient importance for requirements for disclosure of donations to be made at the local council level. If it is required of local councils, so councils are aware of the potential impact of donations, similarly it is an appropriate requirement of government.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: And it is a requirement under the laws we have brought in. As of 1 October, any proponent who lodges a development application either with the council or the State has to declare any donation they have made to any party—National, Labor, Liberal, Green—in the past two years. Also anyone making a comment on a development application has to declare their political donations.

Mr HADDAD: That includes any request for a Part 3A as well, so in terms of the request to the Minister or the director general, they have to apply. We have put the information on our website.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Can you update us on decisions in regard to local environmental plans?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Local environmental plans are statutory instruments, which include local planning rules such as zonings, heights, subdivision sizes and other development controls. Major changes to local environmental plans can have significant impacts on adjoining property owners and long-term local planning. Since its introduction in 2006, the LEP review panel has effectively streamlined the plan-making process by providing upfront advice and direction to councils. The panel includes the Director General of the Department of Planning, or his nominee, senior departmental executives and a nominee from the Local Government and Shires Associations. It also receives advice from the department's regional teams on proposed

local environmental plans and input from relevant councils as necessary to clarify proposals as part of panel meetings.

During 2007-08 the panel made decisions on 230 local environmental plans compared to 426 in 2006-07. This reduced workload is likely to be largely due to councils better managing their LEP processes and focusing on preparing comprehensive and other more extensive local environmental plans. Overall the number of spot rezoning local environmental plans coming to the panel has fallen from about 20 a month in 2005-06 to 18 a month in 2006-07 and about 13 a month in 2007-08. During 2007-08 the panel supported 77 per cent of local environmental plans proceeding further. That is only marginally down on last year's 82 per cent support rate.

The LEP review panel has found that long-term regional and subregional planning strategies being produced by the department are providing important guidance to councils when preparing new local environmental plans. New local environmental plans are routinely assessed against the aims and objectives of these strategies. About 77 per cent of local environmental plans not supported in 2007-08 were inconsistent with the relevant regional or subregional strategy. For instance, in October 2007 the panel did not support a proposed local environmental plan which would have allowed urban development in the Meads Bay area near Wallaga Lake on the New South Wales South Coast. This decision was in line with the South Coast regional strategy, which found urban development on land which drains into the catchment was unsuitable because of the high level of environmental sensitivity of the receiving waters.

A draft local environmental plan amendment to rezone land at Anna Bay from rural to tourist was not supported in November 2007 because the land was in a green corridor in the Lower Hunter regional strategy. The site is located near the Stockton Bight within an active sand drift area and a mapped coastal hazard zone. The department aims for a timely response to local environmental plan notifications by local councils. Between March 2006 and the end of May 2008 the department responded to 81 per cent of local environmental plans within 25 days. In 2007-08 the panel no longer considered new comprehensive local environmental plans. Such local environmental plans are now sent directly to the department's relevant regional team for assessment rather than to the panel.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Could you also update us on the progress of preparations for hosting the ninth World Congress of Metropolis 2008?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes. It was some surprise to me, as the Minister who had just finished World Youth Day, to find out I had another major world event. I was somewhat relieved to find out this one did not involve 200,000 teenagers, people sleeping outside overnight, or a Head of State. As the Committee will be aware, the ninth triennial World Congress of Metropolis will be held in Sydney from 22 to 25 October. Metropolis is an association of world cities with populations greater than 1 million. As Australia's pre-eminent international city, Sydney is a particularly appropriate venue for the first world congress to be held in Australia in the twenty-first century.

The Metropolis Congress 2008 will bring together Australian and international mayors, government officials, academics and industry leaders to share experience and expertise around some of the key issues facing cities today. These critical issues include climate change, urban renewal, transport infrastructure, financing public infrastructure development, and ensuring the continued sustainable growth of cities as both hubs of commerce and industry and as desirable places for communities to live, work, learn and play.

More than 600 delegates from 80 cities will be attending the congress to be addressed by more than 150 international speakers plus leading Australian experts in a wide range of fields. The Rees Government is very pleased with the level of support provided by all levels of Australian industry and government. This has involved a level of partnership that has ensured that the Metropolis Congress 2008 will be a showcase for Australian expertise in the area of long-term sustainable urban growth to a world audience.

The New South Wales Government has played a leading role in supporting the ninth World Congress of Metropolis. The Government has provided a whole of government approach to ensure that the congress highlights the best of the Australian experience in managing the growth and development of urban centres. That whole of government approach is exemplified by two workshops held in China as part of the Premier's trade mission.

The workshops were held to further develop the ongoing relationships between New South Wales and major Chinese cities. The workshops highlighted Sydney's hosting of the event and reaffirmed the message that New South Wales is open for business. A similar visit was undertaken to India raising both the profile of the Metropolis Congress 2008 and Sydney's hosting to city mayors from across the Indian subcontinent. As a result of these missions international participation in the Metropolis Congress will be significantly enhanced, further highlighting Sydney's reputation as an outstanding venue for major international events. For example, the Indian contingent to Metropolis Congress will include the mayors of Mumbai and Delhi, leading a delegation of 30 mayors, city commissioners, the chair of Bombay First and other Indian business and government representatives.

I am delighted to note that the Metropolis Congress 2008 has received outstanding support from across the full range of local, State and Federal Government agencies. The Federal Government's Department of Infrastructure has provided welcome support, as has the City of Sydney as the host city. New South Wales Government agencies that have partnered the Congress include the departments of Planning, Education and Training, Commerce, and State and Regional Development. In addition, the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority, Landcom, Integral Energy and Sydney Water are providing essential support to the Congress. The private sector has also embraced the event with a who's who of industry participating, including Brookfield, Cisco, Climate Friendly, Goodman, Investa, Leighton Holdings, Lend Lease Corporation, Macquarie Real Estate, Mirvac, Nakheel, the GPT Group, the *Sydney Morning Herald*, Westfield and Woods Bagot.

Similarly a number of professional organisations have partnered the Metropolis Congress, including the Planning Institute of Australia, Property Council of Australia, Australian Institute of Architects, Australian Computer Society, Tourism New South Wales, Sydney Convention and Visitors Bureau, Urban Development Institute of Australia and the Urban Taskforce. The participation of these major professional associations further enhances the quality of the event. The expertise and capabilities that New South Wales has developed to support major events such as APEC, World Youth Day and other similar events will be supporting the 9th World Congress of Metropolis 2008. We hope this provides a positive experience for both international and local participants.

The Department of Planning is both host and partner of the 9th World Congress. We are the lead government agency for the event. In this role the department has taken the lead in working with industry, academics and the media in supporting and publicising the event. This has included developing a comprehensive program for the four days of the event; producing five major research papers providing a substantive analysis of issues affecting Sydney and other global cities; undertaking a major domestic and international media marketing campaign to publicise the event; and confirming a full program of Australian and international guest speakers from government, industry and academia to deliver a world-class series of presentations.

The whole-of-government approach being undertaken in support of the Metropolis Congress 2008 is exemplified by a major one-day conference being held in conjunction with the main event, at Sydney Olympic Park. Covering the impact of hosting a mega-event on a major metropolis, using the Olympic Games as an example, speakers will examine the experience of planning in Sydney, Beijing and London. Sydney has led the world in the development of both Olympic precincts and the post-Olympic Games legacy, an example followed by both Beijing with its recent Games triumph and London, which will host the games in 2012. Participants will see how investment in facilities for a mega-event such as the Olympics can be turned into a major cultural, sporting, educational and economic centre for future generations, with Sydney Olympic Park providing a tangible example of this concept made reality. These are tangible examples of the massive planning and preparation that has gone into the State's support for the Metropolis Congress 2008. The Government has committed the resources and expertise necessary to ensure that the Congress is both an outstanding success and a major showcase of Australian expertise in meeting the challenges of managing major urban growth in the 21st century. I will be attending the Congress and I look forward to reporting to the House on the event's outcomes and successes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Is the Prime Minister or the Premier going?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will take that on advice. It is probably a question for them and their diary secretaries.

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: Could you please inform the Committee of the latest statistics and information about the New South Wales Government's assessment of major projects?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I thank the member for his question. As members will be aware, the Department of Planning has an important role in assessing development proposals of regional or state significance. This may include major industrial or infrastructure proposals, which require a specialist assessment and may have regional impacts and benefits beyond individual local government areas. The department also assesses proposals along the State's coastline to ensure a consistent approach to preserving our sensitive coastal environment and managing development that would not be possible if such projects were assessed at the local council level, given the different approaches between various councils. Furthermore, the department assesses projects in areas that the New South Wales Government has earmarked for high-quality urban renewal, such as Sydney Olympic Park, the Redfern-Waterloo area and Newcastle's immensely popular Honeysuckle precinct.

The department mainly uses the major projects assessment system, which includes part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act and the Major Projects State Environmental Planning Policy to undertake its work. It is important to recognise some of the fundamental differences between this system and the assessment system used by local councils. The major projects assessment system has been specifically designed for large and complex projects. Among the system's unique features is that it sets rigorous requirements for projects before they can be placed on public exhibition and specifically encourages developers to amend projects after exhibition in response to community feedback. The Department of Planning, under my instruction, is in the process of running six public roadshows across New South Wales to educate people more about our assessment system and also to get feedback. The department's Major Development Monitor 2007-08, the third of its type to be published, will soon be available. I would like to talk about some of its latest findings.

The monitor shows that in 2007-08, 296 projects were determined and that these projects have a capital investment value of more than \$8 billion and the potential to create more than 32,000 jobs. Of these 296 determinations, 137 were new projects and 159 were modifications. Over the last three years the number of projects determined by the department and the Minister has fallen. This shows the department is increasingly honing its efforts to determine the most significant and complex projects in the State and leaving locally significant projects to local councils. For instance, changes to the Major Projects State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP], which came into effect during 2007-08, contributed to the Minister delegating the determination of 20 coastal projects to local councils. These will be listed in our report. These are projects, which technically meet the requirements of the Major Projects SEPP, but are determined after an examination by the department to be of local significance.

During 2007-08 the capital investment value of industrial projects jumped from \$2.136 billion to \$2.9 billion. That is an encouraging sign about investor interest in this State. Major industrial approvals include the \$70 million Toohey's Brewery upgrade at Lidcombe, the \$150 million new Amcor paper mill at Matraville and the \$100 million Four Arrows ethanol plant near Coleambally. I am also happy to report that the renewal of the Redfern-Waterloo area is gathering momentum. In 2007-08, four projects were approved in this area with a total capital investment value of \$75 million. The department deemed environmental assessments for 47 projects as being inadequate and not able to proceed to public exhibition. Most of the proponents later lodged satisfactory environmental documentation after taking into account the department's advice.

The monitor also shows some of the community consultation work undertaken by the department. This includes nearly 167,000 visits to the department's website. The website allows the community to be aware of a project even at a preliminary stage before the project is on exhibition. This provides earlier information to the community than one would expect on most council websites. Documents available on the website include the Director-General's requirements for a project's environmental assessment; application forms to carry out a project and preliminary documents from the proponent; the proponent's environmental assessment, which is placed on public exhibition; responses to submissions or preferred project reports lodged by the proponent; reports of panels; the department's assessment of the project; and relevant conditions of approval. This compares to the limited transparency provisions in part 4 and part 5.

For instance, under part 4 there is only a requirement to exhibit the development application if it is a designated development or advertised development and for the final assessment report to be made public. Under part 5 there are no requirements in the Environmental Protection and Assessment Act relating to transparency for assessment of activities that do not require an environmental impact statement. During 2007-08, a total of more than 14,000 submissions were made on development proposals exhibited by the department, up from 11,000 last year. Furthermore, after the public exhibition period, the developer can be required to prepare a response to submissions or to amend its project to minimise impacts on the environment through a preferred

project report. As I mentioned above, this is a key feature of the major projects assessment system. During 2007-08, some 80 of those documents were lodged with the department.

In response to issues raised during the exhibition, the proponent Boral submitted a preferred project report which scaled back the retail levels, density and car parking components of the project. A total of 138 new major development proposals, part 3A proposals, automatically came to the department for lodgement in 2007-08 because they met the criteria of the Major Projects SEPP, such as industrial projects which met a set employment generation or capital investment value size. Another 25 major projects were accepted for lodgement as discretionary proposals, such as State significant sites.

Those figures show that the vast majority of projects, some 85 per cent, came to the department because they met the criteria in the SEPP; they were not called in as discretionary projects. It should be noted that the department has made publicly available on its website the criteria it uses when assessing a residential, retail and commercial project worth more than \$50 million, or a State significant site. During 2007-08, four panels were established. The panels were for the Somersby Fields quarry, the Currawong development at Pittwater, the Southern Highlands regional shooting facility and the Elsie Street, Burwood, development. Those panels provide specialist independent advice on complex projects but also provide yet another avenue of stakeholder and public input.

In addition, the department also supported several community reference groups. Those groups allow the community to more fully understand aspects of proposed developments. Such groups were established for proposals sites including UTS Ku-ring-gai, Catherine Hill Bay, Sanctuary Villages and the Sydney Adventist Hospital precinct. The department also conducted important compliance and auditing work. It is, of course, important that the department not only sets stringent conditions for approvals, but also enforces those conditions. The department's compliance unit conducted 34 audits and inspections and initiated 66 enforcement actions during 2007-08.

During the reporting period, the department issued 10 penalty notices for minor alleged breaches of development consents and approvals. For moderately significant alleged breaches, the department issued orders to rectify or remedy the breach within specified time frames. The department assesses large and complex projects. It invites community participation and it delivers decisions important for the State's environmental and economic future.

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: Minister, what planning initiatives are being utilised to streamline the deliver of school infrastructure? You probably need a glass of water before answering.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Thank you for both the water and the question. Traditionally development consent from local councils was required for all new schools or school upgrades because of the planning issues to do with the location and operation of schools. Public transport implications, safety, traffic, parking, noise and constraints on surrounding land all need to be considered. As part of its commitment to efficiently delivering infrastructure in New South Wales, the New South Wales Government gazetted the Infrastructure SEPP in January 2008 to update and streamline outdated planning controls including those for schools.

Under the SEPP the Department of Education and Training rather than the council can self-approve certain upgrades to existing public schools such as single-storey libraries, classrooms, administrative buildings, portable classrooms and tuckshops, as well as outdoor learning areas or sporting facilities taking into consideration environmental and building safety issues. Councils must be notified and their views taken into consideration but they will not have an approval role. In addition, minor works such as security fences, awnings, access ramps, sheds, solar panels and rainwater tanks can be undertaken without approval at existing public schools as exempt development. Development consent is still required from councils for a new school or where an upgrade to a government school is more than one storey.

There have been concerns from schools that councils have been taking far too long to approve some of these proposals including those for halls and gyms so we are putting in place some changes to further streamline the system.

CHAIR: Minister, Do you have more pages to read?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: No, thank you.

CHAIR: You can have it put on the record, because it is time for the next round of questions.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will conclude by saying that we are working with councils, this is not a case of blaming councils, but is recognising that we had an overly complex planning system for what are relatively straightforward structures. Therefore, we are including school halls and gymnasiums. In cases where they do not impact on the community, either in shadowing or other types of impacts, they are able to be considered as compliant development. Also we will trigger that where a development application has to go into council we will trigger a memorandum of understanding between the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Planning, that where a council is taking too long the matter can be referred to the department for mediation.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, I seek clarification in relation to the answer you gave earlier regarding housing codes. You said that there has been less take-up of the compliant development housing codes in a trial in 11 council areas. In which council areas were the trials? What was the anticipated take-up? What was the actual take-up? Does the poor take-up indicate that people just do not like the code?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will take that question on notice, thank you.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You do not have the names of the 11 council areas with you?

Mr HADDAD: I do not have them. If you do not mind, I can ask one of my colleagues to pass it up and I can read it to you. I will have it in a couple of minutes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: In the meantime I will ask another question and come back to that, rather than putting that on notice.

Mr HADDAD: I will have it in a couple of minutes.

CHAIR: Minister, I will proceed to another topic while we waiting for that information. In relation to State infrastructure levies, in view of the State infrastructure levies being charged on development of land and eventually passed on to consumers, developers of housing estates have argued that the information on total infrastructure levies received should be readily available to the public. Can you advise whether such information is contained in any financial documents that are available on the public record?

Mr HADDAD: If you do not mind, may I please have the question again?

CHAIR: Sure. With respect to the State infrastructure levies and the matter of accountability and disclosure to the public, is such information available in the financial documents that are public?

Mr HADDAD: Do you mean, for example, land release zonings? Whether we have voluntary planning agreements and the like?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr HADDAD: That is where we put those warranty planning agreements on public exhibition before the decision is made. Voluntary planning agreements would contain the quantum and the type of infrastructure relevant to the actual rezoning. It goes on exhibition. Angus, would you mind expanding on that?

Mr DAWSON: In the growth centres, where the growth centres levy is depicted, there is a document on our website called the "Growth Centres Special Infrastructure Contribution Practice", which lists all of the infrastructure, the allocation of funds of that infrastructure and how the special infrastructure contribution is calculated. Also it deals with how that will be collected and indexed and preambles works in kind and other arrangements for that infrastructure contribution. They use on the public record and available on the website.

CHAIR: Minister, following on from that, can you provide the basis for the financial calculation of the State infrastructure levies?

Mr DAWSON: The special infrastructure practice note on the Growth Centres Commission website does exactly that.

CHAIR: How much money is the State Government currently holding that was collected from those levies? How much was received in each quarter since the imposition of those levies?

Mr DAWSON: At this stage I would have to take that question on notice. I am not sure yet how much, if any, has been collected within the growth centres. There may be some, but it would be a relatively small amount. I would have to take that question on notice. We would also have to take on notice your question relating to other State infrastructure levies.

CHAIR: Do you agree with that, Mr Haddad?

Mr HADDAD: Yes.

CHAIR: You cannot give us a ballpark figure?

Mr HADDAD: No, I am sorry; it would not be accurate. I will have to take that question on notice and I undertake to get back to you.

CHAIR: Of those State infrastructure levies that have been collected how much has the State Government expended? Can you provide us with the projects on which they have been expended? Has any of the relevant structure been completed?

Mr DAWSON: Within the growth centres—the exact amounts I will take on notice—there are State infrastructure works in association with Colebee in the south-west but there are road works in association with Richmond Road-Symonds Road, Camden Valley Way-Cobbitty Road and a recognition of some state schools. In the current budget papers there is in excess of \$500 million. I can get the exact infrastructure figure allocated in current Budget Paper No. 4 for works and services associated with development in the growth. Developers are undertaking a substantial number of in-kind works and they will then receive a credit based on our practice note for those works.

Developers are undertaking those works under contract to the infrastructure agencies. For example, in a piece of road infrastructure the developers would enter into a contract with the Roads and Traffic Authority to provide the road to the RTA's standards at its costs, and they would receive a rebate from the special infrastructure contribution for the amount that is allowed for that particular piece of infrastructure within the growth centres special infrastructure practice note. In other words, the developers, at their choice and at their election, can build infrastructure to the State specification and to the State standard. They take up the risk of controlling those costs and they simply receive a credit against their special infrastructure contribution. A number of those works are going on at the moment within the growth centres. If you require the exact amount I would have to take that question on notice and provide it to the Committee later.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, how are we going with the housing codes?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I am having trouble deciphering the handwriting.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will give you a little longer and ask another question if that is all right.

Mr HADDAD: I will try to read my colleague's handwriting. The 11 councils are as follows: Shoalhaven, Blue Mountains, Tweed Heads, Blacktown, Randwick, Armidale, Canada Bay, Pittwater, Sutherlands, Orange and Penrith. Those are the 11 councils.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It sounds like a reasonably good spread. Coming back to the other parts of the question, what was the anticipated take-up?

Mr HADDAD: My understanding is that it was 11 per cent actual, but the anticipated target is 50 per cent. So 50 per cent is what we are targeting in two years. There are a number of reasons for that. We are working to address the requirements of the codes. Maybe I can venture something a little more broad. From my experience of the submissions that I receive from councils, they are relative to some of the local environmental plans that some councils have. For example, Port Macquarie has a relatively high take-up of complying developments. The draft codes also need adjusting to come up to those provisions. That covers more than the 11 councils that I just mentioned.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, I go back to the answer you gave to Ms Sylvia Hale's earlier question relating to the adequacy test. It could be said that the adequacy test was the donation margin, but we will not go there.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: You would say that. If you have any allegation to make, take it to the Independent Commission Against Corruption.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, you have not made public the guidelines for the adequacy test. Where are they and can you tell us what are the guidelines for that test?

Mr HADDAD: We have a number of guidelines on our website. Some of them are in final form, some of them are in a draft form, and some of them are under review. I am happy to come up with a more detailed list.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Director General, you were going to provide us with a list of the guidelines on the website that constitute what you are regard as the adequacy test?

Mr PERICA: The adequacy test is outlined in the legislation. It is adequacy against the director general's requirements. It is on a case-by-case basis and it is quite simple legally, that is, that the submission a proponent makes to an environmental assessment and all the supporting documentation must meet the requirements of the director general. The adequacy test is exactly that—it must adequately meet the requirements. Those director general's requirements are tailored for each development proposal. It is then just a matter of ensuring that they are addressed in the submission and in all other documentation. That is the test of adequacy.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That is really a movable feast, is it not? Effectively, the test is whatever the director general says is the test from case to case. It sounds very open-ended.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Mr Wilson will answer that question.

Mr WILSON: Let me give some of the rationale behind the intention of the adequacy test. The adequacy test is not there to determine whether or not a proposal has merit. Let us go back to the Director General Environmental Assessment Requirements [DGRs]. Basically, all DGRs will identify guidelines, air-sampling methods and sea level rises that need to be addressed in each environmental application. We refer adequacy tests to relevant councils and to agencies for their comments, because they have raised issues that are incorporated in the DGRs.

Fundamentally, the adequacy test ensures that there is sufficient information and that agencies have done sufficient modelling to enable them to do a merit assessment. The test is not there to determine whether or not a proposal has merits—that comes later—the test simply ensures that the document goes on exhibition and everyone, including practitioners and the community, are looking at a document that is consistent with the relevant guidelines. That is the intent of the DGRs.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I will leave that for the moment and come back to it later. Minister, can you explain how you intend to apply part 3A over your term as planning Minister? How will you identify projects that you consider appropriate to bring in under part 3A for your consideration? How will you ensure that decision making is done in a way that satisfies the community as to probity and transparency?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I referred to the first part of that question in my rather detailed answer relating to a major project assessment. The majority of part 3A projects are non-discretionary and they come to the Minister as non-discretionary applications. In response to the second part of the member's question, which is good, that matter is under active consideration by me in discussion with the director general.

I might say that it also dovetails with my consideration of the delegation of the role of the Planning Assessment Commission. Those are matters under active consideration both in discussion with the department as well as in discussion with the stakeholders in this portfolio. Having been in the job for six weeks—or seven, I have lost count at this point—in that relatively short time I have come to appreciate the questions and concerns people raise about the discretionary use of part 3A. In large measure that is why I instructed the department to go on a roadshow around the State consulting on the role that State Government plays in determining major

projects and also gathering feedback. I think the feedback we gathered from the roadshow will also inform my thinking on this question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You would be aware that a number of the proposals brought in under part 3A by your predecessor had caused community concern—we were talking about that earlier. Would you be reviewing any of the current part 3A proposals with a view to considering whether or not they were appropriately brought in under the planning provisions?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Of the discretionary part 3As under assessment, I first need to point out that with a number of them I am awaiting advice either from independent hearing and assessment panels or the department. I have no intention at the moment to review the decision to call those applications in as a discretionary part 3A. In the first instance, I would prefer to let the assessment of those projects continue and receive advice back, particularly where there have been independent panels set up. I suspect a question I will be asked later will be about Currawong. In that case there are two independent panels: one looking at the proposal itself and one looking at the potential for heritage on that site. As Minister, I believe it is important that I not interfere with that independent panel's work; that I let it conclude and receive its reports through the department.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What part does shortages of resources in your department contribute to the often lengthy time taken in processing part 3A applications? Can you advise where the part 3A fees go? Further, how much money has been paid over the past 12 months in part 3A fees, and where has the money been spent?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: They are three separate questions and I think we will provide three separate answers.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Okay, let us deal with the first one first. What part does shortages of resources play?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The information I have—and I am happy to take the question on notice—is that we have seen a slight increase in the number of net days it has taken the department to assess major projects, although my understanding is that that is because the department has focused more on complex projects and returned those of local significance back to local council. So in fact the complexity of projects that we are considering has increased. Under the current mini-budget process, all administrative arrangements or all administrative units under my portfolio are being reviewed. That is a question I am asking and will be considering as part of the mini-budget process.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I imagine that is relevant to the second issue, which is: Can you advise where the part 3A fees go now? Obviously it is under review, but where is the money going now?

Mr HADDAD: The part 3A fees go exclusively in the assessment work by way of supporting both teams: the major developments assessment team and the State significant assessment teams. They also go in supporting specialist studies, consultants and contractors, where there are detailed investigations to be done to be able to advise on the outcome of the assessment process. I am more than happy to provide more details, but they generally cover about 70 per cent of our resources that go into this particular operation. That is roughly the amount. It varies a bit, but that is what it is. I am talking specifically about the fees that we receive from applicants with their development application fees.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Is there any particular reason that is not made public?

Mr HADDAD: No. I am not sure whether it is in the budget papers, but there is no reason. It should be mentioned in our annual reports. If it is not, we will make sure it is.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We would like to know how much money has been paid over the past 12 months in part 3A fees and where the money has been spent?

Mr HADDAD: Sure.

Mr DESPINIDIC: If I could clarify the position. The Department of Planning has about three major funding sources. One of those sources is development applications. Development applications bring in about 34 per cent of the total revenue of the Department of Planning. It is distributed notionally across the whole of the department. However, if you did an analysis and said the assessments teams are worth so many million and the

DA fees are worth so many million, it works out to be 70 per cent, as the director general said. In the annual report you will find a break-up of those revenues each year. It is clearly identified. In the budget papers you will see that there are three or four line items identifying revenues, and in the financial statements in the department's annual report you will also see those revenues identified in much the same way as you would see in a local council annual report or the like.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: We can send a copy of the annual report to you, if you like—maybe a copy to Mr Hazzard too.

[Short adjournment]

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Minister, as you are no doubt aware, I have a Callan Park Trust Bill that has been second read in the upper House. The Opposition has indicated it will support it. In a newspaper article in the *Inner West Courier* of 14 October, which is yesterday, there is an item covering a meeting that was addressed by both the Premier, Mr Rees, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr O. Farrell. The article states:

Both Mr Rees and the Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell agreed in principle to support Ms Hale's bill.

Can I ask you if you will indeed support my bill?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I was not at the debate, but the report I read of the Premier's comments was that he committed to Callan Park remaining in public ownership or public access. As you are aware, the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority prepared a land use plan for Callan Park to permit expanded higher educational uses, additional floor space and amended open space areas there. You would of course be aware that this was publicly exhibited for 85 days from November 2007 to February 2008. A total of more than 2,079 public submissions were received, of which 67 per cent objected to the proposal and 33 per cent indicated support, although it is my understanding, without having read all 2,079 submissions, that those who indicated support were expressing support for the playing field and open space provisions under the land use plan. You would also be aware that the land use plan proposes non-compliance with the existing Callan Park Act. That will require amendments to allow the plan to have legal effect. I am aware of your bill and I am aware that it will likely come up for debate next week. To date, no decision has been made on the Callan Park land use plan or, indeed, on my position on your bill.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I agree that Mr Rees also said that Callan Park would remain in public hands. It is one thing to remain in public ownership, but it is a second thing to lease that land for a period such as 99 years, which in effect privatises public space. You would understand that Mr Rees's assurances really do not count for a great deal in terms of people's concerns about the future of Callan Park and that therefore they are keen to see a trust established which will ensure that Callan Park is used in a way that meets the community's wishes.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The Callan Park land use plan envisages 90 per cent of Callan Park being available for open space. That being said, I understand the community has expressed very strong views about the proposed land use plan. I have taken the opportunity, as a new Minister, to meet this week with the mayor and the deputy mayor of Leichhardt Municipal Council. I have also had the opportunity to speak with you and Ms Rhiannon regarding a number of issues, including Callan Park. As I have just indicated, no decision has yet been made.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I turn now to a story that appeared on 12 April 2008 in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in which reference is made to documents that had not been presented to the upper House following a Standing Order 52 resolution by the House to produce all documents relating to the lower Hunter strategy. Specifically the story referred to an email dated September 2006 from the Department of Planning's then regional director, Mr Steve Brown, in which Mr Brown warned that the Government was making massive concessions to developers with little justification, and in which he expressed concern about the Hardie Holdings residential development near Branxton. I can provide a copy of that article to you, if you would like to have it. I recognise that you were not the Minister. It may be that Mr Haddad is the person to answer this question. Minister, can you tell me why the document referred to in that *Sydney Morning Herald* story was not provided to the House?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The Greens have made several requests—I will agree with you on that—and calls for papers on the lower Hunter and particularly development sites, such as Huntlee and

Catherine Hill Bay. Requests were made in November 2006, April 2008 and again most recently in September 2008. At all times the department has adhered strictly to New South Wales Government protocols regarding document calls from the New South Wales Parliament. The department, to the best of its ability, has made available all documents within scope of the various resolutions of the Legislative Council, subject to New South Wales Government protocols. In meeting its obligations, the department is required to examine many thousands of pages of records, including written files, electronic documents and emails to meet the scope of parliamentary requests. There is not a site or region with the volume of publicly available background information as the Lower Hunter. The allegation that information is being inappropriately withheld is rejected.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Are you saying that the email referred to in September 2006 does not exist?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I am not aware of the document you are referring to.

Mr HADDAD: I have to remember about this email, but I can assure you that I personally do not get involved in checking every single piece of paper because I may be called upon to have an independent review. All I have to ensure is that we have an appropriate process in the department which can deliver all that credibly. I can assure you that they do all they can to do it. With regards to the email, I am advised that this particular piece of correspondence was part of a number of documents. It was not an intentional process of taking it out of a box or hiding it. There have been discussions about this email between officers who are trying to do their job to the best of their ability. I cannot tell you why this email did not appear there. I triggered a serious discussion with my executive because we take this very seriously, as the Minister said.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: As the Director General you certify that all documents that are within the possession, custody or control of the department have been made available.

Mr HADDAD: That is correct, and I do that to the best of my ability and my advice. Basically, I have people, I have sections, and I have an independent person who is employed doing this work. I have processors; they do it. I have executive directors; they do it. They advise me that to the best of their ability it is done. They advise me also that the documents contained all the information broadly in this. Certainly, I would not be telling you the truth if I said that I go through each piece of paper and look at it.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Where does the buck stop? The Westminster system of government assumes that there will be a level of accountability for the actions of both its Ministers and its public servants. Here we have a specific order from the Parliament requiring the production of a document. It is not just any old document; it is a damning assessment of the Government's proposal to approve development by significant Labor Party donors, namely, Hardie Holdings and RoseCorp at Catherine Hill Bay. Yet suddenly this key, damning document, this key email, is not presented to the Parliament. Are you suggesting that that is just a simple oversight?

Mr HADDAD: No, I am more than happy to take full accountability of that. To answer your first question, I am accountable for anything to the best of my ability. To answer your second question, I need to go back—whether or not I agree with you as to the significance of this document—to make sure that it is a piece of advice given as part of a process that was happening. When we do those strategies we go through a process involving a number of people. I will just see whether that it is. As I said, yes, I am accountable. It is not intentionally that I set up doing this in any way. That is all I can say.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: So I can assume that you will make that document available?

Mr HADDAD: If that document exists and it has not been made available and it should have been made available—that is, it does not fall within any of the categories of whatever the rules are—I have an obligation to make it available. It is not up to me. If it does exist and it does not fall into this, I have it.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: The story under the title "Secret files expose sway of developers" ran in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 12 or 13 April 2008. Clearly, I thought it would have caused some consternation within your department and you would have been desperately keen to check that other documents had not been withheld. Is that the case? Did you follow-up on checking?

Mr HADDAD: Of course I did. When I became aware of it I immediately wanted to know. I have advice that, for example, this particular email was not returned in the head office where we collect all this information. That is the advice I have. I am just trying to answer you. It has not been returned as if it is excluded from the information that is available through the checking process. That is the advice I received when I made

an inquiry. I also did more than that. I also called a meeting with my executive and with the people involved in this because I wanted to make sure that the procedures were followed. As I said, in this case it is correct to say that we had a number of boxes with a lot of documents, which was an unusual situation. To be honest, I cannot recall having gone through so many documents before, and I have been through a number of those calls. Anyway, that is what it is.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Minister or Mr Haddad, given that the Department of Planning rated the Hardie Holdings proposal that was the subject of this article, Sweetwater, last out of 91 potential development sites for the lower Hunter—it beat in the ninetieth position Catherine Hill Bay—why was it subsequently approved as a development site?

Mr HADDAD: Just to clarify, it was rated as in input into a much broader planning strategic process. That was basically the discussion. The rating was based on a multi-criteria type of analysis, which then said there are a number of factors and then judgement was made against each of those factors, and then a rating given. I recall when this information was presented to a group of people when I was present. I asked questions as to whether things like the availability of public transport was high or low on the thing; whether there were offsetting arrangements—how did we take them into account. I was not satisfied with a number of answers, not only me but also a number of other people present, and this analysis had to be re-thought and redone. Things then progressed towards much more analysis. At the same time the assumptions of the population growth in the lower Hunter generally—as the result of further investigations, as you are probably aware, many submissions told us that the numbers that you are using were relatively low and that we had to increase the numbers to accommodate the population. Then that was done, including, in particular, a number of assumptions regarding offsetting arrangements.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: But, Mr Haddad, you would appreciate that the major group pushing for a revision of those population assumptions from, say, 125,000 to in excess of 160,000 and the major proponent of the re-working of those assumptions by the Department of Planning was Hardie Holdings. Hardie Holdings employs Graham Richardson to spin for it and Hardie Holdings is a significant donor to the Australian Labor Party. Why did the department bend over backwards and alter its findings in order to accommodate Hardie Holdings, who were the significant beneficiaries of the project?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: If you have a specific allegation to make then I suggest you take it as a matter of urgency to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I am quite prepared to take you through quite a detailed assessment of this issue.

The Huntlee New Town site is identified in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006 as a major release area, with the potential for up to 7,200 dwellings, representing more than 6 per cent of the new dwelling requirements proposed in the strategy. The proposed Huntlee New Town development will provide approximately 803 hectares of high conservation value land within the site, and a further 4,988 hectares elsewhere in the region that is identified in the Lower Hunter Regional Strategy [LHRS] and the draft Lower Hunter Regional Conservation Plan of the Department of Environment and Climate Change.

On 1 March 2007 the Minister for Planning agreed to consider the above site as a State significant site under the under the State Environmental Planning Policy (Major Projects) 2005 [MP SEPP] and authorised the submission of a concept plan for the site. The Concept Plan and State significant site study to support the required rezoning were submitted on 21 November 2007 and publicly exhibited from 12 December 2007 until 15 February 2008. More than 200 submissions were received. The site is a proposed mixed-use urban area adjacent to Branxton and North Rothbury in the Lower Hunter Valley, in both the Cessnock and Singleton local government areas.

The proposal is intended to provide for: up to 7,200 residential allotments of varying sizes covering up to 600 hectares; rural-residential development covering up to 93 hectares to achieve 300 lots; employment lands totalling 160 hectares; the provision of associated infrastructure including upgrades to local road, bus and rail networks, sewerage and water infrastructure and the dedication of land for education and health services, community facilities and utilities; and dedication of 876 hectares of conservation and local open space within the development area and a further 4,988 hectares elsewhere in the region. This includes the dedication of 17 hectares as a specific conservation area for habitat reservation and targeted scientific research on the threatened persona pauciflora species. The development will have a population of approximately 18,000 to 20,000 people and significant local employment opportunities.

A Deed of Agreement exists between the State and Hardie Holdings regarding dedication of conservation lands, but this does not bind any determination of a future application. A project application for stage 1 of the concept plan for subdivision—up to 2,300 lots—and construction of roads, open space and provision of infrastructure has also been lodged with the department, and is currently undergoing an adequacy test. The Voluntary Planning Agreement [VPA] is proposed to be exhibited and finalised before the rezoning occurs to ensure there is some certainty about the infrastructure provision for the development in the short term. A project application for 2,300 lots is being prepared for exhibition, along with the VPA.

The Huntlee New Town proposal was recently considered by the Infrastructure and Levy Implementation Committee, who resolved that the proposed VPA for regional infrastructure should be for stage 1 only and that the infrastructure commitments for other stages be determined once there is more certainty about road infrastructure to support the subsequent stages of development.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Minister, will you table the remainder of the document?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I would have thought, given the urgency of your questions, you would want the detailed information.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I would like to read them at my leisure.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: They will be in *Hansard* tomorrow morning. In relation to stage 1, the committee resolved that a contribution of \$17,000 per lot or dwelling is required or \$2,000 per dwelling or lot should the proposed Wine Country Drive deviation road works be provided as works in kind. The VPA is not intended to include contributions to upgrading of existing infrastructure for water and sewer, which are currently the subject of discussion with Hunter Water Corporation. This contribution will be via a service agreement with Hunter Water Corporation and lead to significant upgrades in the existing service level for the region. The expected developer contribution in relation to water and sewer is in the order of \$30 million to \$50 million.

The approach to the provision of regional infrastructure in this instance is generally consistent with the new infrastructure regime outlined in the department circular dated 6 November 2007. Items such as education, health and emergency services will be delivered via the dedication of land only, while regional road and rail infrastructure will be upgraded via works in kind. The proponent is proposing to enter into separate VPAs with the relevant local councils—Cessnock and Singleton—to provide for local infrastructure, that is, open space, library, community and youth centre et cetera.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Solely in response to that I say that the whole point of Steve Brown's email—and he is the former regional director for the Hunter region—is to warn and complain that the Government is about to make "massive concessions", as he described it, in relation to what was then called Sweetwater. He says "with little justification". That is the whole question of what the Government is doing there: it is taking an area that is remote from—

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: It is a time for questions of the Minister; it is not a time to make statements. It is also not a time to quote newspaper allegations.

The Hon. HENRY TSANG: Point of order: The Minister has precisely described all the details of that project. Ms Sylvia Hale does not want to listen to the Minister's detailed answer. In fact, she is suggesting those answers are not adequate. I ask you to ask Ms Sylvia Hale to frame her question in another way.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: To the point of order: If Ms Sylvia Hale wants to give a preamble and take up her time by doing so that is her business.

CHAIR: That is correct.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Could I ask how many times did your predecessor or the Director General meet with representatives of Hardie Holdings during 2006 and 2007?

Mr HADDAD: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. HENRY TSANG: As an architect, I am concerned about local development processing time. Could the Minister please advise the Committee of the latest information with regard to local development processing times?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes, I can, and thank you for the question. Since 2006 the State's 152 councils have been supplying the Department of Planning with detailed information on each development application and modification determined by council and on each complying development certificate issued by council or accredited certifiers. This is a major improvement on data collection in the years prior to 2006 and the cooperation of councils in supplying this data has been most welcome. The most recent data has been analysed and, in summary, the time taken to process local development proposals remains substantially unchanged. This highlights the need for further reform. However, I am pleased that some councils have improved their performance, showing that with sufficient effort better results can be obtained.

When the application process is lengthy it increases costs to the community, it delays the commencement of work, it slows down the economy and it frustrates all those involved in the process. In a time of slowing national economy faced with the challenges of a global credit crisis, any positive actions that allow for a more rapid commencement of work are to be welcomed. Of the 152 councils and shires across the State there are many that have turned in exemplary performances and are truly praiseworthy. Regrettably, there are others that still have to deliver the improvements that the State's residents and ratepayers expect and deserve.

In the 2007-08 period New South Wales councils processed some 82,000 development applications, a slight reduction on the previous year. Modifications determined by councils were marginally up on the previous year; however, determinations of complying development certificates were marginally down over the same period. In all, some 108,000 development applications, modification applications and complying development certificates were determined by councils and accredited certifiers across the State, a figure slightly down on the previous year. These determinations represent over \$23 billion in value. The overwhelming majority of development applications—some 97 per cent—are for works of less than \$1 million in value. These are the efforts of working families and small businesses building houses, renovating homes and expanding their workplaces. In fact 59 percent of the applications covered were for new single dwellings or residential alterations and additions.

This activity is the engine room of the economy, the bedrock upon which our prosperity is built. Unfortunately, when applications become a lengthy process, the costs are borne by and large by the State's families and small business, the sector of our economy that is least able to afford it. Speeding up these processes will lighten the burden directly on the backs of New South Wales working families and small businesses. The data shows that it took on average 74 days to obtain a council development determination in New South Wales. In the previous year the time taken to process a development application and obtain a council determination was 76 days. The council that had the highest mean gross determination time averaged 160 days to process applications. Across the State, 28 councils took an average of more than 100 days to process a development application.

In fairness to councils, there can be significant variation in the reasons underlying high processing times when the net time is considered. The gross time is the total time taken to process the application. The net time is the time taken on average by the council taking out any time when the application was referred back to the applicant for more information or referred on to State agencies. Where a large gap exists between the gross and net times, it appears that either referral to State agencies or time lag in applicants providing additional information after the submission of their development application was responsible for the high gross times. However, I think we can make improvements to net time and I look forward to working with local government on this challenge.

It would be unfair of me to highlight the councils with the slowest performance without also acknowledging that many councils performed extraordinarily well. The fastest council took just seven days on average, and others averaged between 10 and 20 days. Similarly, of the State's 152 councils, some 52—or over one-third—took less than 50 days to process an application and deliver a determination. Many improved this processing time significantly—in one case up to 60 percent improvement. These improvements are most welcome and reflect great credit on all members of council and their staff striving to improve performance delivery. The Government is pleased to be able to acknowledge many councils which, through a combination of methods, have been able to streamline their procedures and truly add value rather than red tape to development applications.

Another area that could be improved is the number of applications on which councils sought clarification and further information from the applicant. Some 40 per cent of applications were sent back for further information from applicants, which added on average 62 days to application times. Some of this is attributable to poorly worded or ambiguous applications; however, some is also due to lack of clear council development guidelines. The Department of Planning is encouraging councils to develop clear development guidelines. Electronic planning tools are being introduced by the Government as part of the overall planning reform process and this will assist in ensuring that development applications submitted contain all the required information and reduce delays experienced in obtaining council determinations.

Similarly, the ongoing planning reform process that is being driven by this Government will continue to deliver a wide range of incremental improvements across the entire spectrum of the development process. Many of the State's councils are striving hard to improve their performance and several have managed to do so quite impressively. The Department of Planning will continue to drive the Government's planning reform agenda reducing regulatory complexity and providing councils with improved tools to do their job.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Further to Ms Hale's earlier question, could you elaborate on the rationale for including Sweetwater in the Lower Hunter strategy?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I would be happy to do so. In finalising the Lower Hunter regional strategy it became obvious that more land was needed for housing. The population projection in the draft strategy of an extra 125,000 people over the next 25 years was clearly not reflective of the potential of the Lower Hunter to grow. The population projection in the final strategy was increased to 160,000. Recent Australian Bureau of Statistics figures show that we are spot on with this growth projection. More than 6,000 people moved to the Lower Hunter in the year to 30 June 2007.

Increased population meant that we had to find more land for housing and jobs, but it had to be in the right place. Sweetwater—or Huntlee, as it is now known—is in the right place. The site adjoins the existing town of Branxton and offers the opportunity to build on and reinforce an existing community. It is located in a high-growth sector of the Lower Hunter and offers the opportunity to capitalise on growth from nearby Maitland and Cessnock. It is located equidistant—approximately 20 kilometres—between Maitland, Cessnock and Singleton, and provides the opportunity to create a viable new urban centre.

It is located in close proximity to the Newcastle rail line, providing opportunities for public transport. Train trip time to Maitland from Branxton is currently 20 minutes, Newcastle one hour, although services are infrequent. It is located in close proximity to the New England Highway and adjacent to the proposed F3 extension. Car trip time to Maitland and Cessnock from Branxton is currently 20 minutes, Newcastle 50 minutes.

It is located in a position that can take advantage of the growth associated with coalmining in Singleton and Muswellbrook. Up to 160 hectares of commercial and employment land will be provided creating the opportunity for a significant proportion of the new population to live and work locally. In common with all major greenfield land releases, the development will require the provision of additional infrastructure, such as water, sewerage, roads, public transport, primary schools, high schools, health and community facilities. Contributions from the developer will be a fundamental part of this.

There are also very significant conservation benefits as a result of this proposal. Fully half of the site, over 850 hectares, will be dedicated for conservation, and in total Hardie Holdings will be required to provide more than 7,000 hectares of conservation lands across the Lower Hunter under the memorandum of understanding negotiated by the previous Minister. The Huntlee proposal included in the final regional strategy is very different from the original proposal. The original proposal was for more than 28,000 lots. The proposal that the former Minister negotiated is a quarter of that size, 7,200 lots. The Department of Planning's original assessment of the proposal was based on the much larger option, which had the potential to significantly impact on the conservation values of the site and overwhelm the road and public transport system. The outcome the previous Minister negotiated is a sensible and sound one and one that stacks up on planning grounds. The Huntlee proposal is currently undergoing rigorous assessment by the department as a State significant site.

The Hon. HENRY TSANG: What is the Planning portfolio's contribution to improving housing affordability?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Thank you, Mr Tsang. That is a very timely and important question. The Government is implementing a wide range of initiatives to enable adequate levels of housing construction to occur. The current situation of relatively low rates of approvals is a combination of the stage of the property cycle that we are in, which always goes through peaks and troughs, and exceptional factors affecting demand. The latter are in turn affecting the willingness of developers to pursue new projects in the short term. The Government has recognised that housing affordability is one factor at present and is progressing the development and implementation of a housing affordability strategy as a priority. It is one of the State Plan priorities, E6, with targets and initiatives applying to regional New South Wales and Sydney, and is also one of the implementation actions for the metropolitan strategy.

The most critical factors affecting housing affordability now are the impact of higher interest rates on homebuyers' ability to enter the market; the global restriction on the credit available to developers to bring projects online; and the prevailing poor market conditions in some parts of Sydney restricting the ability of developers to successfully bring land to the market. The levels of stocks of land available at the key stages of the housing supply process—that is the total potential of land committed for development, total zoned, and total zoned and serviced—are not a factor in the levels of new housing construction in Sydney's new housing estates.

Increasing housing affordability requires a multi-layered approach by government. The Government is addressing affordability in four principal ways. Firstly, Government actions over recent years have ensured that stocks of greenfield land are at healthy levels compared to current demand and can also respond quickly to a market upturn. These actions include the rezoning of new release areas in south-west Sydney, including Oran Park and Turner Road in the growth centre and nearby Harrington Park II. The Government's Metropolitan Development Program [MDP] ensures the ongoing delivery of housing land to the market and is delivering significant increases to the amount of zoned and serviced land towards the State Plan target of sufficient zoned and serviced land to accommodate 55,000 potential dwellings. As of 30 June 2007 the potential of land zoned for greenfield housing was 50,022 dwellings, an increase of 41 percent since July 2005. For zoned and serviced stock, the increase was to 33,858 dwellings, or 44 per cent over two years. For the established or brownfield areas of Sydney the MDP is also showing a continuing supply of sites with capacity to maintain new dwelling construction at adequate levels as the market improves.

Secondly, the New South Wales Government has introduced reforms for levying infrastructure contributions to lower the cost of new development. These changes impose limitations on the types of community infrastructure a council can levy contributions for and the types of infrastructure that State Government agencies can require contributions for in future. These limitations will keep the level of contributions well below what has been seen in the recent past.

Thirdly, the Government's recent planning reforms seek to cut red tape and improve efficiency in the New South Wales planning system, which will have a flow-on impact on improving housing affordability by increasing the uptake on complying development from the current 11 per cent to 50 per cent of all applications over the next four years, a saving of some \$353 million to the New South Wales economy; streamlining the plan-making system to substantially reduce delays in the processing of local environmental plans and produce greater certainty in the delivery of land for investment in housing; and improving development application turnaround times through changes to the assessment process, the removal of unnecessary concurrences and the introduction of planning arbitrators that will result in cost savings to applicants.

Finally, the Government is looking at targeting a number of areas, including the continued retention of low-cost housing; streamlining the collection of affordable housing contributions and targeting them so that they can have the biggest impact; establishing the principles to extend existing affordable housing contribution schemes to areas of the State where it can be demonstrated that new developments increase the need for affordable housing; ensuring the admissibility of affordable housing for renting, including granny flats, throughout the State in appropriate zones; supporting the Commonwealth National Rental Affordability Scheme by facilitating the provision of affordable housing in appropriate areas; supporting Commonwealth Government initiatives on homelessness by reviewing the current provisions relating to group homes; and the feasibility of incentives, but only in appropriate circumstances.

Effectively, the Government has four levers at its disposal: Ensuring an adequate supply of land stocks to meet current and future demand; managing infrastructure costs so that they do not prohibit developers bringing new projects to market; reducing delay by improvements to the planning process itself; and working on ensuring an affordable supply of rental and other accommodation, particularly working in partnership with the Commonwealth on some of its new initiatives.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Can you advise what the Government is doing to remove the unnecessary delays in maintaining State agency concurrence and referrals for routine developments?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Thank you, Ms Voltz. That relates to the previous question and streamlining the planning system. Concurrences are where a consent authority, usually a council, is required either by a local, regional or State plan to obtain the approval of a Government department to a development application or a new environmental plan. Without this approval, the proposal being considered by the council, such as a new residential subdivision, new development or infrastructure project cannot proceed. Referrals are also requirements in planning instruments where the consent authority must refer a development application or new environmental plan to a Government department for comment or feedback.

The New South Wales Government has embarked on planning reforms to improve the efficiency and transparency of the planning system. This has included the approval of the New South Wales Parliament in June 2008 of planning reform legislation. There have been concerns that requirements for concurrences and referrals are unnecessarily adding to the complexity of the planning system, significantly increasing processing times and adding to the cost of development. Four years ago the Government removed over 1,100 outdated and duplicated State agency referral and concurrence requirements from planning instruments. The Department of Planning has recently identified a further 1,300 State agency referral requirements that are unnecessarily delaying the assessment of development proposals. Many of the referral requirements have become outdated or duplicate other approval or assessment processes elsewhere, thereby creating unnecessary red tape without any clear benefits or outcomes for the environment or the community.

A State policy entitled the "Repeal of Concurrence and Referral Provisions SEPP" has been prepared in order to remove these unnecessary referral and concurrence requirements from planning instruments to unclutter the development assessment process. The draft policy was publicly exhibited in July and August this year and the response has been largely positive. The primary objective of making the SEPP is to reduce red tape in the planning system by simplifying the regulatory regime around concurrence and other State agency referrals for both plan making and development approval. It is not necessary for State Government agencies to be involved in and have a say on every development proposal that comes into a council for determination. New South Wales councils do a great job of reviewing and assessing development proposals and are well equipped to consider environmental, social and economic issues associated with local developments. While State agency input is needed for certain developments, especially large projects or those that may involve specific environmental impacts, the majority of local development is minor and can be handled competently by councils.

The new policy will also benefit proponents, including community members and small-business applicants, who often submit minor proposals that are delayed by generic bureaucratic steps that do not add value. Importantly, councils must still consider the potential impacts on natural and built environments, social and economic issues and the public interest, when assessing development applications to ensure that there are no adverse impacts stemming from the development. State agencies have technical guidelines to assist applicants and councils in the consideration of issues. The Department of Planning will establish a register of relevant guidelines to encourage and facilitate the use of this guidance. This will further strengthen the planning and assessment process and reduce the need for referrals and concurrences.

Councils can continue to refer development applications and inquiries to State agencies for advice. However, those referrals will no longer be compulsory, or cause delays in the assessment process. It is important to note that the new policy will not remove any requirements to obtain development consent, building approvals or any State agency approvals under other legislation. Developers will still be required to obtain all necessary approvals such as pollution licences, heritage permits and construction certificates. In addition, amendments are being made to concurrence provisions in the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act as part of the planning reforms.

CHAIR: Minister, again the Committee is about to move on to the next section of questioning.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I have about 10 more lines.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Read them quickly.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will read them quickly. State agencies will be required to provide concurrence in 21 days rather than 40 days, thus speeding up the determination process. Furthermore, if advice

is not obtained within the time frame the council can proceed with the determination without having to wait for advice. These new provisions will give more confidence to councils to get on and determine matters.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, 12 days ago Patrick Fensham, the co-author of the Metropolitan Strategy, said that the Metropolitan Strategy underestimated the number of new dwellings needed by 2030 by 236,640, a every precise figure. Are you aware of his comments? What is your view of his statements?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I am aware of his comments. I have asked the department to provide advice in relation to the population projections to which the report referred. My initial reaction is one of wait and see; first of all until I have that departmental advice and, secondly, I am not certain that the increase in population necessarily translates into the increase in the number of dwellings required that he projects, although I am willing to have that matter examined. I say that because it is not certain yet whether the increase in population necessarily equates to a change in the number of people per dwelling. I am seeking advice on that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Thank you. Obviously in terms of meeting the strategy, land availability is a key factor?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As you said earlier, it was a key factor in housing affordability as well. I go back to your answer and please accept my apologies if I did not get it right. The figure used was 50,022 zoned and serviced blocks of land that are available. Is that right?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: In metropolitan Sydney?

Mr HADDAD: Yes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: How many of those are actually within the purview of the Growth Centres Commission in north-western and south-western growth areas?

Mr DAWSON: The commission was established in 2005, but it began its work with the approval of sequencing other things in 2006. At that point we started the rezoning package. Within the commission's area we do not do only rezonings, we do precinct plans, which include infrastructure plans, development control plans from council and section 94 plans. That is significant because with the first precinct plan we did in the south-west growth centre we precinct-planned 12,000 lots and they are now rezoned and are service planned. By service planned, that means that the state infrastructure agencies are all aware of what infrastructure is required at what time to get that land to market.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: So, would I be correct in saying that of those 50,000, since the inception of the Growth Centres Commission 12,000 have been brought on stream?

Mr DAWSON: Plus another 7,500 in Edmondson Park, 1,000 at Colebee, 4,500 were on exhibition at Kellyville, which is now currently in the process of assessing submissions—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Sorry, is that before or after—

Mr DAWSON: They are all part of the Growth Centres Commission work. That totals 20,500 that had been rezoned and service planned. Of that, another 4,500 have come off exhibition and things are now being assessed on that basis.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, do you want to make a point?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: No, I will clarify something later about a previous question, after this is finished.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Dawson, exactly how many have been sold?

Mr DAWSON: The commission does not actually sell land. The commission can do, as the Government can do—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: You would have an idea of how many have been sold, surely. You would need to know the policy—

Mr DAWSON: Yes, as I said, the best think that the commission can do, and the best thing that the Government can do, is get this land to a point where it can get to market. I was advised as late as this morning that in Colebee there is a display village built, a sales office built, 184 lots are now complete, which I was advised this morning the developer will release on 1 November.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: None of those have been sold?

Mr DAWSON: I am not sure whether they have or not, I am not privy to developers' sales records or other things. In Oran Park and Turner Road, 400 lots now have development approval. Developers have commenced road works and are preparing construction certificate applications and tenders. Again, I am not aware of what the developers' sales records, I do not have access to those.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: That strikes me as curious, because, Minister, from a policy point of view if you do not know how much land you are bringing to market has been sold, how will you gauge the success of the Growth Centres Commission's work?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I remind you, Mr Harwin, that the Government does not sell the land. We cannot force land to be sold. We can provide zoned and zoned and serviced land so that we are ready to meet the market demand. Surely you, as a member of The Liberals, understand markets?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: With respect Minister, that is not my point. My point is that obviously you had to provide land. If you are providing something that people do not want to buy there is not much point in bringing it to market, is there? I am asking the obvious point and pursuing the obvious point, which is: of all this land that has been zoned and rezoned and serviced, how much of it is being sold?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The State Plan target is for a number of serviced, zoned and zoned and serviced lots. The target is not for a number of lots that have been sold. I remind you, again, that the Government cannot force land to be sold. We can ensure that it is zoned and we can ensure that it is zoned and serviced. I am not certain that you do quite understand markets, I have just given a lengthy answer on housing affordability at the moment—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I assure you that I do.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: —many of which are not within the Government's control. Things like interest rates, global credit crisis and things like—

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Thank you, Minister, it is really not necessary to go into all of that.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Well, I would have thought you would want an answer to your question.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Dawson, given that you are under oath, could you confirm that to your absolute knowledge is it the case that you do not know whether one block has been sold in any of your growth areas, north-west or south-west?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: That was a dramatic way in which to phrase the question, and I liked the fact that the Hon. Don Harwin banged on the table. For the benefit of the *Hansard* record, the Hon. Don Harwin banged on the table to emphasise his question.

CHAIR: Order! The question was directed to Mr Dawson.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I asked Mr Dawson the question, as I am entitled to do.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order—

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: And I am entitled to answer, as this is my portfolio.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: To the point of order: It is not the Minister's role to debate the question.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: I took the point of order. In fact it is the Minister's role to answer questions.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: It is not the Minister's role to debate the question.

CHAIR: Order! One at a time.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Further to the point of order: Mr Dawkins has already outlined the number of development applications that have gone in on these sites. The Minister is entitled to answer in relation to her portfolio.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: And not to debate the question as Ms Sylvia Hale correctly pointed out.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Public servants are not here to give opinions on government policy. That is the Minister's role.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not asking for an opinion on public policy; I am asking about an operational matter, which is quite clear.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: And Mr Dawson outlined the number of development applications that have gone in on those sites.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I did not ask that; I asked whether or not they have ever been sold.

CHAIR: Order! Minister, are you able to allow Mr Dawson to answer the question?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I do not believe the question was appropriately addressed to Mr Dawson.

CHAIR: Order! You cannot debate the question.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will not allow Mr Dawson to answer the question because it is not his job to know whether or not land has been sold. It is not his responsibility.

CHAIR: If somebody drove around these estates today would they find one house built on them?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: It is not Mr Dawson's responsibility; it is the Government's responsibility to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet demand and to ensure that land is serviced and zoned for when market conditions are ready.

CHAIR: Surely someone in the planning department can tell us whether a house has been built on one of these estates. Is one house there?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I do not think you understand what I am saying. Let me speak slowly in case the Hon. Don Harwin again starts to bang on the table.

CHAIR: Is one house built on any of these estates?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: The Minister is not required to answer the question.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: It is not the Government's responsibility to sell this land or to build upon it. It is the Government's responsibility to provide zoned and zoned and serviced lots to meet the market demands. Currently, and over the last period, we experienced extraordinary market conditions in this State because of to the global credit crisis and the poor conditions of the market in some parts of Sydney. Under the State Plan the Government is committed to meeting a target of zoned and zoned and serviced lots. Mr Dawson is

responsible and the Growth Centres Commission are responsible for that. If you want to ask about zoned and zoned and serviced lots you can do that, but it is not the responsibility of the Growth Centres Commission to sell land.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: It is extraordinary. You are the planning Minister and you cannot tell the Committee if you know whether any land has been sold.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I am telling the Committee that it is not the Government's responsibility.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Presumably New South Wales has to play its part in emerging from the global credit crisis that you described. The Federal Government is doing its part with the support of the Federal Opposition in relation to the First Home Owners Grant. New South Wales has been in negative growth for some time now. My question and this whole line of questions are about whether the Government's policies are resulting in more houses being built in New South Wales, or more affordable housing, which you say is part of the State Plan. You do not even know, which I find extraordinary, whether any of this land has been sold. That is what you are saying under oath. I question the adequacy of the Government's policy and how it is being implemented.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Let us talk about development contributions for infrastructure. I find extraordinary that you did not hear the long answer I gave about housing affordability that outlined various things that impact on housing affordability, many of which are not under the purview of the New South Wales Government. I outlined the levers that the Government has to effect housing affordability. I did not say that I do not know or that Mr Dawson may or may not know about development in the growth centres area, as he has provided you with some information. However, I said that that is not the Government's responsibility.

I think that the Hon. Don Harwin demonstrates a fundamental misunderstanding of both the role of the Growth Centres Commission and the policy levers available to the Government. God help him if he ever gets into government with that fundamental misunderstanding. Let us talk about development contributions. I just outlined a number of issues relating to housing affordability. Ensuring that development contributions for infrastructure are reasonable and affordable and that they reduce the costs of bringing new land to market is a government lever. The Minister for Planning makes decisions on the extent of contributions for State infrastructure in consultation with the Treasurer. Councils make decisions on the extent of contributions for local infrastructure.

Under present processes, the assessment of the extent of development contributions for new release areas has been on a case-by-case basis, using the principles announced by the Government in 2007. Until the planning reforms are implemented a committee known as the Infrastructure Levies Implementation Committee reviews levy proposals and assists in the implementation of new policy. Both Mr Dawson and the director general are members of that committee. Eventually, I would like to move to State infrastructure contributions being set on regional basis. I believe that that will better enable us to assess the impacts of State and local levies on housing affordability.

This is the type of work that is done by the Growth Centres Commission. I think Mr Dawson outlined well the various roles that it plays, including meeting that State Plan target of providing zoned land and zoned and serviced land ready to meet an upturn in the market. Finally, thank you for your endorsement of the Federal Government's initiatives that were announced last night.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Federal Labor endorsed them yesterday, so that is not a problem. Are you aware that Premier Rees commented on a plan for an extra levy on home builders in the north-west growth sector to cover the cost of the North West Metro? Have you discussed the Premier's comments with him or with any member of his staff? If so, did you agree with his proposal? Do you think it will help in getting more houses built in the north-west?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I understand that this is just one of a number of options that will be discussed in the mini-budget. As the Premier indicated, the Government will not provide a running commentary on what may or may not be included in the mini-budget.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As your department's metropolitan strategy forecasts 250,000 people moving into the north-west sector by 2030, can you indicate whether you argued for the retention of the North West Metro to the north-west growth sector?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will not provide a running commentary about what may or may not be within the mini-budget.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I am not asking about the mini-budget; I am asking what advice you have given.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The North West Metro, any infrastructure project, and any matter under review for the mini-budget are decisions for the whole of government. It is not for me to be providing a running commentary. The mini-budget will come down in November and the Premier and Treasurer will make those announcements.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, I refer to MP05-0113 Seniors Living Resort, Oxford Falls. How does a retirement village in Oxford Falls qualify as state significant, and will it be determined by you under part 3A?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: As a new Minister I cannot answer that question, but I am happy to take advice or to take it on notice, unless Mr Haddad would like to speak to it.

Mr PERICA: I will have to check the exact clause under which that was called in. At moment an application has not been lodged. There is agreement that it will qualify under part 3A. I would like to check the records to establish whether that came in under the clause for major projects.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: So you will take that question on notice and get back to us with an answer?

Mr PERICA: Sure.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, I refer you to the proposed sale and development of the Currawong site in Pittwater. Will you refer the sale of the site to the Planning Assessment Commission or will you determine the project yourself? What is your reasoning behind the decision?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I believe I outlined for you in answer to your first question at today's hearing that the delegation to the Planning Assessment Commission has not yet been decided. It would be premature of me, therefore, to discuss whether any particular project will go to the Planning Assessment Commission until I have decided its delegation.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I refer to MP08-0054, which is the Royal Rehabilitation Centre Sydney health facility site. When do you envisage a determination will be made on the future of the site? Are you aware of community concern with the project? Have you met with any community groups to discuss this project? If so, could you please provide details?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I might answer part of that question and I might ask Mr Perica to also address the question. A project application for the new rehabilitation health facility currently is under assessment by the department, and the application was exhibited for 31 days until 20 June 2008. Three submissions were received from agencies and four submissions were received from the public. The value of the project is \$45 million and includes the construction of a replacement Weemala high-care residential facility. Key issues raised included traffic and access, drainage, the future of existing Weemala residents and the detailed design of the public domain works. I understand that on 26 September 2008 the proponent submitted a preferred project report.

In answer to your question about community groups, in my previous portfolio as the Minister for Disability Services I had some involvement and discussion about the future of Weemala residents. Indeed, I toured the Weemala site, and met with a number of its residents and their families. I can advise you also that I have agreed to have a meeting with the new mayor of Ryde regarding the centre and I agreed also to meet with Mr Rolff Clapham from the local action group. Mr Perica, is there anything else you would like to add?

Mr PERICA: Part of the question was when will the future of the site be decided?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes?

Mr PERICA: A concept plan approval was issued as a part 3A project on 23 March 2006. That involved a number of things, including the new replacement high-care facility. At the time 900 residential dwellings were applied for, but that was reduced to 800 dwellings in the terms of the approval. It also included landscaped open space and other services. As the Minister pointed out, there were issues about relocating Weemala residents as well as relocating widening for the disabled. A number of actions have been taken regarding those requirements, though the basic parameters for the future of the site have been approved through the concept plan. Subsequent to that there has been an approval for subdivision of the site and, as also mentioned, there is a current major project in the \$45 million high-care facility proposal, which is still being assessed. The preferred project has been lodged recently and a recommendation has been made to the Minister about that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: And is there a view as to a date when a determination will be made?

Mr PERICA: Before the end of the year is the expectation.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: If I can just clarify something for Mr Harwin. You asked earlier about the zoned-in service. I want to make sure that we are entirely clear that the potential for zoned land stocks was the 50,022 dwellings and zoned-in service was the 33,858.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Minister, if I could return briefly to the subject of the growth centres and factors that are within the Government's control. Are you aware that the mayors of Camden, Liverpool and Campbelltown are reported to have stated that they will not process any further development applications within the area if the south-west rail link does not proceed?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I am aware of that statement.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: What is your response to it?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: My response is that that would be a decision for the whole of government under the mini budget.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: You do not believe that that statement of the mayors of these three very significant local government areas reflects the sheer frustration in the area at the absence of key public transport and infrastructure and their horror at the thought of yet more people being encouraged to move to the area in the absence of such essential things as the south-west rail link?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: In fact, I cast no aspersion or interpretation on their statement. I just said I was aware of it.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I was asking what significance did you attach to it?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: No, that is not what you asked.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Well, I am asking now what significance do you attach to it?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I think it is appropriate that local mayors express the views of their local communities, and good local mayors do so with strong advocacy.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Is it equally appropriate that the Government take heed of those views?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I think in all cases it is important that the Government listen to a wide range of views, including councils.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Could I ask you several questions about the Redfern Waterloo Authority [RWA]?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: When will the proposed filter environment plan be made public?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: My apologies for the slight delay in answering the question. This is why I asked for a break between our portfolio questions.

Mr DOMM: We had intended to put it on public exhibition this year, but that will not happen now. The project has proven to be much bigger and more complex than we originally anticipated. Given that we are now getting close to the end of the year, and given that we have a new Minister who is yet to be briefed on this issue, to be updated on where the project is at and the fact it will have to go to Cabinet for endorsement to go on public exhibition, I would not anticipate it going on exhibition until the early part of the new year, subject to Cabinet endorsement.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Has the plan in a prototype format gone to Housing New South Wales for its comment and input?

Mr DOMM: We have been working in partnership with the department.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Can I add to that and reiterate that, first of all, the RWA has met and will continue to meet with members of the public housing community in Redfern-Waterloo. We commit the Government to no cuts in the amount of public housing, current residents will not be disadvantaged and all public tenancies are secure.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Is there any planning underway for the redevelopment of Housing New South Wales properties in Waterloo?

Mr DOMM: We are basically working on a planning regime. We are not working on a development strategy at this stage. It is basically looking at available sites and seeing what ways we can revitalise and regenerate public housing and create a better deal for public housing tenants and the surrounding community.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I refer now to the Rachel Forster Hospital site and the community health centre. Now that the hospital site has been sold, do you know when work will begin on its redevelopment as a residential complex?

Mr DOMM: No, I do not. We had anticipated that works may have commenced by now, but I guess with the current credit situation, it may be impacting on a whole range of projects, including this one.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: What percentage of units is anticipated to be set aside for public housing in that redevelopment?

Mr DOMM: The Rachel Foster development under the concept plan that was approved envisages approximately 150 dwellings, and they are all private dwellings. It is not a public housing development.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: There is no mention or requirement in that development that there will be affordable housing?

Mr DOMM: In that development, we are obviously collecting an affordable housing levy, which will be applied to the provision of affordable housing in other parts of the area.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: In other parts of the area, which will be a privately owned enclave, as it were?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Ms Hale, there are many private developments in the Redfern-Waterloo area.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Now that the Rachel Foster has been sold, when will work commence on the community health facilities in the old courthouse?

Mr DOMM: It has already commenced.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: What stage has it proceeded to?

Mr DOMM: I have not visited the site recently, but work has commenced, I am advised, and it is in the early stages of construction.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: So when do you expect it to be fully operational?

Mr DOMM: Hopefully by late next year.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Do you see any reason for that target not to be achieved?

Mr DOMM: It is not our project. It is being managed by the Department of Health, but they advised us, when there was meant to be an earlier start, of an anticipated finish by August next year. Given that they are a little bit behind that, I suspect they are pushing for the end of next year, if things go to program.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Could you give the Committee some idea of the budgetary allocation for the Redfern-Waterloo Authority for the next financial year?

Mr DOMM: The Redfern-Waterloo Authority is funded for \$5 million a year. That does not take into account Australian Technology Park, which is not funded. It is a company that generates its own revenue. But in terms of the statutory authority, the Redfern-Waterloo Authority is funded operationally for \$5 million.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: What do you anticipate spending that \$5 million on in the next financial year, specifically?

Mr DOMM: There are salaries, continuing to completion the Everleigh railway plan stage two, getting the north Everleigh site concept plan approved and taking the site to market in the early part of the New Year, seeing to the finalisation of the Channel Seven development in Australian Technology Park—a wonderful new project which will help to revitalise that whole area and create a lot of jobs—taking the remaining development sites at the Australian Technology Park to market after we have subdivided and prepared them for sale, and continuing with our innovative employment programs, including leveraging off these developments to create jobs for unemployed Aboriginal people.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: In relation to north Everleigh, I think you said you envisaged taking the site to market in the early New Year.

Mr DOMM: Yes.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: You will do that, regardless of the depressed state of the real estate market?

Mr DOMM: That is our program. Obviously, you have to monitor the situation repeatedly and make judgement calls at the time. But at this stage, our program is to go to market in February next year. Having said that, though, even though the current market situation is difficult, you have to take into account that these developments occur over a number of years. People who are bidding for these sites have a longer-term view. They do not just look at the immediate situation. They take a longer-term view and make judgements on purchasing based on that. We will have to make an assessment in the early part of the year of whether there is sufficient market interest to take it to market now, or whether we should postpone that.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: For example, if a private developer purchases the site, or any of the site, are they under any compulsion to complete the development within a specific number of years or their approval lapses? I am thinking here whether we will have a recurrence of the case involving the World Centre site at Haymarket where development languished for many, many years.

Mr DOMM: I will answer that question in two parts. Firstly, any development approval requires substantial commencement within a defined period of time. Secondly, we intend to structure the sale contract so that those components of the development that are relevant to the community—that is, open space and in the public domain, whatever—are built by defined dates.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Other than the University of Sydney, have there been any other expressions of interest in the north Everleigh site?

Mr DOMM: We have not gone to market yet, but certainly we have had a number of inquiries, yes.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: So you expect groups other than the university to be interested. When will plans for the upgrading of Redfern station be released?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: We are at the moment looking at a concept design study for the Redfern railway station upgrade. The next step in that process is that RailCorp commences preparation of a business case for the station upgrade, but again, the Redfern-Waterloo Authority is working in partnership with another agency here, RailCorp.

Mr DOMM: A business case has to be finalised and approved by Cabinet, and the funding for the station upgrade comes from the net proceeds of the sale of north Everleigh. All of the proceeds of the sale of north Everleigh are being reinvested in public infrastructure. The nature of that sale of course will determine the timing of that upgrade.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Which is another factor to consider when we go to market with north Everleigh. It actually funds the upgrade of Redfern station.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: What stage is the Aboriginal Housing Company's Penmulwuy project at?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The Aboriginal Housing Company's concept plan was launched some time ago with the Department of Planning. The payment of an outstanding application fee was an obstacle to the application proceeding.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: The Council of the City of Sydney Council has now paid that. Is that correct?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Part of the Redfern-Waterloo Authority's charter is to facilitate the social and economic advancement of Aboriginal people in the Redfern-Waterloo Authority's operational area. To enable the Aboriginal Housing Company's concept plan to be considered, the Redfern-Waterloo Authority has paid the application fee of behalf of the Aboriginal Housing Company to the Department of Planning.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Very good.

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: You should not get too excited.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Such acts of generosity excite forever.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The Aboriginal Housing Company's application for the project can now proceed to assessment. It is currently on public exhibition.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: One of the sticking points or sore points, certainly from the point of view of the Aboriginal Housing Company, is that they felt they had been very disadvantaged by the floor space ratio that had been imposed on that site compared to other comparable sites within the authority's area. Will the authority be reconsidering that floor space ratio?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: They have launched their application now, and it is on public exhibition. My understanding is that that issue largely has been resolved.

Mr DOMM: The reality or truth is that the rezoning of that Everleigh Street precinct, which occurred following the Redcliffe-Waterloo Authority's built environment plan, nearly doubles the floor space potential on land owned by the Aboriginal Housing Company. But rather than reducing it, their development potential nearly doubled. In addition, we increased heights particularly on the rail corridor. We rezoned land as mixed use that was zoned open space, which gave it a development capacity. The end result was that the Penmulwuy project, which would not have been capable of being approved under the former Council of the City of Sydney's planning controls, is now capable of being approved under the rezoning of the Redfern-Waterloo Authority that the Minister for Planning brought in.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I will revert to planning more generally, and specifically the Woolworths big box proposal at Mullumbimby. I imagine you are in receipt of the letter addressed to you dated 30 September 2008

from the Mullumbimby Community Action Network and that you also no doubt would be aware of the considerable community unhappiness about the Woolworths proposal. Will you review the section 96 application from Woolworths to build its full building without adequate sewerage arrangements being in place?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I cannot confirm the letter. I would have to check with my office before confirming receipt of the letter. My department has received an application to modify the development consent that the previous Minister issued for the construction of the supermarket and bottle shop. The application, including amendments made as a result of the first public exhibition period, have been publicly exhibited. The department is currently assessing that application. Of course I will consider all the issues raised in public and agency submissions in making a decision on that application.

Mr WILSON: The department is cognisant of the issues raised in relation to disposal of effluent. We have engaged independent advice in that respect, and that advice has been shared with the local council. We have asked Woolworth's to address the issues raised in that independent advice.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: When assessing such an application, do you take into consideration principles such as the food miles—the sheer amount of movement that is required for food—the social impacts, such as the demise of small local businesses, and the economic impacts, such as the fostering of supermarket duopolies?

Mr WILSON: The assessment report for the original decision, which is on our web, shows that a strong socioeconomic analysis was undertaken about the impacts of the supermarket, as it was then the Melons proposal, on the existing town centre. That was considered as part of the overall decision.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Do you have any intention of strengthening the Building Sustainability Index [BASIX] provisions soon, for instance, to match the United Kingdom's aim of having new buildings carbon neutral by 2016?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: We have a report on BASIX that we will be releasing shortly. We are looking at further amendments we can make to BASIX.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Will BASIX requirements for multistorey buildings be raised to match those for detached houses and villas?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: We are looking at that.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Will you be looking at issues such as compulsory solar hot water in all new and renovated houses?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes, we will look at that.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: My question relates to the ICAC report into corruption risk in development approval processes. At last year's estimates hearing of this Committee, on 15 October 2007, my colleague Ms Lee Rhiannon asked then Minister Sartor if the Government intended to provide a formal response to the ICAC position paper on corruption risks in the New South Wales development approval process. The Minister's response was:

The Government will provide a response in due course. It is a matter for the whole of Cabinet.

Has Cabinet endorsed a formal response to that report? Which of the ICAC recommendations has the Government decided not to implement? If there are recommendations that the Government has decided not to implement, why not?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will take that question on notice.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I hope I do not have to ask it again in 12 months time.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: So do I.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Do you recall a representative of the Stockland company writing to former Minister Sartor in June 2006 asking the Minister to intervene in a commercial dispute between Stockland and Wollongong City Council over an aspect of the Sandon Point residential development? If you recall that, do you

recall also writing a memorandum to the Minister on 23 July 2006 advising him that it was inappropriate for Stockland to have requested the Minister's intervention? What was the underlying reason for your advice to the Minister that it was inappropriate to intervene?

Mr HADDAD: I recall this briefing note—not the details—because it was the subject of media interest. Yes, I recall my advise to the Minister. At the time there was an assessment process underway and at that stage of the assessment the issue of acquiring the road or not was not necessarily a planning consideration in that context, as I have wrote in my briefing note to the then Minister.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Are you aware that the Minister became involved in that matter despite your advice?

Mr HADDAD: To be honest, I do not know. I am not aware of whether he was involved, other than through the media reporting. From my recollection, he had given his explanation. I can assure you that in terms of the assessment process the advice to the Minister was on the basis of the merit assessment itself. It did not go into the merits of the road being there or not subsequent to that.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I think you might take it on trust that the Minister intervened and, I think, contacted Wollongong council. [*Time expired.*]

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order—

CHAIR: Ms Sylvia Hale will have to put that question on notice.

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: How will the Rural Lands State environmental plan policy assist in providing guidance to councils for strategic planning of rural lands?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Agriculture is a significant industry which, in 2006-07, was worth approximately \$7.3 billion to the economy of New South Wales and contributed 79,000 jobs to the State's workforce. Due to its importance, the ongoing orderly and economic development of the rural lands in New South Wales is vital to the State's economy. In addition to the importance of agriculture to the State's economy, the proper planning of rural lands provides opportunities for rural lifestyle settlement and housing which contribute to the social and economic welfare of rural communities.

In February 2007 the New South Wales Government established the Central West Rural Lands Panel to advise on rural land use in the central west region of New South Wales. This panel was chaired by former State MP and Minister Garry West and also included the New South Wales Farmers Association President, Jock Laurie; the Local Government and Shires Association Secretary, Bill Gillooly; and the former Department of Planning Director General, Gabrielle Kibble. The Rural Lands Panel found that there was an important need to plan for rural areas, in particular to recognise that the face of agriculture was changing and that farmers needed to be given greater certainty over the planning controls applying to their land so that land use conflicts with rural lifestyle dwellings could be avoided.

On 9 May 2008 the Government released the Rural Lands State Environmental Planning Policy [SEPP] to implement the recommendations of the Central West Rural Lands Panel. The Rural Lands SEPP recognises the economic social and environmental importance of rural lands to the State. The SEPP provides guidance to councils for the strategic planning of rural land. The Rural Lands SEPP applies to all councils in the State outside the Newcastle, Central Coast, Sydney, Wollongong metropolitan area. The Rural Lands SEPP provides flexibility to encourage innovation in agriculture whilst reducing land use conflicts. It creates a framework for the proper management, development and protection of rural lands. It does this by introducing rural planning principles to guide local councils as they prepare local environmental plans for rural lands.

The SEPP does not alter the existing minimum lot size requirements for rural land; nor does it require local councils to do so. If a local council chooses to review its minimum lot size controls for rural land based on its strategic planning, then it is free to do so but the review must be in accordance with the rural subdivision principles identified in the SEPP. Consistent with the Central West Rural Lands Panel recommendation that concessional lot provisions should be removed, the SEPP has directly amended councils' local environmental plans to remove all remaining concessional lot provisions.

These concessional lot provisions were hangovers from past planning regimes; and because they were allowing settlement in unplanned locations, they were creating conflicts between genuine farmers and those people who wanted a rural lifestyle. However, the SEPP does not affect any other provisions in LEPs that permit the erection of a dwelling house, such as historic allowances on lots known as "existing holdings". Savings provisions have been put in place to preserve dwelling entitlements on concessional lots that have already been approved, as well as those development applications lodged with councils prior to gazettal of the SEPP.

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: What is the latest reform package that applies to building certification?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: A range of changes are being introduced to the certification system in New South Wales to further improve the standard of building certification. The Building Professionals Board has recently undergone a facelift to increase its membership and bring a greater range of skills and experience to the expanded work of the board. The new-look board consists of eight members who have experience in building regulation, certification, fire safety, planning, law and mediation. The new board disciplinary powers introduced by the Building Professionals Amendment Act have already commenced. The board can now impose fines of up to \$110,000 and deal with the most serious disciplinary matters without reference to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal.

The Government will soon commence additional public protection measures by mandating certification from accredited fire safety engineers to ensure all buildings conform to the Building Code of Australia and by introducing the accreditation of council building surveyors to establish a minimum level of competence to undertake this important role in New South Wales. The Government is also introducing a number of other reforms to benefit the community. Steps that need to be taken to enforce development consents will be more certain for accredited certifiers. Councils will have greater powers and expectations on them to enforce their conditions of consent.

The new powers of the board will further strengthen the accountability of the certification system and provide greater consistency in the regulation of building and subdivision development in New South Wales. For the first time the board will be able to accredit corporate entities as accredited certifiers where they have an accredited certifier as a director and at least two other employees who are accredited certifiers. This change will promote professional development within the industry by enabling accredited certifiers to work together. The board's role has been expanded to enable the board to make a finding that an accredited certifier has engaged in professional misconduct.

The Building Professional Board can also impose the larger penalties associated with such a finding namely cancelling or suspending an accredited certifier's certificate of accreditation or imposing the maximum fine of \$110,000 without referral to the Administrative Decisions Tribunal [ADT]. Previously the board was limited to suspending accreditation for a period of only eight weeks or imposing conditions without notice if the action was necessary to protect the safety or property of any person. The board is now able to suspend an accreditation holder where they have persistently breached the legislation while an investigation their conduct is carried out.

The number of penalty infringement notices that can be used by the board will also be increased to cover common breaches of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act by accredited certifiers and key parties. This allows the board to issue small fines for procedural breaches without the need for a full-blown and time-consuming investigation into a matter. To increase confidence in the system rules will be introduced to further address perceived conflicts of interest between accredited certifiers and developers. The board will also be able to investigate complaints about councils in relation to the council's work and activities as a certifying authority.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Will the Minister update the committee on the progress of implementing the Western Sydney Parklands?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The Western Sydney Parklands Trust was created in 2008 to plan the more than 5,200 hectares of regional open space that forms the Western Sydney Parklands. Stretching over 27 kilometres in length from Quakers Hill in the north to Leppington in the south, the Western Sydney Parklands form the largest urban parklands in Australia, a major resource for the people of the rapidly expanding suburbs of Sydney's west. The park is overseen by the Western Sydney Parklands Trust, which in

turn is led by the board of the trust. The inaugural trust board was appointed by the Government earlier this year, providing leadership and direction to the trust.

Comprised of a cross-section of members representing specialists in the legal profession, local government, the environment, finance and land management, the board embodies a diverse skill set and a commitment to the vision of a grand park for all members of the community. In addition, both the Department of Planning and the Department of Environment and Climate Change are represented on the board, providing both oversight and a conduit to the State Government as appropriate. The appointment of the board has resulted in significant progress being made in a number of areas. These include the finalisation of the Parklands Track, recruitment of both senior managers and on the ground rangers, putting in place a sound financial reporting structure and commencing management of the former Western Sydney Regional Park and for the Parklands track.

While much has been achieved in a short time, more remains to be done. This includes implementing the bio-restoration plan for the park, developing the park's long term business and operational plans and undertaking additional recruitment of the specialists needed to manage and develop this wonderful community asset. The Western Sydney Parklands are also an essential part of the region's ecosystem. Much of the land acquired for the parkland was ex-grazing land and as such had been cleared of much of the native vegetation. Today, a massive re-vegetation program is underway, one which will see native vegetation re-established in areas that were once their natural habitat but which were cleared over generations of land use. For example, some 700,000 trees and shrubs have been planted within the parklands borders, a massive program which continues to restore the native ecology of the region.

The Western Sydney Parklands also acts as a biodiversity storehouse as other areas of natural vegetation in Western Sydney are reduced due to continuing urban growth. In addition to parks and recreation space, natural vegetation and biodiversity areas, the Western Sydney Parklands links and connects a range of other major community activities. For example, the Western Sydney International Drag way and the Eastern Creek Raceway, both centres of active pursuits and motor sports, fall within the parklands boundaries. Also falling within the parklands boundaries are several centres of organised sporting endeavours, including the Sydney International Equestrian Centre, Blacktown Olympic Park and the associated Softball Centre, plus the Sydney International Shooting Centre.

These major sporting infrastructure projects, created for the 2000 Olympic Games, today continue to be used for a wide range of activities in addition to their designed ones, reflecting the wonderful investments that these Olympic facilities represent. Taken together, the Western Sydney Parklands offer something for everyone, a diverse range of attractions the residents of Western Sydney and beyond. The residents of Sydney are blessed with a truly wonderful series of parks and public spaces the envy of cities around the world. These range from Hyde Park in the central business district and Centennial Parklands in the Eastern Suburbs, to Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park in the north and the Royal National Park in the south.

The city's geographic heart has the parklands of Sydney Olympic Park and the people of western Sydney now have their own massive public open space, one of the world's largest urban parklands. The Western Sydney Parklands are a tribute to the foresight of the State Government over the last three decades, a commitment both to this exceptional project and the people of Western Sydney. The Department of Planning has been acquiring the land for the Western Sydney Parklands corridor over the last 30 years as part of a long-term strategy for Western Sydney. Today the Parklands Trust now owns more than 90 per cent of the parklands.

The Department of Planning's interface lands adjacent to the parklands at Doonside and West Huntingwood are being developed for housing and employment in Western Sydney. Revenue generated from the development of these sites will be used to further develop the parklands. This long-term strategy has seen the acquisition and retention of an area the size of 25 Centennial Parks for the future enjoyment of the people of Sydney. Just as Centennial Park has served the people of the surrounding area for more than a century, forming an iconic part of the fabric of the Eastern Suburbs, so too the Western Sydney Parklands will serve as the playground for future generations of families from Sydney's west. Today, the Rees Government is building on the forethought of previous governments over three decades and is driving the future development of the parklands to ensure that it continues to serve the needs of Sydney's residents.

The Hon. LYNDIA VOLTZ: Will the Minister outline the Government's future plans for Sydney Olympic Park and its unique parkland?

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Is this before after the V-8 race?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Australians do remember the Sydney 2000 Olympics and Paralympics Games with pride. The games transformed Sydney and left the people of New South Wales with an iconic sports and major events infrastructure and important urban parklands of Sydney Olympic Park. But Olympic precincts around the world do not automatically thrive after their games. It takes a determined combination of vision and planning to ensure that they become vital additions to a city, and not just a monument to the past. The Government has been working steadfastly since the games to ensure that Sydney Olympic Park maintains its position as Australia's major event capital and protects its diverse parklands, while developing as a new town centre in Western Sydney. In the eight years since the Games, significant progress has been made. Cranes—not the bird type—have become a typical part of the park's horizon.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Although there are cranes of the bird type as well?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: There are cranes of the bird type, but cranes of the industrial type have also become a typical part of the park's horizon, demonstrating the confidence that the business community has in the Sydney Olympic Park precinct as an event capital and an economic hub in Western Sydney. That confidence is well deserved.

Today Sydney Olympic Park has grown to accommodate about 60 businesses and has a workforce of more than 6,000. I am advised that this will grow to about 8,000 by early 2009 with the completion of two more buildings for the Commonwealth Bank. Organisations based at the park include the Commonwealth Bank, Dairy Farmers, Samsung, the Australian College of Physical Education and the NSW Institute of Sport, to name a few. I was pleased to note that two Sydney Olympic Park businesses—BP Solar and Peregrine Semiconductor—were recognised at the 2008 Western Sydney Industry Awards for their role in developing innovative technologies used around the world.

Many of the businesses that move to Sydney Olympic Park do so because of the unequalled work-life balance that the park offers through its world-class sporting and recreational facilities, its magnificent parklands, and its innovative lifestyle program. Indeed when I was there the other day I met a woman who works at Sydney Olympic Park who told me she finally learned to ride a bike because of the lifestyle program. It offers workers at the park a wide range of benefits, including discounted access to the aquatic centre and discounted tickets to sporting and entertainment events, including NRL matches at the ANZ Stadium.

There have been more than \$1.1 billion of developments approved at the park since the 2000 Games and more than \$276 million in the past 19 months alone. This includes the 156-room Formule 1 hotel and the Pullman Hotel, Sydney's first five-star hotel in 10 years and Greater Sydney's first ever five-star hotel. This impressive new hotel reflects the growing sophistication of the Sydney Olympic Park precinct, and indeed of the dynamic Western Sydney region, which is Australia's third largest economic region and home to one in ten Australians.

It also includes Sydney Olympic Park's first residential development, a 208-unit complex. This is an important milestone for the Sydney Olympic Park's transformation into an integrated community and I am advised that construction will commence in the first half of 2009. Other recent approved developments include three new commercial buildings, a specialist hospital, a new pub and bistro. The critical mass of workers and construction now at Sydney Olympic Park is supporting the establishment of a range of service providers, including new cafes and restaurants, a convenience store, bank, florist, pharmacy and newsagent. This is helping to bring the park to life and make it a great place to work, to live and to visit.

Indeed, Sydney Olympic Park visitation is increasing. Last year the park attracted 8.5 million visitors, up 10 per cent on 2006, and visitation is on track to reach 10 million by 2010. The park hosts more than 4,500 events a year and is Australia's undisputed major events capital. Sporting events held at the park include the Bledisloe Cup, the recent NRL grand final, the Medibank International tennis tournament, the Swimming World Cup and the upcoming 2009 World Masters Games. We also at the park host many of the international concerts that visit Australia, including Stevie Wonder and Kylie Minogue. They will soon play at the Acer Arena, which was recently ranked the third most successful indoor entertainment venue in the world.

The park also hosts more than 2,000 business events each year and last year welcomed more than one million business events delegates. The Government is working to enhance the park's business event capabilities through the current Sydney Showground exhibition expansion project, which will support State and local

economies. The park hosts a significant number of community entertainment events, including the Sydney Royal Easter Show, the southern hemisphere's biggest event, which last year attracted about 900,000 people. Sydney Olympic Park is also an important destination for education and last year more than 21,000 students participated in their curriculum-based environmental education programs.

One of the great things about Sydney Olympic Park is how it provides the opportunity for a wide range of people, from community or recreational users to elite sportsmen and women training for the Olympics, to use the same high-quality facilities. Indeed I was there the other day to launch the new BMX bike track where we had Olympians teaching BMX biking to children from the Auburn local government area. The Sydney Olympic Park aquatic centre is another great example of this.

The facilities at Sydney Olympic Park give people of all levels of athletic ability the opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing and to enjoy life in Sydney Olympic Park.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Were you briefed prior to the Premier's decision to host a V8 race at Olympic Park or did you only find out about it after he made the decision?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I was briefed by Mr Marsh, the chief executive officer of the Sydney Olympic Park Authority, on the proposal.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Was that just after your appointment as Minister?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: And prior to the decision that the Premier took?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Why did you sideline effectively the Sydney Olympic Park Authority and its chair, former Minister Knight, in their opposition to the V8 car race?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: What action of mine do you think represents me sidelining them?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Did you back their advice, which was that the race should not go ahead?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I provided advice when I was asked for it on what was the Sydney Olympic Park Authority board's position on the proposed V8 race.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Prior to announcing the V8 Supercar motor race going to Homebush, did you receive any legal or other advice as to possible exposure to compensation of other tenants or owners at the Homebush Bay site? If so, what were the details of that advice?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The briefing provided to me by Mr Marsh did not include that advice.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: So there was no advice given to you? Mr Marsh, have you received any legal or other advice as to possible exposure to compensation of other tenants or owners on the Homebush Bay site from the V8 Supercar motor race?

Mr MARSH: Looking at all the aspects of motor racing there, we certainly got some legal advice on possible exposure.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What were the details of that advice?

Mr MARSH: Under the leases you are required to provide quiet enjoyment, access to the site and that sort of stuff, and that type of information was fed to the committee looking into the race to be taken into consideration in the staging of it.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Given that that advice exists, will you table it and provide it to the Committee?

Mr MARSH: It was prepared in Cabinet in confidence, as part of that Cabinet review.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, I did not let you answer.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I was only going to say that I would seek advice from Mr Marsh as to whether or not that information could be released.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Mr Marsh, what is the likely compensation that will have to be paid to tenants or owners at the Homebush Bay site as a result of the inconvenience caused by the race?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: I am not sure where we are going with this, but I seek clarification, if we are talking about legal matters, whether this should be a matter that comes before the Committee? I just seek clarification; I am not sure where the questions are heading.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: We are here considering the budget estimates for the Planning portfolio. I am asking what the likely financial impact on the Planning budget is going to be in terms of the State's exposure.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Perhaps I can assist and suggest that Sydney Olympic Park is the venue for the event. The event itself and any questions about liabilities and otherwise, agreements with the event organiser and the financial implications of the event are best directed to the Minister in whose portfolio the event resides, and that is the Minister for State and Regional Development.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Given the limited time I will move to another area rather than pursuing that further at this stage. What assessment has been undertaken of the cost of remediation of the old gasworks site at Barangaroo? What is the value of the remediation required and what is the specific contamination that needs to be addressed?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: We will take that question on notice.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: As there are approximately 388,000 square metres of primarily office space contained in stage one of Barangaroo and as there is discussion about adding approximately 150,000 square metres of office space, can you advise whether you support the proposal for an additional 150,000 square metres?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: That matter is being assessed by the department and no recommendation has been made to me yet.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What criteria are you applying?

Mr HADDAD: We are basically assessing the proposal. Jason, do you want to explain the status of it?

Mr PERICA: A concept plan amendment has been made. The total floor space was 388,000 square metres and I think there was an allowance of up to 75 per cent of that for commercial office space. There is a proposed modification seeking to allow an additional 50,000 to 120,000 square metres. As has been explained, that is still under assessment. It has recently come off exhibition and I understand the preferred project has recently been lodged and will be placed on the Web. We will be assessing the application in accordance with legislation and considering all submissions and making a report through the director-general to the Minister.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: I want to ask one or two questions on the Redfern-Waterloo Authority [RWA]. Minister, what is your view on the Redfern-Waterloo Authority's proposed concept plan for North Eveleigh? Do you agree with the demolition of 20 heritage buildings to make way for high-rise towers?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: The concept plan was publicly exhibited by the Department of Planning. The RWA has now lodged a preferred project application, which considers the issues raised in submissions and amends the concept plan by creating additional and improved open space, including a new 3,350 square metre park at the western end of the site; reducing car parking on the site from 1,943 to 1,800 spaces; improving access at the western entrance to the site; and reducing the overall floor space by 2,400 square metres. That preferred project application is being reviewed by the Department of Planning staff.

Mr DOMM: I would like to add to what the Minister said. I doubt there are even 22 buildings on the site, let alone 22 buildings that are allegedly being demolished. Every heritage building that is identified in the State Environmental Planning Policy is being retained under the proposed concept plan. That constitutes 52,700 square metres—over five hectares—of heritage floor space that are being preserved.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: The National Trust's conservation director, Graham Quint, has said that plans for Eveleigh equate to trashing the place. Minister, do you agree with Mr Quint's assessment and, if not, why not?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I have not seen Mr Quint's comments. You have read one quote out to me. I think Mr Domm has just made clear the position of the heritage buildings on the site.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: How much money has your Government collected via section 94 funds from each of the councils in the growth centres?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: In the growth centres, not across the State?

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Yes.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: None.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: None? That makes the next question redundant! Your backbench has been very busy today, Minister, and Tony has been running around with lots of questions for Linda. How many ministerial staff do you have?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: In fact we do not have a full complement of ministerial staff at the moment. I am advised we have 10.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: How many of them are media advisers?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: One.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: What is that person paid?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I would have to take that on notice. I note that pay scales for ministerial staff are not set by individual Ministers. That may be a question that is more appropriately asked of the Premier.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Mr Haddad, returning briefly to the question of Stockland and Wollongong council and Minister Sartor's intervention, are you aware that subsequent to Mr Sartor's intervention the dispute between Stockland and Wollongong council was resolved by the council accepting a much lower value for public land that Stockland wanted and in fact needed to provide road access to its site?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: That calls for an opinion on it being subject to the previous Minister's intervention. I hardly think it is appropriate for a public servant to make comment on that.

Mr HADDAD: I cannot comment.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Reverting briefly to the question of Olympic Park that Mr Harwin raised, and here I stand to be corrected, it is my understanding that Auburn council derives a substantial portion of its income from the Olympic Park site, but there is a suggestion that that money will no longer go to the council but will be diverted elsewhere. Is that correct or have I been misinformed?

Mr MARSH: It has no relationship to the park. Auburn council receives rates from businesses out there, but it would not be substantial.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: So there is no proposal that those rates go to the Authority or to the Government in some form rather than the council?

Mr MARSH: I think it is being handled through Local Government. There is a whole issue of a number of Government organisations such as the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority where they undertake the vast majority of local government responsibilities. I think IPART is looking at a review. I think that might be what you are referring to.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: There is a review of local government rates. Perhaps you could provide the question in writing and we will take it on notice.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I will get more detail. I wanted to ask a further question in relation to Eveleigh and the railway workshops. Unfortunately the background is fairly lengthy because without the background you cannot understand the questions. In December 1997 the Minister for Urban Affairs and Planning, Craig Knowles, published a media release entitled "World class railway machinery saved", which stated that a State Government grant of \$300,000 would go towards the conservation of world-class railway machinery at the Eveleigh workshops and would result in the employment and training of a group of young people to carry out the work. The grant was to go to the Australian Technology Park on a dollar for dollar basis. That was in 1997. In 2000 the member for Hawkesbury asked a question in the House as to whether this was so and, if so, what was the current status of the grant and the work. The answer in August 2000 said:

A Heritage Assistance Grant of \$300,000 was made to the Australian Technology Park for the conservation and interpretation of machinery in Bays 1 and 2 ... at the Eveleigh Locomotive Workshop. The Grant was not for building conservation. This grant was to be matched by the Australian Technology Park (ATP) on a \$ for \$ basis. Approximately \$80,000 has been expended on conservation works for the machinery (\$40,000 from the Heritage Assistance Grant and an equal amount from the ATP).

It went on to say:

... residual funding of the grant of \$260,000 will be made available to the SHFA on a \$ for \$ basis, to continue the work of conservation and interpretation.

My questions are: Has that residual funding been released? If so, what was it spent on? Was it spent on those items for which it was intended, namely the conservation and interpretation of machinery in bays one and two? If not, what has happened to those grant funds?

Mr DOMM: All I can say is that the Redfern Waterloo Authority assumed ownership of the Australian Technology Park in January 2005 and assumed management control in April 2005 from the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority. In that time I have no knowledge of the issues you are talking about, but can I say that the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority and the Redfern Waterloo Authority have spent millions of dollars on heritage preservation and the conservation of the Australian Technology Park.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: My concern is the missing \$260,000. Minister, given that both the Harbour Foreshore Authority and the others under your control, will you get back to me with a detailed answer as to what has happened to those funds?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I will do my best. I acknowledge that I was not even elected to Parliament at that time, but I will endeavour to do my best to answer that question.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Thank you, Minister. I now raise the issue of social impact statements. As you know, when applications are made to extend trading hours, the applicant is required to submit a social impact statement. Given that those social impact statements are frequently very self-serving and really have little credibility in the eyes of the public, will you consider requiring applicants to fund the compilation of a social impact statement, but for a disinterested third party to undertake appointment of the organisations that prepare them?

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I apologise: Maybe I am misunderstanding your question, are you referring to applications to extend trading hours?

Ms SYLVIA HALE: Often you find that.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Hotel licensing?

Ms SYLVIA HALE: That is probably the most common case?

Mr PERICA: My understanding is that it is a Gaming and Racing requirement to lodge those as part of the extension of hours and impacts of poker machines.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I know it is in relation to that, but I understand it could be also in relation to other applications. But I may be wrong.

Mr PERICA: I think it is for gaming machines.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: I stand corrected on that.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: We will consider your question and if there is any appropriate answer we will provide that.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Minister, prior to your appointment as Minister for Planning and prior to the appointment of the new Premier, Mr Rees, did you have discussions with Eddie Obeid or Joe Tripodi about the way you would vote if required to do so in your Right faction meetings, or were you promised the Planning portfolio in exchange for your vote?

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: Point of order: This is outside the terms of reference of this Committee.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: To the point of order: Rightly or wrongly, it would seem someone, most probably in your own party, has been trying to create a perception that that is what happened. I would have thought, Madam Chair, that the Minister would welcome the opportunity to clear the air.

CHAIR: I would have thought so also, and the Minister has that opportunity now.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: That is absolutely fine. I find the question ridiculous.

The Hon. LYNDA VOLTZ: He obviously knows little about the party structure.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I can confirm that no, I had no conversation about who I would vote for were there to be a leadership change, because nobody was expecting a leadership change. In fact, you might have seen in the newspapers that I was quite upset about the fact that Premier Iemma had resigned. I had a great deal of respect for him, and I think history will judge him as one of the most decent men to ever hold that office. His contributions in terms of social justice, particularly in my Disability portfolio, were significant. In terms of the Planning portfolio, I received a phone call from the Premier directly. That was the first conversation I had about me holding the Planning portfolio. It is fair to say that in any reshuffle there are a lot of scenarios put about by various members of the party at any time. The only scenario that counts is the one that comes from the Premier.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: Have you had any discussions with Joe Tripodi or Eddie Obeid in regard to individual planning decisions within your portfolio? If so, which planning issues?

The Hon. HENRY TSANG: That is ridiculous.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Mr Harwin, I find that question offensive because it seeks to suggest that having a conversation with a Cabinet colleague about any matter in my portfolio that may also cross over into his is somehow improper.

CHAIR: Is Mr Obeid now in Cabinet!

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Mr Harwin, you are trying to make an allegation without making one and I find that offensive. If you have an allegation to make, make it. Make it here, make it in the Parliament, make it outside on the steps or make it at the ICAC. In terms of members of Parliament, I will have discussions with any member of Parliament who wants to discuss with me a planning matter that is important to him. Indeed, I have two meetings lined up with Liberal members of Parliament next week. If you want me to cancel those meetings, and take it as a policy that I am not going to talk to members of Parliament about planning matters, you can give me that advice but I will not take it.

CHAIR: Do Government members have questions?

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: Sure do. Minister, can you advise the Committee of the success of World Youth Day, government services delivered and the Sydney community's response to the event question mark

Ms SYLVIA HALE: And the budget thereof.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: I can talk about the budget thereof, Ms Hale.

The Hon. TONY CATANZARITI: It is a better question than you have asked all day.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: You have had several hours to ask me a question about the World Youth Day budget, Ms Hale. I thank Mr Catanzariti for the question. I am delighted to outline the success of that wonderful event to the Committee; what an event World Youth Day 2008 proved to be. It gives me great pleasure to inform you, just in case Mr Catanzariti was not in town, that the event ran incredibly smoothly and the international and domestic visitors were able to enjoy a magnificent experience in Sydney. The pilgrims brought so much joy and goodwill to Sydney and Sydneysiders welcomed them with open arms. Sydney's overwhelming support of the event was boosted by the lovely nature of the visitors and the stunning production staged by the event organiser, WYD 2008.

Here are some facts that Committee members may be interested in: 70,000 international pilgrims took part in *Days of the Diocese* throughout regional Australia during the week before World Youth Day; 110,000 international pilgrims from 117 nations travelled to Sydney for the week of celebrations; about 113,000 Australian pilgrims also gathered in Sydney; hundreds of thousands of visitors and Sydneysiders attended the opening Mass at Barangaroo and other central business district sites and the Final Mass at Randwick Racecourse; World Youth Day 2008 events were watched live by an estimated international television audience of 500 million, with television and Internet audiences combined reaching one billion; and 2,000 accredited media were in Sydney for World Youth Day 2008.

Hosting the largest single mobilisation of young people in the world was an enormous task and Sydneysiders responded with the enthusiasm that they are well known for. Just like during the Olympics in 2000, Sydneysiders again showed their first-class hospitality and their readiness to join in the celebrations. In excess of 10,500 people volunteered to assist with the event to ensure that it ran smoothly. This included people who volunteered to work with the event organisers and those who work with the government agencies tasked to provide support services. Agencies such as the State Emergency Service, the Rural Fire Service, the New South Wales Police Force and other organisations ran their own volunteer programmes attracting almost 2,000 people to help deliver important services that helped World Youth Day run smoothly and looked after the health and safety of people attending events. I wholeheartedly thank the volunteers for their time, effort and dedication in making World Youth Day a successful event. Their generosity and willingness to help the visiting pilgrims made them wonderful ambassadors for Sydney and for New South Wales.

By generously donating their time and skills the volunteers enabled international and Australian visitors to enjoy a wonderful event experience, while the impact on the people of Sydney was minimised. World Youth Day was a great event. A Newspoll survey of 400 Sydneysiders held over the weekend of 25 to 27 July found that nearly 80 per cent thought that World Youth Day was a good thing for Sydney. In that same Newspoll survey, 84 per cent of those surveyed felt that the Government did a good job in its organisation of World Youth Day, 75 per cent stated that the potential impacts were well communicated, and 81 per cent said that they were not disrupted by the event.

The survey also found that 69 per cent of Sydneysiders agreed that the New South Wales Government should help to fund large events that are held New South Wales, such as World Youth Day. These survey results are further proof that Sydney has the expertise and capability to host major international events in a way that promotes our beautiful city, while minimising the inconvenience to locals. I have already spoken about the marvellous assistance provided by volunteers, but let us not forget the New South Wales government agencies that made this event possible.

To give members an idea of the task that was carried out, during the week of World Youth Day 75 per cent of people were carried by rail services using 98 per cent of the rail fleet. Around 4,500 extra rail services ran during the week, with 96 per cent of trains running on time. Five different rail timetables were developed to meet demand around event times. Four transport peak services ran each day and high-frequency rail services to

support the event operated for 13 days. There were road closures and 500 special event clearways in place around Sydney that operated without incident. The State Transit Authority scheduled an additional 16,500 bus services to support World Youth Day, and that helped to move pilgrims and Sydneysiders around the city without significant incident. The police, who were on hand to manage the large crowds and to ensure the safety and security of visitors and locals, witnessed no major policing issues and the crowds were well managed.

The World Youth Day Coordination Authority negotiated 16 formal approvals that covered the use of over 700 venues. More than 700 inspections took place by NSW Fire Brigades to make sure accommodation sites met safety standards. Some 465 medical presentations were made to the on-site medical units established at Barangaroo and Randwick racecourse, and 79 per cent of them were treated on site and discharged back into the event, reducing potential pressure on hospital emergency departments. I express my sincere thanks to the hard-working public servants who worked around the clock to support this wonderful event.

World Youth Day would not have been possible without their commitment and expertise in delivering major events. New South Wales government agencies not only delivered high-quality services and supported this major event; they also did it within budget. Although the budget is still being finalised following the event I can confidently inform members that the cost of supporting World Youth Day will fall within the budget of \$86 million, as previously announced by the Government. The World Youth Day Coordination Authority is projecting a savings, but until we have finalised the budgets I am loath to put a number to it. World Youth Day 2008 was certainly a proud moment for all involved.

Ms SYLVIA HALE: The Parliament was initially told that it would cost \$20 million. There must have been an escalation.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: If Ms Sylvia Hale wanted to ask me a question about that she had several hours within which to do so. Every time I travelled around the city or walked to events I was struck by the generosity, the friendliness and the happiness in our city—not just from the pilgrims who were here to celebrate the occasion but also from Sydneysiders who welcomed them with open arms. This demonstration of goodwill and acceptance made the World Youth Day celebrations an enjoyable experience both for participants and for Sydneysiders going about their daily business. The joy it brought to our city during the event had a positive effect on everyone, making the city all the more beautiful. Planning for the event by World Youth Day 2008 and the government agencies was a tremendous effort. I look forward to Sydney playing host to many future events.

The Hon. DON HARWIN: World Youth Day is a lovely note on which to finish.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Yes, it is. I thank the Hon. Don Harwin.

CHAIR: That brings us to the conclusion of today's hearing. Minister, I thank you and your officers for your assistance today.

Ms KRISTINA KENEALLY: Thank you very much.

(The witnesses withdrew)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.
