

MINISTER FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
COMMITTEE HEARING ON 22 OCTOBER, 2007**

(TAFE FEES)

Question1 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING - TAFE FEES -
Dr John Kaye to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial
Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for
Finance –

QUESTION

What are the costs of TAFE fees in both 2007 and 2008 for apprentices with rebates,
apprentices without rebates and trainees?

ANSWER

In 2007, the fee for an apprentice and for a New Entrant Trainee was \$384. From 1
July 2007, Apprenticeship Training (Fee) Vouchers valued at up to \$500 became
available to eligible apprentices undertaking an Australian Apprenticeship in a skills
shortage area as defined by the National Skills Needs List (NSNL).

In 2008, the rebate available from the Commonwealth is up to \$500. For an
apprentice eligible for a rebate, the fee will be \$480, meaning the apprentice will not
be out of pocket.

For a New Entrant Trainee and an apprentice who is not eligible for the
Commonwealth rebate, the fee in 2008 will be \$394.

Existing Worker and School-based Trainees do not pay TAFE fees.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(TAFE FEE EXEMPTION FORMS)

Question 2 – BUDGET ESTIMATES- EDUCATION AND TRAINING- TAFE FEE EXEMPTION FORMS - Dr John Kaye to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Would you be able to table to the Committee the forms that people need to fill in to achieve an exemption? Is that system wide, TAFE wide?

ANSWER

There is no state wide application form to apply for an exemption from fees.

Some Institutes have a form whilst others ask the students to write a letter and enclose substantiating evidence of severe financial hardship.

All Institute Directors can exercise discretion with regards to these exemptions.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

(MACQUARIE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL)

Question 3 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – MACQUARIE BOYS HIGH SCHOOL - The Hon. R.M. Parker to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

You are closing Macquarie Boys High School and replacing it with Lachlan Macquarie College. What is the cost of operating Macquarie Boys High School? What provisions have you made in this year's budget for that transition from closing one school?

ANSWER

In relation to operating costs for Macquarie Boys High School, I can advise that the Department's ledgers do not capture total operating expenditure for individual schools.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(BASS HILL - SALE OF SURPLUS LAND)

Question 4 – ESTIMATES COMMITTEE – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – BASS HILL SALE OF SURPLUS LAND - The Hon. R.M. Parker to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

On what date did you seek advice on the controversy surrounding the sale of surplus land at Bass Hill?

ANSWER

I am advised my office sought advice regarding the Development Application submitted by Al Amanah College Inc on 9 July 2007.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(MACQUARIE BOYS TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL – CLOSURE)

Question 5 – BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING – MACQUARIE BOYS TECHNOLOGY HIGH SCHOOL CLOSURE - Dr John Kaye to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

At what date did the Department commence to develop plans to close Macquarie Boys Technology High School?

ANSWER

On 23 August 2007 I announced my intention to commence procedures under the Education Act (1990) to close Macquarie Boys Technology High School at the end of 2009.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(STAFFING FORMULAS – KINDERGARTEN TO YEAR 6)

Question 6 – BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING – STAFFING FORMULAS - KINDERGARTEN TO YEAR 6 - Dr John Kaye to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Are schools reducing their class sizes in Kindergarten to Year 2, but increasing class sizes in Years 3 to 6?

ANSWER

Schools are staffed on the basis of a statewide average class size of 20 in Kindergarten, 22 in Year 1 and 24 in Year 2 and on the basis that no Years 3 to 6 class need exceed 30 students.

Once teachers are allocated to a school, the Principal is responsible for organising classes in the school to meet the needs of students and the school community.

QUESTION ON NOTICE

(STAFFING OF BEHAVIOUR UNIT AND SPECIAL PURPOSE SCHOOLS)

Question 7 - BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – STAFFING OF BEHAVIOUR UNIT AND SPECIAL PURPOSE SCHOOLS - Dr John Kaye to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Are behaviour unit and special purpose schools, even if they have secondary students, staffed on a primary staffing formula?

ANSWER

Teachers are allocated to behaviour schools and schools for students with a disability using a staffing formula that is aligned with the primary staffing formula.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION – BVET FUNDING)

Question 8 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – CATHOLIC EDUCATION COMMISSION – BVET FUNDING - The Hon. M.R. Mason-Cox to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

I understand that the Catholic Education Commission receives that grant you mentioned, about \$2.1 million from the Board of Vocational Education and Training New South Wales to assist in relation to that training. What percentage of costs does that cover in relation to students that apply to the TAFE system?

ANSWER

I am advised that in 2007, the Catholic Education Commission received a total subsidy for TAFE delivered VET in Schools courses (TVET) of \$2.23 million. This consisted of a grant through BVET of \$1.54 million and an additional DET subsidy of \$0.69 million. This government subsidy covered 78 per cent of the total of \$2.86 million charged by TAFE NSW for the provision of TVET courses to Catholic school students in 2007.

QUESTION ON NOTICE
(INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS)

Question 9 – BUDGET ESTIMATES - EDUCATION AND TRAINING – INVESTING IN OUR SCHOOLS - The Hon. R. M. Parker to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Can you supply a list of all grants from the Investing in Our Schools Program, including the total Commonwealth Government funding and the total amount for capital works?

ANSWER

The list is available on the Department of Education, Science and Training website.

Schools receive the total grant monies awarded to them by the Australian Government as part of the Investing in Our Schools Programme.

QUESTION ON NOTICE
(BEGA WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL)

Question 10 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – BEGA WEST PUBLIC SCHOOL - The Hon. R.M. Parker to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Are any capital works planned for the Bega West Public School? The school has been advised that it is on the list to receive fencing. What is the rollout timeframe for that security fencing?

ANSWER

There are currently no nominations for capital works for Bega West Public School.

A 1.2 metre high roll top fence will be constructed on the western boundary and double gates will be constructed on the eastern boundary of the school for child safety.

This work will be completed for day one of Term 1, 2008.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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**(FUNDING FOR CATEGORY 1, 2 AND 3 NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, THE
PRIORITY SCHOOLS FUNDING PROGRAM (PSFP), THE PRIORITY ACTION
SCHOOLS PROGRAM (PAS) AND 2006-07 FUNDING DATA FOR NON-
GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS)**

Question 11 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING – FUNDING FOR CATEGORY 1,2 AND 3 NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS, PSFP, PAS AND 2006-07 FUNDING DATA FOR NON-GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS - Dr John Kaye to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

What does the State give to category 1, 2 and 3 private schools each year, and how much do we spend on the PSFP and PAS schemes in public education? When will the funding data for each individual private school for the 2006-07 year be available?

ANSWER

The 2007-08 State Budget includes an estimated \$71.3 million for the Priority Schools Funding Program (PSFP) and \$16 million for the Priority Action Schools (PAS) program.

I refer the Honourable Member to his Question on Notice 395.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(PRINCIPALS IN BEHAVIOUR SCHOOLS)

Question 12 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – EDUCATION AND TRAINING –
PRINCIPALS IN BEHAVIOUR SCHOOLS - Dr John Kaye to the Minister for
Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central
Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Why is it that principals in behaviour schools are teaching principals? Does that not mean that there is not somebody available in behaviour schools who is in a senior position of authority that can intervene at a time of crisis?

ANSWER

Not all principals in behaviour schools are teaching principals. Whether a principal is a teaching principal is determined by the notional enrolments at the school, which are based on the number of students at the school plus a weighting based on the special needs of each student.

Schools have in place Student Welfare and Discipline policies to ensure that quality learning is provided for all students in a safe environment.

If the behaviour of a particular student is identified as a potential risk to the health and safety of the student, other students or staff, staff will put the appropriate strategies in place to eliminate or manage the behaviour safely.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(COMPLIANCE INVESTIGATIONS)

Question 13 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS – COMPLIANCE INVESTIGATIONS - The Hon. Matthew Mason-Cox to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Did your office conduct any investigation into WorkDirections New South Wales operations following those public revelations about underpaid workers?

ANSWER

No. As WorkDirections Australia Pty Ltd is a constitutional corporation, since 26 March 2006 the company has been covered by the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*. The allegations relating to WorkDirections Australia Pty Ltd arose following an article published in the *Herald Sun* in May 2007. They were investigated by the Office of Workplace Services, which is the federal agency responsible for enforcement of the *Workplace Relations Act 1996*.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(WORKERS COMPENSATION COMMISSION – COMPUTER FAILURE)

Question 14 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – WORKCOVER – WORKERS
COMPENSATION COMMISSION – COMPUTER FAILURE – The Hon Matthew
Mason-Cox to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial
Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for
Finance –

QUESTION

In relation to the WorkCover computer failure that occurred on 27 March 2006, it is our understanding that the systems failure resulted in a large amount of computer files being destroyed. It is thought that the cost to the WorkCover Authority will run into millions of dollars. I wanted to get some information in that regard, particularly as to how much information relating to completed or current cases was lost in that computer breakdown.

ANSWER

The computer failure that occurred on 27 March 2006, relates to the Workers Compensation Commission computer server at Oxford Street, Sydney.

The server failure did not affect any data held by WorkCover on workers compensation claims and there was no need for anyone to resubmit their workers compensation claim.

The server failure did not affect WorkCover's main computer centre at Gosford. However, the server failure did affect data held by the Workers Compensation Commission, including audio files of a small number of arbitrations.

Audio recordings of arbitrations are primarily used if a matter is appealed. Seven of the affected matters were appealed. All of these appeals have been heard and closed with minimum impact.

WorkCover's Internal Audit Group conducted a post incident review and a number of actions were identified and implemented to minimise the risk of such a failure re-occurring.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(WORKCOVER – DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON OFFICER)

Question 15 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – WORKCOVER – DEPARTMENTAL LIAISON OFFICER – The Hon Mr Matthew Mason-Cox to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

In terms of the WorkCover departmental liaison officer, can you inform the Committee when the position of WorkCover departmental liaison officer to your ministerial office was last filled? When that position was last filled in your office?

Could you also inform us what the current public service grade and salary level for this officer is?

ANSWER

The position of WorkCover Departmental Liaison Officer was last filled on 27 April 2007 until 31 December 2007. The position was not advertised, but filled as a developmental opportunity for a permanent staff member of WorkCover.

The position is graded at Senior Officer 1 - Year One and payment is made in accordance with the Award rate.

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**(OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY DIVISION INSPECTORATE ACTIVITY
QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER)**

Question 16 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – WORKCOVER – OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY DIVISION INSPECTORATE ACTIVITY QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER – The Hon Mr Matthew Mason-Cox to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

According to the OHSD Inspectorate Activity Quarterly Performance Report, how many workplace interventions did WorkCover undertake?

ANSWER

During the June Quarter 2007 WorkCover undertook 4,678 workplace visits. In total, WorkCover undertook 19,881 workplace visits for the 2006/07 financial year.

In addition, 3,364 people attended the 302 safety workshops undertaken by the Business Assistance Branch during the year, with a further 16,100 people accessing WorkCover's On-line Self Assessment Tools to evaluate their management of workplace safety and injury management.

WorkCover's Information Centre also received 240,000 calls, 13,200 emails and 3,000 front counter enquiries.

This equates to a total of 295,545 workplace safety interactions over the 2006/07 financial year.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(EXECUTIVE STAFF APOLOGIES)

Question 17 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – WORKCOVER – EXECUTIVE STAFF APOLOGIES – Ms Lee Rhiannon to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

To your knowledge, has any of your executive staff issued written apologies this year for swearing at staff? If so, how many times?

ANSWER

There have been two occasions where executive staff have issued apologies where language has caused offence.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(S457 VISA WORKERS)

Question 18 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS – S457 VISA WORKERS – Ms Lee Rhiannon to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Mr Della Bosca, are you aware of any workers employed by your department or employed by companies undertaking contract work with your department who are on 457 visas?

Would you also take on notice what procedures does your department undertake to check whether workers are on 457 visas?

ANSWERS

During the 2006/07 financial year WorkCover had one employee on a 457 visa. This employee was sponsored by a host agency under the auspice of the Commonwealth Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs' *Employer Nomination Scheme* and has since gained permanent residency.

Applicants for employment must provide documentary evidence of their Australian Citizenship, permanent residence status or other approval to work in Australia.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(PEACH CONSULTING)

Question 19 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – WORKCOVER - PEACH CONSULTING –
Ms Lee Rhiannon to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial
Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for
Finance –

QUESTION

On 1 December 2006, I asked you about an advertising campaign developed by
Peach Consulting on slips, trips and falls. I was advised at this time that the
“advertising campaign has not been withdrawn. The advertising campaign has been
delayed”.

Is it still delayed?

How much has been spent on this program? How much has been paid to Peach
Consulting?

ANSWER

The campaign has progressed and is soon commencing. The awareness campaign
will involve a direct mail to industry, which includes information packs for workplaces
containing stickers, posters, fact sheets and case study booklets.

The total spent on the execution and delivery of the Slips, Trips and Falls awareness
program to date is \$384,425.00.

The amount paid to Peach Consulting for the Slips Trips and Falls campaign
between 2005-2007 remains at \$8,356.25.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(WORKCOVER STAFFING)

Question 20 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – WORKCOVER – STAFFING – Ms Lee Rhiannon to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

How many staff relocated when WorkCover moved to Gosford in October 2002?

It was originally anticipated that a total of 480 staff would relocate to Gosford, however this figure increased prior to the relocation when it was decided that most corporate staff would in fact move.

How many staff is there in Gosford now?

ANSWER

As at 30 June 2007, 694 permanent and temporary staff members worked from the WorkCover head office in Gosford.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(MEETING EXPENSES)

Question 21 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – WORKCOVER – MEETING EXPENSES –
Ms Lee Rhiannon to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial
Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for
Finance –

QUESTION

How much did WorkCover spend last year on hiring meeting rooms in Gosford when
it could not conduct work-based meetings in its own premises?

ANSWER

WorkCover spent \$11,059 on external room hire in the Gosford area during 2006/07.
Some of these meetings would have involved WorkCover meeting with external
stakeholders.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(WAGES POLICY)

Question 22 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS – WAGES POLICY - Ms Lee Rhiannon to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

You said there were some examples where it [the Wages Policy] has not resulted in a downgrading of conditions. I gather that they were not immediately in your mind, so can you take that on notice and give me those examples please?

ANSWER

Wage outcomes for NSW Government employees will be determined by the process set out in the Wages Policy. The Policy requires agencies to find employee-related reform measures and cost savings. Importantly it requires agencies to approach negotiations with unions in a co-operative and problem-solving manner.

The Policy while promoting workplace reform also contains protections for employees, including:

- Adherence to Test Case standards
- Recognising unions as the representatives of employees at the negotiating table
- Requiring the focus to be on common interests and long-term goals in open and honest negotiations.

State Transit Bus Operatives and the Wollongong Sportsground Trust have already concluded agreements under the new Wages Policy. The agreements made for these employees include reforms that do not downgrade conditions, whilst at the same time providing savings that have been passed on to employees as wage increases.

At State Transit

Some of the agreed savings measures are:

- the rationalisation of various ticket sales outlets (Transit shops)
- formal implementation of training rosters at all locations
- introduction of contingency arrangements for major incidents affecting

public transport services

- agreement to implement job sharing arrangements
- introduction of new procedures for absence management.

Apart from a 4% pay increase per annum, the State Transit agreement included an increase in paid maternity and adoption leave benefits and an increase in paid carer's leave.

At the Wollongong Sportsground Trust

Some of the savings measures agreed are:

- increased flexibility through multi-skilling (ushers, cleaning and operations)
- average hours over 4 weeks rather than one week
- better managed casual staff, increasing part time opportunities
- improved supervision/efficiency of labour tasks through the introduction of leading hands
- more efficient payroll administration.

Apart from a 4% pay increase per annum, the WST agreement includes increases to an allowance for cleaning toilets, an increase in night shift allowance and the introduction of a Leading Hand allowance.

**QUESTION ON NOTICE TABLED AT THE PARLIAMENTARY ESTIMATES
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(PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT ACT 2006)

Question 23 – BUDGET ESTIMATES – INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS – *PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT LEGISLATION AMENDMENT ACT 2006* - Ms Lee Rhiannon to the Minister for Education and Training, Minister for Industrial Relations, Minister for the Central Coast and Minister Assisting the Minister for Finance –

QUESTION

Can you take on notice why not just Port Kembla ports but all the State-owned corporations were not named in your legislation?"

ANSWER

The *Public Sector Employment Legislation Amendment Act 2006* transferred up to 186 000 employees of statutory corporations into Crown employment, including Health workers and employees of the Roads and Traffic Authority, and the State Transit Authority.

These arrangements were not applied to employees of State Owned Corporations due to the distinctive structural arrangements of these organisations. These corporations are intended to operate as commercial entities, and they largely operate at arms length from Government.

As I alluded to in my response on 22 October 2007, a number of State Owned Corporations (SOCs) and their unions have historically operated in the Federal industrial relations system, including Rail Corporation, Sydney Ferries, and the Ports Corporations. These organisations continue to operate under the federal jurisdiction.

A number of other State Owned Corporations were covered by State awards and agreements prior to the introduction of WorkChoices, such as the Energy and Water SOC's. These organisations continue to operate within the NSW industrial relations system and act in accordance with administrative arrangements established by the Government, as set out below.

The introduction of s146A of the *Industrial Relations Act 1996* allows employers and unions to enter into common law agreements that give the NSW Industrial Relations Commission a role in resolving disputes about matters contained in the agreement. These agreements allow parties to reach agreement over a broader range of matters than allowed under Work Choices, such as grievance procedures, protection of injured employees provisions, union payroll deductions and training, and unfair dismissal protections. A number of State Owned Corporations have signed up to s146A agreements in 2006 and 2007, as part of their collective negotiations with unions.

The NSW Government does not allow State Owned Corporations to use Work Choices to cut pay and conditions or introduce Australian Workplace Agreements. Premier's Memorandum 2007-12, sets out the Government's wages policy, and provides guidelines for agencies operating under the WorkChoices legislation. The policy re-affirms the Government's commitment to collective bargaining with unions.