

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 5 - LEGAL AFFAIRS

Friday, 5 March 2021

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

SPORT, MULTICULTURALISM, SENIORS AND VETERANS

CORRECTED

The Committee met at 09:30

MEMBERS

The Hon. Robert Borsak (Chair)

The Hon. Rose Jackson

The Hon. Trevor Khan

The Hon. Natasha Maclaren-Jones

The Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane

Mr David Shoebridge (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. Natalie Ward

PRESENT

The Hon. Dr Geoff Lee, *Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans*

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**

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The CHAIR: Welcome to the public hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2020-2021 initial hearings. Before I commence, I would like to acknowledge the Gadigal people, who are the traditional custodians of this land. I would also like to pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging of the Eora nation and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present. I welcome Minister Lee and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. Today's hearing is open to the public and is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. In accordance with broadcasting guidelines, while members of the media may film or record Committee members and witnesses, people in the public gallery should not be the primary focus of any filming or photography. I would also like to remind media representatives that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings. The guidelines for the broadcast of proceedings are available from the secretariat.

All witnesses in budget estimates have a right to procedural fairness according to the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House in 2018. There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In these circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. I remind Minister Lee and the officers accompanying him that they are free to pass notes and refer directly to advisers seated at the table behind them. Any messages from advisers or members' staff seated in the public gallery should be delivered through the Committee secretariat. We expect the transcripts for this hearing to be available on the web from tomorrow morning. Finally, could everyone turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing. All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister Lee, 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.

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MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER, Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice, on former oath
CAROLINE MACKANESS, Director, Office of Veterans Affairs, sworn and examined
JOSEPH LA POSTA, Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW, sworn and examined
KAREN JONES, Chief Executive Officer, Office of Sport, affirmed and examined
SIMON DRAPER, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, sworn and examined
KERRIE MATHER, Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.30 a.m. until 12.30 p.m. with the Minister, and from 2.00 p.m. until 5.00 p.m. with departmental witnesses, with questions from Opposition and crossbench members only. If required, an additional 15 minutes is allocated at the end of each session for Government questions. As there is no provision for any witness to make an opening statement before the Committee commences questioning, we will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you, Minister. You must have been a bit put out when John Sidoti resigned as the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans, considering you have been doing the job for 18 months.

Dr GEOFF LEE: No. It is business as usual. Was that a proper question?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It is business as usual, is it?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes, business as usual.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Are you in fact still the acting Minister? What is your status right now?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am the Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans, and the Minister for Skills and Tertiary Education, and the member for Parramatta.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Have you asked the Premier to remain permanent in the Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans portfolio? Is that something that you have requested?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Look, I have many conversations with the Premier about many different things and those conversations remain private.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is it a portfolio that you have been enjoying, very enthusiastic about, dedicated to and something that you look forward to continue doing?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that it has been an absolute honour and privilege to serve the people of New South Wales in the role of Acting Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans. We have absolutely done some wonderful things—things that I never thought were possible and things that are serving our community. I mean, one only has to look at the decisions and the legislation that we have passed, such as the venues legislation merging the Sydney Cricket and Sports Ground Trust [SCGT] and Venues NSW to create one entity to manage all the State's significant sporting infrastructure, looking at developing a strategy for veterans—a wonderful opportunity—and looking at our response to COVID-19 through all of the lenses, especially sport and understanding the key role that sport plays at the community level, with millions of people playing community sport and the important impact not only on a healthy lifestyle but on the social cohesion of people being able to get out and do things.

It has been an absolute honour. I think March was the start of COVID and, I tell you, it has just been a privilege to be able to influence those decisions about how our Government managed the process. I think anyone would look at world standards in terms of New South Wales being an exemplar to the rest of the world about managing COVID, getting on with government, and taking health risks. I mean, there was one point when we actually closed down all sports so no-one could actually play on the weekend. That was a particularly difficult time, when people were saying, "When can we get out of our houses? When can my son or daughter or I go back and play sport?" Sporting organisations were finding it really difficult at that time to even collect fees and to sustain, but we managed to get through those processes. Multicultural communities played a key role in managing COVID. I think, if there is anything, look at our multicultural communities and commend them for spreading the message and sending the right message to their community of having to actually comply by those health regulations.

I remember the time that we had to advise the Christian leaders, for instance, that you could not have services on Easter Friday. Good Friday was a difficult time. Similarly, for the Islamic community not having the

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family and social gatherings during Ramadan—these are deeply ingrained cultural celebrations. We actually asked our religious leaders to say that they could not attend their places of worship. Those communities spread that message and followed in line with government health orders and I think the results are clear to see for everybody. We were able not to eliminate—and I do not think we have ever tried to eliminate COVID—but to really control COVID. Similarly with Anzac Day, we see with the portfolio of Office for Veteran Affairs, this is the first—Anzac Day would arguably be the most important day in our nation's calendar. It was tough but we worked with RSL NSW and other ex-service organisations. But to say to our veterans, some of them Second World War, and our diggers, "You cannot actually go and do your morning services. You cannot go to a march"—and can I commend Ray James and RSL NSW for their strong advocacy on keeping veterans, who are some of the most vulnerable communities, safe.

Standing at the end of the driveway to commemorate Anzac Day and pay tribute to our service personnel, both serving and past serving, and the people that paid the ultimate sacrifice was particularly important. What it showed was that the community right throughout New South Wales is aligned to doing whatever they can to commemorate. I think more people were actually involved in it and it was a great time; similarly Remembrance Day. Your question is: Has it been a great experience? Absolutely. We have been able to do things in the height of a one-in-100-year pandemic that nobody else would actually be able to do. We have Kerrie Mather here today looking after Venues NSW—some of our largest sporting venues and our biggest infrastructure that is State owned, where we could not actually have crowds. People could not go, but we continued on to manage the situation.

I will let her talk later on and I am sure you will have some questions about our venues assets and the hundreds of thousands of people that have gone to our sporting assets infrastructure. We have been able to control the spread of COVID through COVID safety plans, modifying our operations and changing our procedures. The answer to your question, Ms Jackson, is that it has been an absolute pleasure. I have certainly learned a lot. I am privileged to be surrounded by a great team—not only from my office of Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans but really the opportunity to work with the departments and the agencies to deliver for the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: After that answer, why don't we all just go home?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The word around is that you will not be the Minister.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Is that a question or is it a comment?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: No, it was just a comment in response.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I appreciate your level of support. Luckily, Shaoquett, it is not up to you to decide.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is the truth.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It is an important portfolio and it is an important time as well. There was quite a lot of feedback that it was pretty disrespectful to have a temporary Minister in such an important portfolio. All of the things you said at length in that beautiful speech, Minister, about how important this work is at such an important time and yet you are an Acting Minister.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: You could have asked the Premier that yesterday.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Is there a question?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do you think that is disrespectful to the veterans, to the seniors and to the multicultural community? Do you think it is disrespectful at this important time to have an acting Minister for 18 months?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Your inferences are absolutely wrong and you were highly disrespectful and insulting in that question. I feel you were insulting to me. I have put my passion and my life into this portfolio. There is not a Minister that does not put their heart and soul into this. I continued to put my heart and soul into it while I was Acting Minister, with all the powers of the Minister. As Minister for Sport, Multiculturalism, Seniors and Veterans I continue to champion the causes of my agencies. It was not a speech that I just gave you; it was the reflections from my heart to say how well the portfolios have performed in some very difficult circumstances. We had to answer questions from the 95 sporting organisations that we caught up with on Zoom every week. We had to explain to them that they could not actually enrol or have sporting activities on the weekend, so their five-year-olds or seven-year-olds could not play sport. It is appalling that you would even think of politicising that part of our response to the pandemic.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We are in budget estimates, Minister. Give me a break.

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Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, you are politicising. You asked me a question and I told you I think it is insulting to say. We have looked after the community to the best of our ability. The results are significant. We have made it through the pandemic but it is not over yet. We will continue to be passionate, support our communities at all times and do the best thing for the people of New South Wales.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I do not really want to doubt your commitment to the portfolio areas but do you think that they would have had an Acting Health Minister, Treasurer or Education Minister for 18 months? It is not about your personally trying hard in these areas. It is the fact that these areas were treated disrespectfully by having a temporary Minister for 18 months when you would not see that in other areas of the Cabinet, would you?

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Point of order: I allowed the last one but it is a question-and-answer session, not a speech by the Hon. Rose Jackson.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: To the point of order: It is a legitimate question, Chair.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: It is not even within a bull's roar of being a question. It is a speech.

The CHAIR: Order! We are in the business of asking questions and hopefully getting answers—usually non-answers, but we are in the business of getting answers.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I gave the Minister a lot of attitude with his answers previously and I want him to say whether he thinks the Premier would have allowed—

The CHAIR: Can I finish? I am actually ruling.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Sorry, Chair.

The CHAIR: Me chairman, you not.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Me deputy-deputy.

The CHAIR: Yes. We are here to ask questions. A lot of latitude is given in relation to making statements and preambles and all that sort of thing, but please ask the questions and the Minister will decide how he will answer them.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do you think that the Government would have allowed a temporary, Acting Health Minister or Treasurer or Education Minister for 18 months?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I will certainly not engage in any hypotheticals like you are asking. It is up to the Premier, and I serve at her discretion. I am very proud of serving in the Cabinet or as a backbencher as she sees fit.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We will move on to the Greater Sydney Sports grants. I have a copy here of the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund expression of interest [EOI] stage assessment October 2019. This might be for the Minister or Ms Jones. I want to confirm that that was the document that was used to provide assessment and numerical scores for the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund 2019.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Whilst Ms Jones is reviewing, can I just say for the benefit of the Committee that the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund was a program focusing on upgrading and providing new facilities that are multipurpose, improve amenities—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I did not ask a question about it.

The CHAIR: Minister, could you speak into the microphone?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Sorry. I thought I would help the Committee while Ms Jones is reviewing that document by looking at the great things that the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund is doing in terms of providing valuable infrastructure in our communities throughout Greater Sydney. It upgrades facilities or builds new facilities through a different process. There is a whole criteria and I think that is what Ms Jones is looking at now.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Minister. I can confirm that this is a working document that was used to inform the assessment of the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund for the 2019-20 round.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Were those scores applied as part of the assessment process that was used to determine which grants would progress to stage two? Is that the purpose of that assessment process?

Ms JONES: The document that you have here is an expression of interest assessment for a specific grant project or grant application. The document actually outlines one component of the assessment process, being the

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Office of Sport assessment. That assessment would then go to the grant assessment panel where it would also be considered by other panel members. This was one aspect of that assessment process.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: But it was a necessary aspect. As part of the various inputs that went into the determination of the grants, this was one box that needed to be ticked.

Ms JONES: Yes. Under the assessment methodology, the grant assessment panel is the panel that actually goes through and assesses all of the applications. This was one component that fed into that grant assessment panel process.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Were EOI stage assessments completed for the 2018 round of the grants?

Ms JONES: Yes, they were.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Why, then, were no EOI stage assessments or weightings provided with the documents requested under Standing Order 52?

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice. I was not aware, but I will take that on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I have an index of the documents that were provided and I can provide you with a copy of that, but I can assure you that they were not provided. I am interested to know if that was an oversight, if it was deliberate or if in fact there were no EOI stage assessments done.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Ms Jackson. I will take that on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It would be useful if we could have that information by the end of today.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: She is entitled to take it on notice and the resolution is passed as to how long. It does not have to be today.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am entitled to suggest that if documents that were requested under Standing Order 52 were not provided, then that is a cause for concern. It would be good to quickly ascertain what has happened to those documents.

Ms JONES: For the benefit of the Committee I am happy to ask my staff to have a look into that today, but I will take it on notice if I cannot provide an answer for you today.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you, Ms Jones. Minister, let us look in a little bit of detail at some of the great programs that were funded under the sports facility fund. Concord Golf Club water harvesting received a score of 12 to progress to the second round. Bankstown Golf Club, 18; Bonnie Doon Golf Club, 19; Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club, 21—they did not progress. Why is that?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say first up, for the benefit of the Committee, that it is actually a two-stage process that we follow. There is a whole methodology for assessment. It is done by an independent panel by stages, overseen by a probity officer at all times. Certainly, I am advised that the process was followed in line with the assessment methodology and overseen by that probity officer. I do not know if there is anything more that you can add to that process.

Ms JONES: Sure, Minister.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Why would a project that scored 12 on the assessment criteria proceed when others that scored 18, 19 or 21 did not? How does that happen?

Dr GEOFF LEE: You may want to say something, Karen, but—

Ms JONES: You go first.

Dr GEOFF LEE: —I certainly approved the recommendations as per the Office of Sport when they came to me when I was Acting Minister at that time.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Minister. I think we covered this off at the last budget estimates, but I will go through the process again for the benefit of the Committee. The Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund, as the Minister said, is a two-stage process. The first stage was that we called for expressions of interest. The expressions of interest were submitted. There was an assessment process overseen by the independent assessment panel and it also had attendance by a probity officer. All of the assessment process was actually informed by the assessment methodology and also the probity plan.

As outlined in that assessment methodology and the probity plan, the actual determination of the grants goes through the assessment panel and recommendations are then presented to the Minister. The Minister has the right to make the final decision. For the Greater Sydney fund, like I said before, you have the expressions of

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interest process, through to the grant assessment panel [GAP], through to the Minister. They then called out for those applications that could proceed to business case or detailed application. Those applications were then invited to come to us with a business case or detailed application. It goes through a very similar assessment process, again through the grant assessment panel, overseen by the probity officer. Recommendations are then formulated and presented to the Minister.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So that panel that the Office of Sport manages, overseen by the probity officer, is giving those scores, in a way, based on all of the information that is in this document. As you say, it is quite clear how those projects are assessed. They are given a score or a weighting, as it were. They are then put forward to the Minister and, as you say, the Minister then makes a decision. Minister, Ms Jones has explained how those scores, those weightings, are given to projects, which as she has explained is made by the independent assessment panel and overseen by the probity officer. So why did you approve the Concord Golf Club water harvesting when you are looking at it and, on the scores that it has been given, it gets a 12? You look at that and you go, "Yes, that is one that we are going to fund, but we are not going to do the Bankstown Golf Club, Bonnie Doon Golf Club, Terrey Hills Golf and Country Club when they go 18, 19 and 21." What is informing your decision-making at that point to select that project, which scored considerably lower than other projects?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Thank you for that question. Karen will be able to help me. I have the option at either stage—at the EOI stage, when the projects are recommended by the Office of Sport, or at the final stage, so the business case and the analysis done by the independent panel, overseen by the probity officer. Certainly I followed the recommendations from the grant assessment panel and the Office of Sport to approve those and sign those off, looking at: "Was the process followed and was it in line with overall Government objectives?"

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Similarly, a new swimming facility in the Liverpool local government area [LGA], with an estimated population growth of 100,000, scores 24 on the assessment. That is a very high score. It does not get funded. North Sydney pool, with an estimated population growth of 12,000, scored 23. It did get funded. How did you make that decision? You have got two aquatic projects, one out in Liverpool, which is a massive growth area and which received a big score from the independent panel at the Office of Sport—no; North Sydney Olympic Pool—tick.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Ms Jackson, I refer you to my previous answer: We are in line with the recommendations of the Office of Sport and the recommendations of the grant assessment panel, an independent panel at both stages and overseen by the probity officer.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: They are not the recommendations. The recommendations, as you describe them, that the Office of Sport is providing, is a score, a ranking, a weighting. They have done their job. They have looked at the criteria. They have given them a score. They have then given that information to you. They have not said, "Fund the Concord Golf Club and the North Sydney Olympic Pool over these other projects." They have not said that; you have made that decision. I am asking you why you made those decisions.

Dr GEOFF LEE: With all due respect, Ms Jackson, I think you will find that the briefing that comes up is actually recommendations from the Office of Sport. I oversee that, of course, to make sure that the process was followed. Can I say that—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Jones, was it the Office of Sport's recommendation to the Minister?

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Point of order: He is actually answering the question. He is entitled to finish—I would suggest, Chair—his answer before Ms Jackson seeks to jump down somebody else's throat on this occasion.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order.

Dr GEOFF LEE: One of my learned colleagues behind me has just provided the briefing advice to the Minister, which I understand I did sign off, although it does seem to be a copy. I was asked to approve the funding of the 19 GAP-recommended projects as listed in tab A and I signed the document approving the funding to three Office of Sport-recommended eligible projects in response to COVID-19, as listed in tab A and signed. So I had a look at this, assessed it, took advice from my own office and approved those projects which were supported. Certainly they were in line with the recommendations from the Office of Sport and the grant panel. If Ms Jones—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Jones, is it the case that the recommendation to fund Concord Golf Club water harvesting or North Sydney Olympic Pool instead of other projects that ranked more highly was the recommendation of the Office of Sport?

Ms JONES: If I can just clarify a few things, it is actually the recommendation of the grant assessment panel.

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Dr GEOFF LEE: My apologies.

Ms JONES: The Office of Sport actually administers that process. In terms of the actual recommendations, so the grant assessment panel recommendations are actually presented to the Minister and, as I said before, as outlined in the assessment methodology and also in the probity plan there is that step of the Minister approving applications. So as the Minister just quoted from the briefing note which was tabled as part of the Standing Order 52 documents you will see that in that briefing note those projects that you refer to are recommended for approval.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Why were they recommended for approval instead of other projects that rated more highly on the scores that your own office put together?

Ms JONES: The grant assessment panel put it together. Those are recommendations, and as outlined in the probity plan and also in the assessment methodology the Minister has final say about which projects proceed.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: He is saying, though, when I ask him the same question, "Well, I just signed a brief with a list of recommendations that were provided to me." Someone is making a decision that a project that scored 12 on the EOI assessment stage gets funded over a project that scores 21. Someone is making that decision. Who is that person?

Ms JONES: The final decision rests with the Minister, as outlined in the assessment methodology and the probity plan.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: That is why he signs the brief.

Ms JONES: That is very clear.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is why he is the Minister.

Ms JONES: It is clearly outlined in those documents.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, I put it back on you then. Ms Jones has been quite clear: You are responsible for the decision to fund projects. Why did you fund projects that scored so low on the assessments that were done by the grant assessment panel instead of projects that ranked considerably higher?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that as Acting Minister in those days when I signed that, I have every confidence in their methodology process as outlined in the two-stage—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Why were you tinkering with it then?

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Point of order: The witness is entitled to answer without being interrupted by the member. I ask that you restrain—

The CHAIR: I will uphold the point of order.

Dr GEOFF LEE: As I said, I have every confidence as the acting Minister, when I signed off that brief, that the proper processes were followed. The recommendations came from the assessment panel up to that. I take into account not only their assessment and the proper process, the two-stage process of an independent panel overseen by a probity officer at all times. The recommendations then came to me administered, technically I think it is called, by the Office of Sport, for recommendation. I looked at those and made sure that the process had been followed as best as I could and also took other factors like whole-of-government priorities, in terms of any other extraneous factors, in terms of growth corridors—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Political considerations?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Did you have access to the expressions of interest list? Is that something that was provided to you as part of the brief?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I would have to check with you on the timing. It was just about the time when, from memory, I was appointed, just shortly after, as Acting Minister. The expressions of interest were advertised, they were collated and, as Acting Minister, a brief came up to me and said—this is from memory—that these projects should go to the second stage, which is the full business case analysis project. I note that some 23 projects were recommended to do a full evaluation based upon their expression of interest and their merit-based expression of interest in terms of where we needed a full business case, which obviously exposes the people that are putting that full business case to a significant amount of costs and resources in terms of actually developing a comprehensive business case that we can actually analyse.

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The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: You do not recall at that point whether the full expressions of interest list was provided to you?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am happy to take that on notice just to double-check and make sure I give the Committee the right answer.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Why did applications for the Margaret Whitlam indoor cricket facility, Begnell Field, Emu Plains sport and rec and Henley Park not progress past that EOI assessment on round two and lower scoring applications did? How did that happen?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Certainly can I say that the bottom line is that I have followed the process that was involved and the recommendations that the independent grant panel put up to me. I did not see why I should vary those. There was no compelling case to actually vary those recommendations from the independent panel overseen by a probity officer.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Jones, it was the case that the grant assessment panel are writing their brief to the Minister, they look at the scores that they themselves have given these applications and they say, "We are just going to put a line through these ones that have scored high—Margaret Whitlam cricket, Emu Plains sport and rec—and we are going to circle these ones down here that scored lower and that is what we are going to recommend to the Minister." Is that the kind of work that the grant assessment panel does?

Ms JONES: I think I have been pretty clear about what the grant assessment panel does. In fact, again, the assessment methodology and the probity plan actually outline the scope of the grant assessment panel. I can go through that if you want me to do so. However, in terms of those specific projects you are referring to, I do not have the full list here with me today. I am more than happy to have a look at those specific projects and provide you with information around the assessment of those projects and the decision-making that was framed around those. I can take it on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Jones, you have been quite clear in a way about how the process works but the frustration is I ask you—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: No speeches; questions.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: How do I resolve the inconsistency or the circularity of your argument that it is the Minister who makes the final decision and the Minister's response is, "I just follow the recommendations from the grant assessment panel"? How do I resolve who is actually responsible for making the decision to fund low-scoring projects over high-scoring projects? Who wants to put their hand up as being responsible?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Certainly I am responsible at the end of of the day for the sign-off of all of those projects. Because I am firmly of the belief that the methodology was used and the process was followed: Two independent panels, overseen by a probity officer, produced recommendations which I signed off that came through and were administered by the Office of Sport from the independent panel. Ms Jackson, you can ask me all day. I am more than happy to sit here until 12.30 p.m. but my answer will always be the same because that is the answer.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, do you understand how that does not—it is not necessarily to satisfy me. It is to satisfy the people who put all of the effort into putting these grant assessments together. The people from these local sporting clubs, all of the energy and effort, they get that high score, they have ticked all the boxes, their project does not get funded, and yet other people who scored considerably lower do. Do you understand how they might be looking for answers as to what they did wrong? Why, after they ticked so many boxes, can they not get their project funded?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that one thing that you learn when you are in government—it does not matter whether it is the Sport portfolio, Multiculturalism, Seniors, Veterans, Skills, Tertiary Education—there is unlimited demand for the resources of government and that government has to make decisions. It makes the decisions on the best available information at the time. We rely upon a rigorous methodology and a process. As I said, in this case it is a two-stage process with independent panels overseen by a probity officer and it is signed off by the Minister, or the Acting Minister which I was at the time. It would be great to fund every single project no matter what it was, but the reality is that somebody has to actually make the decisions. It would be wonderful if I could fund every single project, and every single project I am sure is meritorious. I have lots of projects for my own electorate of Parramatta that I would love to fund, but that is not always the case. I have been very fortunate and I thank the Government for their support of Parramatta but across the State—

The CHAIR: But Minister, you have the Powerhouse Museum. That is the big one, isn't it?

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Dr GEOFF LEE: Absolutely. And can I say what a wonderful addition, Mr Chair, that that will be for Parramatta and the people of western Sydney. I think it is only fair and just that we should have access to cultural infrastructure, especially for our young people in western Sydney. Ninety-five or ninety-eight per cent of the arts and culture budget is spent on the inner city and eastern suburbs. And the people of western Sydney, where 50 per cent of people live, do not have access. It is an equity issue of allowing our young people and our older people to have access to cultural infrastructure. But I think that—

The CHAIR: Minister, surely that equity should also apply, as Rose Jackson is saying, in terms of proportionate and fair allocation of sporting grants.

Dr GEOFF LEE: These are all based upon merit-based applications. Geography does not have anything—

The CHAIR: Electoral boundaries—nothing to say about that?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Electorate boundaries and geographic boundaries have no influence over the decision-making. They are all based upon merit-based assessments. As we were saying, there is an independent panel and a two-stage process. Those then are put forward to me as the Minister for sign-off at stage one. I sign off the ones to go forward for a full business case; that is based upon their expression of interest. That full business case is then developed by the applicants. They are assessed again by that independent grant panel overseen by the probity officer. Then the recommendations come through the Office of Sport who are recommended to me. I sign off the brief. If you have done an SO 52, I think that is what you call them in the Upper House—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Yes.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am sure you have my signed document.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: About 190 of them so far.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just a few. Just a couple.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Then I am sure you will be able to see for yourself that I signed those—

The CHAIR: By the time we give you some more you will remember what they are.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, it is just not fair to say it is a merit-based process. The assessment that is done by the grant assessment panel to provide scores to the projects on the basis of the criteria, that has some merit basis to it, some rigour to it. The final decision is completely disconnected from that. The final decision is not a merit-based decision.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Is this a question or is it a statement?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Or a speech?

The CHAIR: I will allow the member to get to the end of her statement. Let's see if there is a question mark on the end.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: How can you make the claim that it is a merit-based system when you fund some projects that score 12 and not other projects that score 21? How is that merit based?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Because we have a strong methodology that looks at it. It is a two-stage process. There is an independent grant panel that assesses those projects at the expression-of-interest stage. I understand that in the 2019-20 round some 118 expressions of interest were received. Twenty-three of those were invited to stage two. Again, the recommendations from the independent grant panel were forwarded to me, from memory. I signed off the final list—that was very new when I was Acting Minister some time ago—and then the business cases were developed for 23 projects. They were invited to go to stage two.

That obviously encompasses a lot more work by the applicants to justify why we should fund those projects under this \$100 million funding facility. Those were assessed, as I said, by the independent grant panel overseen by a probity officer. And then those recommendations came through the Office of Sport—the recommendations from the independent panel—to me, where I oversaw them. I eventually signed them off once I was satisfied that they reached the objectives of the Government, had followed the correct methodological, rigorous process and were done in line with the objectives of the whole Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund. I can keep saying it if you really want me to, but I am sure it is a bit tiresome.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister—

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am just saying—I mean, I do not mind, Ms Jackson. I am happy to keep giving you the answer because that is the answer.

CORRECTED

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, you said that geography was irrelevant in the decisions that you have made—

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, within—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do not cut me off. Every single time you even get towards the end of a question and I try and ask the next question, I am called a point of order on. Do not cut me off.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am just trying to be helpful, Rose, that is all. I am just going to be helpful. I am here to answer questions.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, out of the 18 applications that were made in relation to northern Sydney, six got funded. Twenty-one applications came in for the south; one got funded. How is that fair? Is it just that people on the North Shore are more meritorious and they are more worthy in your mind? If it is merit, how on earth do you justify those numbers?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Well, that is three questions.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Ms Jackson, I first must apologise and just correct something I said before. What I meant by geography was that electorates do not matter—that is probably better. This fund was specifically for Greater Sydney, so the project had to be in Greater Sydney. Secondly, there is no criteria for electorates and that is not a consideration. I do apologise, if I can just confirm that.

The CHAIR: Minister, how do you line up with the Premier's comments about this fund and others being just another exercise in pork-barrelling?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Certainly that is not my view at all. I cannot comment about what the Premier says, rather than just simply say that we have a process and an assessment criteria. I will not do it to you, Mr Chair.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That is what the Premier said, though. She said that the Government uses grants to curry favour. That is literally what she said. Is that what you do?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No, I follow the process.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: "Politically reasonable," she said, I think.

Dr GEOFF LEE: You will have to ask the Premier that; that is for the Premier to answer for.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We did and that is what she said. As the head of the Government, she said that was the way the Government approached the use of grants. So we did ask her that; she was asked. That is what she said and we are putting it to you. Is that the way that you administer grants?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say, Ms Jackson, with all due respect, I think I have been very clear in what I have been saying. We have a rigorous assessment methodology. It is a two-stage process. It has an independent assessment panel at each stage, overseen by a probity officer. Those recommendations by the independent panel come to me at the end of stage one, at the end of the EOI stage. I then approve those. I have a look at them and then I make sure that I am satisfied that the process, as described, has been followed. I make sure that they line up with Government priorities and make sure I am satisfied. At that point, I sign those off and then they go to the second round, which is the full business case, which is round two.

And then the applicants are asked to submit a full business case to justify that expenditure. They are again assessed by an independent panel overseen by a probity officer. Those decisions are then forwarded through the Office of Sport, who administers that process, and they are forwarded to me for my further review. If I am satisfied that the process has been followed and they are aligned to Government priorities and I am satisfied with the projects, then I sign them off, which I did. It is quite clear, I think; my details had it. But if you are interested in geographic spread, I am more than happy to ask Karen Jones to talk about the geographic spread of them.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, how do you explain that Southern Districts Rugby Union, which has—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is back to us.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: There are no crossbench questions at all, so you are just going to have to put up with us continuing.

Dr GEOFF LEE: That is good.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: I think it is just you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes.

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We are happy with that. We were just saying we need a deputy Deputy Chair. We have lost both the Chair and the deputy.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: And I am happy she is asking the questions.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It is a full three hours of Opposition this morning.

Dr GEOFF LEE: It is going to be a long three hours!

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes, tell me about it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You should just invite Lynda up here. She could ask them.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Where is Lynda?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Behind you. She is shadowing you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I would be more than happy with that. How do you explain why Southern Districts Rugby Union—which has women's Rugby fifteens and seventeens, and hosted the women's Rugby Union finals and women's Country v City representative games—did not progress? They did not progress to the second round. They got a lot of support but they did not progress to the second round, despite your emphasis on women's sport. Why? What was wrong with their application?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Tell us, Minister.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say firstly that we are doing everything we can to support the participation and inclusion of women in sport—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Clearly not.

Dr GEOFF LEE: For far too long—well, you are absolutely wrong. In fact, we did a quick calculation and our Government in the last 10 years has spent something like 10 times the amount on women's sport than the Labor Government in the previous decade that you were in power.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Hear, hear!

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is nonsense.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Well, I was in high school then.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I just say our record speaks for itself about a strong investment in women in sport. Can we do more? Absolutely. Will we do more? Absolutely.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Hear, hear!

Dr GEOFF LEE: Having said that, as I explained before, there is an unlimited demand in terms of grants and in terms of funding for resources, not just for sport but for a whole heap of different activities throughout electorates right throughout New South Wales—not just in Sydney. Government eventually has to make decisions about a limited resource budget. We make those decisions and, like I said, I am not shying away from that. I signed and approved those recommendations put up by the independent grant panel and administered by the Office of Sport. I signed them off because I was satisfied that the criteria had been followed, that the process had been followed, that they were assessed in line with the methodology and that they were in line with Government priorities. That is how they were funded.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Southern Districts Rugby, despite that considerable investment in women's sport, did not progress to the second round. Old Barker Rugby Club—last year they had no female Rugby team, no sevens or fifteens; they have only ever had one sevens female team—they were graded "strategic alignment that meets the objectives of a female-friendly facility" and given \$863,000 for extensions on a canteen and a patio, yet Southern Districts Rugby Union missed out. How does that align with what you just said about your support for women in sport?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I think you are conflating two different issues. You are saying just because one application did not progress to the second round for a full expression of interest in consideration—I understand in round two there were something like 118 expressions of interest that were received for round two. I understand and have been advised that if we asked every single 118 applicants in the first round, in the expression of interest, it would actually give each organisation—cost them a huge amount of time, money and resources to put together applications. So, what we try and do is—the EOI sets out the conditions and people respond to those conditions, but we do not want to put a whole impost on a whole heap of people we cannot fund. Realistically the fund has a certain budget limit: It is \$100 million over the time.

CORRECTED

Quite in contrast to you, I think our Government, not only through the strategic direction and Her Sport Her Way, has been significantly funding women's sport; for instance, in the nearly \$51 million worth of Active Kids vouchers. That is a voucher every six months that you get for an individual—your kids, 4½ to 18—that families can apply for to support their sporting activities. Sporting activities—nowadays in some codes it is actually very hard for some families struggling on a budget to meet those costs. It has been a landmark success of our Government in terms of Active Kids. We have also funded \$40 million across 22 sporting infrastructure projects, which included a priority focus on female-friendly facility design.

We also have another \$2.6 million for programs and initiatives that reduce barriers and grow participation for women and girls in sport. I was privileged very early on in my tenure to go to the Dads and Daughters program, where it looked at allowing fathers with their daughters to learn to play together in terms of rough-and-tumble in sport—that women can actually do anything. I think that is a particularly great program to allow them to work with young girls—their daughters—to actually encourage them to say that they can do football, they can do Rugby, and they can do canoeing and hiking and all these other fun sorts of activities. Every kid should have that opportunity, if they are allowed. Female sport is at the centre point.

Not so long ago we were out in the regions—and it was not my money, which is great; it was the Deputy Premier's money, which is even better. He announced a \$50 million program to upgrade female-friendly sporting infrastructure like change rooms throughout the regions. Can I say that that is one of the things our focus is on. For far too long, female-friendly change rooms and things had not been included in infrastructure, and we are looking to redress that. I think that is not the finish but just a good start in terms of the regions. A lot of these facilities were built 10 or 20 or 50 years ago, so we hear reports of female athletes having to get changed in their cars or in the bushes, or not having toilet facilities, which is terrible. I think we should address those.

Another example is the funding of the Minerva Foundation Network to look at how we can develop role models and mentoring programs for aspiring young female athletes to come through, because what we are finding is you cannot be what you cannot see. To have industry champions in sport mentor young females is so important for those younger athletes to come through and develop into well-rounded people. It gives them that leg-up that I think we need and we should do.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It is so good that you are so interested in supporting women's sport. It surprises me then that, for example, the Ku-ring-gai Netball Association, which has 359 netball teams—a massive women's sport organisation—wanted money for installation of lights which would have massively increased the number of games that could have been played. They scored so far behind Old Barker Rugby Club for female facilities and they did not get a grant. You say all these nice words. There is a specific example. Why is Ku-ring-gai netball not successful when they are a massive women's and girls' sports organisation, and Old Barker Rugby Club is?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Ms Jackson, the implication of your question is that we are discriminating based upon female participation. Clearly, that is not part of the criteria. In fact, what we want to do in all sorts of programs is actually encourage females to participate. Can I say our strategy Her Sport Her Way has a funding stream for grant applications. Can I announce today that it is officially open, with another \$650,000 to encourage women's participation and girls' participation in sport. I think we can spend all morning here again talking about individual projects—why one did not get funded, why one did get funded—but, as I said to you, we have an independent panel that assesses both stages.

Stage one is overseen by a probity officer and assessed by the independent panel. There were 118 recommendations, I have been advised, in round two, which was the 2019-20 year. I am advised that 118 expressions of interest were received and that 23 projects were then invited to stage two for that full business case after the EOI stage. As a government, clearly we could not fund 118 projects. We had to try and limit the amount of resources those organisations had to use. Normally those are community-based organisations. Putting together that full business case requires a significant amount of time, money and resources. We wanted to try and minimise that impact. We have to make decisions. We do not shy away from making decisions.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Indeed. The decisions that you make, though, do belie the fact that all of your rhetoric about supporting women's sport is pretty hollow. Another example, Minister—

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, I disagree with you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Pennant Hills—

Dr GEOFF LEE: I disagree with you. I think I went through the \$50.85 million in Active Kids vouchers that have been received. You know, when I go to the meetings as sports Minister—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We are not talking about Active Kids vouchers.

CORRECTED

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Point of order: I am not sure how the Deputy Chair can chair her own question.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am the Chair, so if everyone else wants to abandon ship I will just keep going.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I would be appreciative if I could be heard on my point of order before I am yelled over. The Minister was attempting to answer what I think was a question—it might have been a statement. I think it was a very important statement that has quite severe implications, and I think the opportunity for him to be able to respond, in accordance with the procedural fairness resolution, is only fair. I ask that before asking your next question you allow him to respond on that point.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I have not asked a question about the Active Kids Sports vouchers at all, though, so I do not know what he was talking about. There is no point of order.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That is not a response to my point of order. You did interrupt him, and I ask that you cease interrupting him, allow him to answer, and then ask your next question.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: He does not seem to have anything to say anyway.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I am not sure that is correct. You made a statement. He was responding to your statement. You must allow him to respond to the statement that you made. Otherwise, you must withdraw it.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Ms Jackson, I think you are trying to conflate individual projects for the Government's commitment to female inclusion and increasing participation in sport. Can I say the reasons why I was talking about the \$50.85 million in Active Kids vouchers was to show that we are actually supporting females in the community. In addition, \$40 million is being spent across 22 sporting infrastructure projects which include a priority focus on female-friendly facility and design, and \$2.6 million for programs and initiatives that reduce barriers and grow participation for women and girls in sport. What I was trying to say to you, in essence, is that we do support and—apart from your picking out individual projects we did not fund. We fund a whole range of projects to the value of, I am advised, just looking at the rough measurements, over \$9 million in those programs in the last 12 months.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am indeed, Minister, trying to use specific examples to draw out whether or not the rhetoric around support for women's sport is, in fact, factual. My next example is Pennant Hills Netball Club, which applied for a grant, has 3,500 netball players, received a score of 17 and was not funded. Concord Golf Water Harvesting received a score of 12 and was. How do you justify that? We have had Ku-ring-gai netball, Pennant Hills netball—how to you justify those decisions which go to a genuine commitment to sport? That is where the money is going. How do you justify that?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are we going to go through every project that has not been awarded funds?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Thank you again for a similar sort of question, Ms Jackson. At the risk of repeating my answers ad nauseam because this is my testimony, I will see if Karen Jones would like to make comment as CEO of the Office of Sport.

Ms JONES: Thank you, Minister. I think that at this point it is pretty important to outline that the Greater Sydney Sport Facility Fund is not specifically targeting women and girls in sport. It is a fund that seeks to provide facilities across all Greater Sydney. In fact, the actual criteria and the objectives of the fund are clearly outlined in the grant guidelines and I will quickly go through those. The first objective is to actually increase the number and type of sporting facilities. The second is to improve the standard of existing sporting facilities. The third is to increase participation in sport. For the year 2019-20 Greater Sydney Sport Facility Fund round, whilst it was not an objective, there was prioritisation given to the provision of facilities that support women and girls. Now, as stated by the Minister, in the same year of 2019-20, the Office of Sport facilitated over \$40 million of infrastructure projects—22 projects, actually—that had a priority focus on female-friendly facility and design, and that amount itself actually exceeds the Greater Sydney Sport Facility Fund allocation for that year.

We are very strong advocates of women in sport and that is clearly outlined in our Her Sport Her Way strategy. Under that strategy, as I think the Minister has already outlined—we have the Active Kids allocation and the support we provide, particularly to school-age children, including females and girls, to participate and take up sport. We also have a number of other initiatives outlined in Her Sport Her Way. In fact, there are 29 initiatives that aim to increase the number of women and girls playing sport, and that includes investment into sports facilities, maximising investment into women's sport, and supporting the sports sector in ensuring leadership in

CORRECTED

women in sport. We are into our year two action plan of Her Sport Her Way. I can give you some of the highlights of year one.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: No, thanks. I have the document.

Ms JONES: Great.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: As part of Her Sport Her Way, it is my understanding that the grant applications that cater for the needs of women and girls will be given priority. Does that not include in funds such as the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund? When you put that in Her Sport Her Way, that does not apply to the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund?

Ms JONES: The Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund is a standalone program in its own right. In the year 2019-20 there was a focus—not an objective but a focus—on female facilities. I think you will find that a number of the projects that did actually proceed did have that focus. In terms of the individual assessment of applications that you have been pointing towards, I am happy to take that on notice and provide again some information around their decision-making on those individual projects. I do not have that in front of me right now, so I can take that on notice.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I just add, Ms Jackson, I just want to clear up any miscommunication that I may have had. The projects you mentioned are clearly worthwhile community projects, and I do not want to take away from anything about people's expressions of interest. Every project in the community is important to that community. Unfortunately, we cannot fund every one. It would be wonderful if I had a magic wand or a magic pudding so that I could actually satisfy every community project, but I cannot.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I understand that, but we have a document here that suggests that priority will be given to grant applications that cater for the needs of women and girls. We have had an acknowledgement that this is a focus for the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund. We have had Ku-ring-gai netball, Pennant Hills netball, Baulkham Hills netball: 6,188 registered players, 760 teams, 29 clubs. They did not receive any grant funding. They were providing 44 per cent co-contribution to the grant that they were seeking. They never even progressed to the second round. Minister, do you accept that it is not as though there is just one example here of a female-dominated sport grant application that did not receive funding. In fact, there is a pattern. That is why I am going through one by one. Do you accept there is a pattern here of female-dominated sports, big clubs putting in grants and not getting funding?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I do not accept that there is a pattern. They were assessed according to the criteria outlined in the grants program for the Greater Sydney Sports Facility Fund. I think Ms Jones took on notice to say that she is more than happy to get back to you about the projects and about their focus on women. I do not think she has it at hand, unless suddenly it came to you and you do have it at hand, Ms Jones.

Ms JONES: No.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Or one of your staff may have it?

Ms JONES: No.

Dr GEOFF LEE: We will take it on notice and get back to the Committee for a full and transparent evaluation of evidence provided today.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Jones, are you able to provide any more information to us as to how these grant applications for big clubs in female-dominated sports are consistently not being funded or failing even to progress to round two, despite the fact that you have said you will give priority to grant applications that cater to the needs of women and girls?

Ms JONES: What I will say is when you actually publish in your grant guidelines that that is a focus, or focus on anything—it might be a disabled sport, it might be a whole range of things—that will actually attract applications that demonstrate that focus. I think you will find that even the applications that were approved actually have a women-in-sport focus as well. I would be very surprised if not all or at least the majority of applications that were actually presented for assessment included commentary on how they were focusing on women and girls in sport because it was clearly articulated in the grant guidelines that that would be a focus. So good grant preparation would include that. It is a competitive process.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do you accept there is a difference between a Rugby club putting in a line in its grant application that "We will try to do up the women's change rooms" and an application for a netball club, which is a female-dominated sport that is trying to massively increase the capacity for women to actively participate in that sport? Do you accept there is a difference between those two things?

CORRECTED

Ms JONES: No, I do not actually accept that, with due respect. What I do accept is that under Her Sport Her Way the New South Wales Government is trying to increase participation of women and girls across all sports.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So you do not think there is any difference between a club—if you are looking to support women's participation in sport—that has thousands and thousands of women and girls participating, that is trying to considerably increase the capacity for them to play and participate, and an application for a Rugby club that has thousands of blokes participating, a very small number of women, that puts in a line that says—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: To try to increase the women participating in Rugby.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: —"We might look at putting some new doors on the—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Order!

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: There is no difference? In terms of actually trying to get more women playing sport, you think that the outcome is going to be the same?

Ms JONES: In terms of those two projects, like I have said before, I will take on notice in terms of the actual assessment behind those, but I will revert back to my previous statement and say that the Office of Sport, New South Wales Government, wants to see growth in women participating in all sports.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, the minutes of the Office of Sport NSW note that a secondary benefit of the Old Barker Rugby Club application was school use. It would be fair to say that the Old Barker Rugby Club is a feeder club for the Barker College, which is a \$35,000-a-year school that has five Rugby fields, 10 tennis courts and an indoor pool. It is probably pretty well catered for in terms of sports facilities, is it not?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am not aware of its facilities, to be honest. I did not go to Barker; I went to Castle Hill High School.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: North Shore Rowing Club was granted funding to accommodate Loreto Normanhurst, which wanted a site for boat storage. It is already the home to Roseville College rowing. Why are so many of these grants going to projects that support the sporting opportunities of wealthy private schools?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Wow. You are actually doing that.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that is a value judgement. Can I say that merit-based selection is based upon the criteria. I do not think—well, I am sure—that there is no criteria to downgrade people because they choose to send their kids to a school or not to send their kids to a school. I think everybody has the opportunity to put that in there. When you talk about the Old Barker, I am just informed that the Old Barker Rugby Club, part of the description of it was the female facilities upgrade at the pavilion at the Turramurra Memorial Park. Just looking at it off the—having a look, it is \$800,000-odd to upgrade the female facilities there so that women—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In a public park.

Dr GEOFF LEE: And I think women, whether it is netball, which is exclusively female, or Rugby, which is male-dominated—but females should actually have the opportunity to play Rugby.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I agree.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Women are doing better in Rugby anyway.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Why did you not—

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes, that is right. They are better probably, and at cricket they are definitely better, but do not put that—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Order!

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: If you are interested—

Dr GEOFF LEE: They are definitely doing better in the cricket.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: With the Sevens.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Order!

CORRECTED

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: If you are interested in supporting women's participation in Rugby Union, I draw you back to the Southern Districts Rugby Union application, which does have a considerable stream for women's Rugby, and it was not funded. So if women's participation in Rugby Union is so important to you, it seems as though that was a bit of an oversight.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, you can go through individual projects, and we can do this all morning. I am happy to go through them all morning but, as I said, we have Her Sport Her Way. We have done it 10 times—in the last decade we have spent 10 times the amount on female sport and their facilities and for their participation than the previous government, the Labor Government, did in its 10 years. By simply saying, "You didn't fund this project, therefore you don't support it", is truly an inaccurate representation of the facts. We are supporting it, just in the last year with over \$90 million in encouraging female participation in sport. So I refute your assertions that we do not support female participation in sport in every way.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Carlingford High School and Condell Park High School are crying out for indoor multipurpose courts. They do not have five Rugby fields, 10 tennis courts and an indoor swimming pool at Carlingford High School and Condell Park High School. They missed out, but applications that supported school facilities at Barker College and Loreto were funded. Does that seem fair to you?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that it was a process, a methodological process. Criteria were published on the website. There was two-stage process overseen by the probity officer. Let us go back to, if we can, the Old Barker Rugby Club. In fact, the money was—it says "Old Barker Rugby Club", and it could have connotations. I could understand your connotations, that this is for male facilities. In fact, the evidence that I have in front of me here says it is for female facilities to be upgraded at the pavilion at Turramurra Memorial Park. That is probably a historical legacy of having male change rooms or facilities at the expense of any female. They are addressing that situation.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: You have taken responsibility, Minister, for the decisions under this grant. So when we see things like netball clubs consistently not being funded, clubs that support private schools on the North Shore consistently being funded, those decisions reflect your priorities and your values as a Minister. Is that right?

Dr GEOFF LEE: They reflect the views of that two-stage process, which assessed the methodological assessment against the set of criteria by an independent panel at each stage overseen by the probity officer in terms of looking at which ones and recommending it to the Minister. I take responsibility for the things that I sign off.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you, Minister. Welcome, now Minister, after 535 days of being acting Minister.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Is it 535?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Congratulations, Minister, on becoming now formally a Minister.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I didn't even add it up. Just felt like a blink of time.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I agree, Minister, that the multicultural communities did play a key role in spreading the message of constraints and followed health orders. That is a fact, Minister, so I concur with your comments. Why did it take so long for accessible multilingual information to be provided during the COVID-19 pandemic? Why did it take so long?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say to you that I do not agree with your assertion that it took a long time. In fact, NSW Health initially was proactive in terms of our COVID response. One of the things that we organised quickly is meetings with our community leaders to help out our multicultural communities right throughout the State. We responded quickly and efficiently. I will ask Joseph La Posta to make comment in a second. Certainly, this Government is continually assessing and responding to the different needs as those health orders change. Can I say that very quickly we were on board in terms of talking to our multicultural communities, including the religious and faith leaders, including those community leaders. I certainly refute your accusation in that question that we did not respond quickly. In fact, very early on, we held engagement forums. I did 38 of those, I am advised—I did not actually count them myself—online engagement forums, because we only had Zoom in those days, involving over 150 religious leaders from a hundred different faith-based groups. We were meeting them weekly. I have got to commend Joseph La Posta in heading up from Multicultural NSW, and Health, who had Jan. Dr Jan Fizzell must have been on every single meeting we had. What a champion she has been throughout this process to interpret health-speak into normal-speak and answer questions.

Can I say we have also done things like nine online engagement forums with Muslim leaders throughout Ramadan. As you would know, Ramadan was particularly difficult. It was the first time in many years or ever that

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celebrations at mosques could not occur, because we actually closed down places of worship. Obviously, they got caught up in that stream. We also had two online engagement forums with Jewish leaders around Hanukkah and 13 online engagement forums with Christian Orthodox leaders. We also had 50, they advise me, online regional advisory council forums. Those regional advisory councils sit under the ministerial advisory board. They are actually the grassroots community members actually feeding up information and feeding down and back into the community at a grassroots level about what is happening in our multicultural communities not just in Sydney but what is happening right across the regions and the country areas.

We also had 11 forums with peak multicultural bodies in the Sydney metropolitan and regional forums and six forums with the New South Wales consular corps. They were particularly important because they are another point of access that citizens of other countries would actually access in terms of the opportunities to stay here or return home or clearing up visa issues or clearing up visas where the people can return to Australia and the arrangements. They were particularly good, the consular corps. So I would like to acknowledge the consular corps. We had 16 meetings with leaders from the humanitarian settlement sector. The temporary visa holders have been particularly hit hard in terms of their inability to access traditional support from the Federal Government, like JobKeeper. There was no facility for those. If you cannot work because the industries have disappeared, like tourism and hospitality, if your casual work has disappeared, if you cannot get any money from government, how do you actually live and how do you pay rent and how do you buy food and how do you actually keep your family, if you are not able to do that? I pay tribute also to our humanitarian settlement sector.

In fact, the Jesuit Refugee Service, which is in my new boundaries of my new electorate, which I had the privilege of visiting early on, when we actually gave support to the Jesuit Refugee Service as part of a multimillion-dollar strategy—I will let Joseph talk about that. It was outstanding, their work, in terms of providing over 600 food packages every week to families in desperate need when they had no money. These are basic requirements, like rice and flour and oil. These are not luxury goods. These are just to be able to survive during the time. I may ask Mr La Posta to detail the work we did. I think your question revolved around translation and language services and the work you have done, not only translation services and the advertising and the deep penetration we have into our communities.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, before Mr La Posta answers, my question is with regard to multilingual information and when you provided it early on the pandemic. You have mentioned that you had organised meetings earlier. When did you organise those meetings? The complaint was that Multicultural NSW was very late in responding and providing that information. You say you have met all these people. I take it that you have met them on Zoom and Facebook and whatever. When did you actually meet with multicultural communities to spread out the message of constraint and coordination with those communities?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that very early on in the piece we—I do not have the specific date, when we first started, but I will ask Joseph to detail those meetings that he had. But can I say I refute the accusation in your question that we did not meet early. Can I say that straightaway from March we started those dialogues and started that information dissemination. We were listening to the community at all times. In fact, one of the biggest advantages of those online forums that we had every week with up to 150 leaders was that we were able to answer their questions and get straight back to them, publish those online, and people were able to share—I remember even Bill Crews was offering his services, for instance, attending places of worship. Bill Crews actually offered his COVID Safety Plan for how he actually cleans his meal preparations and service areas to make sure they remain COVID safe.

Often there was a lot of peer groups working with different religious leaders or community leaders, sharing their COVID safety and their tips about how they clean their places of worship, the seats, the doors, and how they arrange for the entry and exit of worshippers as they come into the place. I certainly refute the accusations of your question in terms of support very early on in the pandemic. In fact, it was in March. I am happy to let Joseph—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Just on that, the pandemic and the news of the spread of the coronavirus was in December. What took you so long—three months—before you had any communication with the multicultural communities?

Dr GEOFF LEE: That is absolutely wrong.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You said March.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am more than happy to see if Mr La Posta wants to—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: No, why did it take you more than three months before you met with communities?

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The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Just before we go any further, we now do not have a deputy chair here either, if it has been passed—

Dr GEOFF LEE: Nat can be deputy chair; can we elect her?

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: No. I just make the point that we are inquorate?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I thought a quorum was three.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Well, we need a deputy chair. We are inquorate.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, if I can—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Before you do answer, Mr La Posta, I would like to hear it from the Minister. Why did it take the Minister four months, when we knew and the fear was out there that this was developing into a pandemic. It took Multicultural NSW, as is the Minister's own admission, till March 2020 to commence communications with multicultural communities. Why did it take so long?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Firstly, I should say that Mr La Posta should buy a new pen.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: This is a serious question, Minister.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, it has a serious response.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What, "buy him a new pen" is a serious response?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Shaoquett Moselmane, Mr Moselmane, when you accuse us not to respond quickly and not to listen to communities that is offensive. We have spent significant amounts of time focusing—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You indicated it was March.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Let him answer.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Let him answer.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that at all times we followed health advice and that was our primary directive. As you may remember, at the time the most important thing was information that came from—which we followed—was health advice. We had to follow a single point of truth that we kept reflecting as that health advice would be released and updated. We kept updating them, so we followed that. You know, the accusations within what you are saying that we do not talk to our multicultural communities and only started in March.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Well, according to you.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, the reality is we talked about the health advice, talking to our communities at all times, not just in March but right throughout the year. You would know out of everybody that my attendance at as many multicultural meetings and forums and events would be second to none. When people want to meet with me and I have the possible time and it coordinates, we certainly do. That is why we are very proud of our continued dialogue, not just through me but through the whole of Multicultural NSW. I will ask Mr La Posta to talk about his ongoing, continuous project—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Before Mr La Posta answers—Mr La Posta will have an opportunity later this afternoon. While we have got you, Minister, I accept that I do see you at many multicultural communities, but my question is: Why did it take Multicultural NSW four months before it commenced communication with the migrant communities and ethnic communities? That is the role of Multicultural NSW—to communicate. Why did it take them four months, as per your admission, to start the communication process?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that we continually communicate with all our multicultural communities throughout the year in numerous forums, whether it is through the advisory board and their deep reach into community, whether it is the regional advisory committees, whether it is the specific programs that are run, whether it is doing things like—they advise me that the Farsi interpreters were at the airport in February. We certainly made sure that we followed health advice all the time and always communicated that health advice as a single point of truth. I think that is important because during that time there were multiple sources of information. People go online and hear that "fake news" and people's versions. But it was so important to actually communicate a single point of truth.

For instance, early on in the piece we did things like we cancelled things like Parramasala, an event that is held in my own electorate of Parramatta, after 10 or 11 years. We made the difficult but necessary decision to keep in order and make sure to keep people safe that Parramasala was cancelled for that year to stop the spread of COVID. Parramasala is western Sydney's premier event to bring not just Indian communities together but a whole heap of communities, whether it is Chinese or South Asian communities. It is significant. In fact, during the time

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that single point of truth was translated, as I understand it, into some 52 different languages. The most important thing was to make sure that it was up to date and accurate. That information had to reflect health advice and we have been very clear and are still very clear that with any COVID-safety work, whether it is multiculturalism, whether it is sport, whether it is our veterans or our seniors, we are always reliant upon the health advice, number one, to keep our communities safe. We have been very clear we continually keep in touch with our multicultural communities. Mr La Posta, I do not know if you want to add anything?

Mr LA POSTA: Just to reinforce, Mr Moselmane, our work did not start in March. Our work started as we were watching the virus expand from Wuhan at the end of December over the Christmas period through China in January and, unfortunately, a country I am very familiar with, throughout Italy in the back end of January, in Iran—which is why we put Farsi interpreters at the airport to help with that source of truth, exactly what you are talking about—in partnering with Health. I am very grateful for the work of our interpreters and translators that translated, as of yesterday, over 1,569 different documents into over 400,000 words. Any community people or colleagues of yours that approached our agency and said, "Can we do more in language?", we did. I include when we started with the most popular languages, colleagues of yours—shadow Ministers, members across all Parliament—approached our agency and said, "Can you do more for our community in this language?"

As the Minister said, 52 different languages. While a lot of other jurisdictions have been criticised about the accuracy of their information, ours has not, which is something as a State we should all be incredibly proud of. There is only one time I have sat on the secretaries' board and that was as this pandemic was starting to work, so that as a government we could all pull together and understand what our culturally diverse communities needed. I can assure you that was not in March, that was well before then—remembering that the World Health Organisation only called it a pandemic in March, so we also had to provide a commensurate response with a lot of other messaging that was happening.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I can understand my colleagues asking you to do more because there were complaints at the time that not enough was done. Can I ask, Minister, did Multicultural NSW receive complaints about the lack of multilingual information, in particular around the initial restrictions and testing process?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I will ask Joseph La Posta, otherwise we will take it on notice. To my knowledge there were requests for further translations but certainly no complaints in the traditional sense that "you are not doing anything". In fact, the opposite is true. Can I say that there were no complaints is my understanding, but certainly there were compliments. There were requests for further languages, and can we expand it and change the media that we produce those, how we distribute those and the media that we are using—perhaps whether there was a sign purely in another language or it was a multilingual sign, or the graphics of the layout, those sorts of things. But, contrary to your assertions in your question, this is untrue. I personally and my testimony here, I take an important part today and I take it seriously that, in fact, the multicultural communities and the community leaders and people I talk to were very impressed with the response of Multicultural NSW.

To the point, we had a forum just recently in my own electorate at Harris Park, a community forum with business owners, shopkeepers, retailers, restaurateurs, cafe owners, all from non-English speaking backgrounds, mainly from the subcontinent, to come together to look at health advice. Multicultural NSW conducted that to make sure that those proprietors actually were informed with the latest information and their responsibilities. And I think, all reports, they were very well received from the community that I have had reports, as well as Mr La Posta said that the shopkeepers themselves, the restaurateurs all had the COVID-safety requirements in place, because it is important. It is a tourist area, it is an area where lots of people go to experience our own Little India, which we are very proud of. Certainly, from the initial pandemic response and interpretation of health to advertising, where we picked up where the Federal Government left off, we actually targeted advertising programs in the correct media, whether it is online, whether it is in newspapers or on radio, that we did a significant advertising piece. As I understand it, the advertising piece is a continuation of the 156,000-something documents—

Mr LA POSTA: It was 1,569 documents and 400,000 words.

Dr GEOFF LEE: My apologies. Now we are moving into the communities and we have a whole plan rolling forward to look at how we can work with specific communities where we have identified that the need exists to bolster that response. Maybe Mr La Posta wants to—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Before Mr La Posta answers, Mr La Posta just told us that members of Parliament approached him "Can you do more?" and you also told us that you commenced communication in March. Are you seriously telling us there were no complaints, as you stated, to Multicultural NSW, that lack of multilingual information was a fact? Are you telling us that there were no complaints?

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Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that I am more than happy—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You said that, Minister.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am more than happy to take it on notice. I cannot actually recall someone complaining, saying we have not done enough, which is amazing. When you come from an electorate like Parramatta, they soon tell you what they want to do and they will complain. Were there requests can we do something more for a community? Absolutely, and there will always be those requests. When we are online with 150 religious leaders—and I tried to do a rough calculation of how many people they represent; they probably represent two million people in New South Wales. When you have 150 of those community and religious leaders online, they are not backwards in coming forwards in telling you exactly what they are thinking. That is why Multicultural NSW did such a good job.

I should acknowledge the role of those community leaders and everybody in the community, especially the faith leaders, the community leaders and especially the mums and dads, the great Australians that we have, for their work in keeping us safe. But when you compare us to a similar situation in Victoria in the multicultural communities, we have done an outstanding job, and I commend Joseph La Posta.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You can blow your own trumpet, Minister—

Dr GEOFF LEE: No, I am congratulating Joseph La Posta and Multicultural NSW—they are the ones that do the work.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Tell us, Minister, how much funding was allocated to reaching multicultural communities during COVID-19? How much funding?

Dr GEOFF LEE: In terms of language support?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Reaching out. Is that a broad budget, and then breaking it down?

Dr GEOFF LEE: There are many different strands and, for the sake of full transparency, I will just try and find that list that we have developed, otherwise we will certainly take that on notice. But there was certainly a significant amount of money. They are just telling me which note I should look at so I get the right information for you.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, I can help with the specifics if you like.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Do you mind? I just do not want to delay the Committee, that is all.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, with respect—

Dr GEOFF LEE: I have found it. Sorry, Joseph. You will get your chance this afternoon.

Mr LA POSTA: You are the Minister.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am now.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Finally.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: After 335 days.

Dr GEOFF LEE: And what a privilege it has been every day. Can I say that I am very proud of some of those initiatives. I will outline them and I am sure Joseph will pick up on the ones that I have left off. There was \$20 million in temporary crisis accommodation for stranded international students. We are committed to protecting the most vulnerable, which included international students, which are an integral part of our community and economy, with thousands of other families right around the State depending upon the sector, whether it is through direct employment, home stays or other services. That is in addition to my other portfolios where the 10 universities in New South Wales estimate they have contributed \$180 million to international student support, whether it is a reduction in fees, help with accommodation, food packages, telecommunications and a whole range of other things. That is \$180 million they advised me that they have supported their international students and continue to support.

We have also had a \$6 million package to support temporary visa holders, including refugees and asylum seekers, with the basic necessities like food, medicines and telecommunications. That is particularly important. I use the example that I went to as one of the many examples: the Jesuit Refugee Service at Westmead that is soon moving to Rydalmere, which is great news—moving from one side of my electorate to the other side—helping over 600 people a week with essential food packages. They have done it particularly tough because most of their volunteers were elderly people, some of the community groups that were most at risk from COVID, and they

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faced the difficulties of how do they actually distribute those packages when all their volunteers were asked to stay at home and socially isolate because of their risk.

In addition to that, there is the \$4 million extension of the NSW Service for the Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture and Trauma Survivors [STARTTS] program in community hubs. We are certainly very proud—and this was my thinking and Mr La Posta kindly found some money in the back drawers of Multicultural NSW. There was \$600,000 for COVID crisis support to fund over 120 grassroots multicultural organisations to support the vulnerable people. I went to many, as I am sure you did, Mr Moselmane, community-based organisations where volunteers were coming together, raising money and spending their own money to provide food and emergency services, and with no help from anyone else other than their volunteers and their donors.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is very true. No government—

Dr GEOFF LEE: It was a tough time for them all. We supported 120 grassroots organisations. Those grants came out quickly. But we have certainly been continuing to—and I will ask Mr La Posta to talk specifically about the education services that are particularly—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Before he does that, Minister—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Point of order: Where a question is being answered, the Minister is entitled to refer it to one of the public servants at the table to assist in the answer. This constant exercise of saying, "We'll take it this afternoon," is inconsistent with the right of the Minister to fully answer the question. I ask that he be allowed to answer it in his own way by referring it to the witness.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: To the point of order: I would like to ask a follow-up question to the Minister before diversion is taken by the officer. I would like to ask a follow-up question, that is the intention.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: To the point of order: There have been repeated instances where the Minister has sought to refer particularly to Mr La Posta to provide further information in answer directly to the question that is asked, and each time the Hon. Shaoquett Moselmane has then gone on—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is not true.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: —including on to different areas.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is not true, Chair.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: It is, Shaoquett. I simply ask that the Minister be allowed to complete his answer by referring it to a witness.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. The Minister is entitled to refer to his advisers at any time. You can obviously listen to that advice and ignore it and then redirect the question again, but you should not be interrupting that direction to the ministerial adviser.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, with respect to the question, and correct me if I am wrong, the question is: How much money did you spend directly on translation services and interpreting services to make sure material got out? Is that correct?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: How much funding was allocated to reaching multicultural communities during COVID-19? How much funding? How much money was put out there?

Mr LA POSTA: There are a couple of things to this, and I am not trying to dodge it. It is a layered question because there is a whole-of-government campaign that sits around that which my agency had input into but I did not have direct financial responsibility over it; that sat with the Department of Customer Service, and Minister Dominello and Minister Lee collaborated very closely on that whole-of-government agency, and I can assure you that my team was at every possible meeting to make sure, as we all know, that the culturally diverse people throughout New South Wales had what they needed.

The second part to that question relates largely directly to me, which is about translating services. There was never an instance where translated material was not provided to make sure that the public safety messaging from Health—and I am not talking about media releases or press releases but the public health messaging—was not translated into the languages that we identified that were most at need; that came personally from my own agency. I can take the question specifically on notice, but I can tell you right now that it is a running bill because the job is not done and it is in the vicinity of between \$350,000 and \$400,000 directly on translation costs.

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The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, how much money was spent on multilingual information and dissemination?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I will refer you back to Mr La Posta's answer and say that it is a significant amount. We are more than happy to take that on notice. I do not think the bill has finally—we continue to translate information, it is a running total. But, as Mr La Posta clearly said, 52 different languages, for the record, 1,569 documents and over 400,000 words are translated. We will continue to do what is necessary to make sure our multicultural communities remain informed and up to date with the latest health information to keep the whole community, not just the multicultural community, safe.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I hear you say "significant amount". What is that amount?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am happy to take it on notice and get back to you. I just do not have the figure in hand, Mr Moselmane. That is all.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Sure, fair enough. That is your response. I will accept that response. Is there a plan or strategy to ensure accurate and important information on the vaccine reaches multicultural communities? Is there a plan?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say, first off, the vaccine rollout throughout New South Wales is the primary responsibility of the Federal Government. Certainly can I say that Multicultural NSW will support NSW Health in delivering and communicating about the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. In a second I will ask Mr Coutts-Trotter to talk to you about the whole-of-government approach to how we are trying to work with the Federal Government, but certainly it would be important to say that the Federal Government is primarily responsible for the rollout. The Federal Government is controlling that and the New South Wales Government is responsible for implementing parts of the program. The Australian Government is currently creating and disseminating COVID-19 vaccine communication material. Multicultural NSW has shared these resources with our multicultural communities. Multicultural NSW will support NSW Health in disseminating information that complements the Australian Government's campaign. Initially the NSW Health COVID-19 vaccination communication strategy for multicultural communities will focus on supporting the first two stages of the national COVID-19 vaccination strategy.

If you give me one second, I will just make sure that I have covered off everything before I turn to Mr Coutts-Trotter. As I said, NSW Health is closely working with the Australian Government to plan and implement a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccination program in New South Wales. As you are aware, the priority groups—those who are at the highest risk and who need protection the most—will receive the vaccine first. The Australian Government has developed a national strategy so that everyone can access a safe, effective and free COVID-19 vaccine. The strategy can be found at the Federal Government's health website. Importantly the Australian Government's COVID-19 vaccine information is in languages that can be found, again, on its website. Through my agency Multicultural NSW we have shared this information across our extensive stakeholder networks via email, which includes religious leaders, community leaders, specialist migrant and settlement NGOs and the New South Wales consular corps. I have also tasked my agency Multicultural NSW with liaising with NSW Health and our Federal counterparts to ensure the multicultural communities are receiving timely and accurate information as changes and updates occur. I will ask Mr Coutts-Trotter to provide more.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Minister, I cannot add to your comprehensive answer.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: He probably wrote it. Can I just specifically ask about the vaccine and multicultural communities because, Minister, would you accept that it is not just about translating vaccine information into different languages. That is important. Would you not accept that there is a specific problem with vaccine hesitancy in multicultural communities? The ANU recently did a study that went exactly to this point: There is a higher level of vaccine hesitancy amongst multicultural communities. What are you doing not just to translate the basic information, but to specifically address concerns multicultural communities have about being vaccinated?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Thank you, Ms Jackson. I think it is fair enough to say that there are some sections of the community that have hesitancy in terms of the efficacy of the vaccinations, not just COVID-19 but those who are anti-vaxxers that plague our society—very difficult indeed. Can I say that we continue with our engagement with stakeholders. I am not aware of the ANU report that you mentioned, but certainly the hesitancy within the community—I think Multicultural NSW is a microcosm of the larger society—there will always be those people who choose not to vaccinate for their own personal reasons, feelings and values. We respect that. But we certainly encourage people wherever possible to be vaccinated against COVID-19. Certainly we will continue to work with our stakeholders. I think I agree with you, Ms Jackson, that we must do everything we can to engage with all our stakeholders wherever they are. That includes continuing with our community and religious

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leaders. That includes at a grassroots level through our Regional Advisory Councils [RACs] and every community event and information that we translate.

In fact, I think next week we have another forum with those community and religious leaders—we have been continuously holding them since the outbreak and the pandemic—and the need to get out valuable health information. As I said to you before, when you are on these calls—and I am sure Mr Moselmane would agree with me—that whenever these leaders are not satisfied, they certainly direct you and say, "Can we have more information?" But I should commend Dr Jan Fizzell because she is on just about all those meetings and she is able to answer those questions as a health expert, because at the end of the day we are guided by NSW Health to produce the single source of truth to make sure that there is only one truth that gets out there so that we limit any misinterpretation. Mr La Posta, did you have anything to add about our program of communications with our multicultural communities?

Mr LA POSTA: Ms Jackson, you touched on it before: It is the role of government in collaboration with community and religious leaders. We cannot do it alone. So it is so pleasing to see videos released from the Australian National Imams Council yesterday with their own doctor talking positively about the role that Muslims need to play in this country to take the vaccination if offered it, which is no different from the Greek Orthodox Church, an incredibly conservative church and their archbishop positively saying that he will be first in line to take the vaccination. It is going to be complex; it is going to be hard work, but we are up for the challenge and we will work with our religious and community leaders to ensure that they get the facts and that they also get the support that they need. It is not, as you said, just about translating documents; it is about working with them collaboratively so that they have the full level of facts. Then hopefully they can embed that messaging into their very diverse community audiences that they work with.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Ms Jackson, I will just add on top of what Mr La Posta said: You are absolutely right; it is not about the Government producing information. It is about working with the community hand in hand to support the community because we can only solve these things in a partnership where they trust us and we trust them, and we both work together to put the right information as quickly as possible so that we actually influence at the grassroots level, which is always the hardest thing to do. I agree with you: Simply translating a document can have very little impact, but it is working with those community leaders and those leaders who actually touch the grassroots community members that is so important.

That is why, for instance, the latest forum for the retailers, restaurateurs and cafe owners in Harris Park was so important. These are guys, the owner-operators of their own businesses, who influence the hundred people who come into their shops. Whether making sure that they are aware that they absolutely have to have those QR codes for the check-in, absolutely assuring them that they need to practice social or physical distancing and the correct hygiene while people and their staff are there to make sure that we minimise any spread. I think it has been over 40-odd days since we had a community transmission, which is great news. But my one message consistently is that complacency is our biggest enemy. We know that we cannot eliminate COVID safety, but despite that we have great testing in our water and our sewerage system. We know that COVID is in our community—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Point of order: I have never liked James Joyce and this answer seems to have strayed so far from the question, which was about immunisation, that I cannot see how it is at all relevant.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Minister, can I— ?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I think your time is up.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I think we are actually in crossbench time.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Okay, yes.

The CHAIR: I think that is really what this is all about.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I let it go for like 3½ minutes. There were so many semicolons and hyphens—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Don't get snifty.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So ask a question.

The CHAIR: We will reset the clock.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, do you think that your Government's Active Kids program has been fairly rolled out across the State?

CORRECTED

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that Active Kids is a \$127 million program, which we will continue to support, as a feature has been a sensational success. Can we do more to promote active kids in the community? Yes, I think we can. I think we should not be complacent.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was: Do you think it has been fairly rolled out across the State? Your answer is, "It has been a sensational success." Is that your answer?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No. As I said, there are issues that we can address in terms of informing people so they can access that opportunity. Over 2.5 million vouchers have been redeemed. It is a huge investment by this Government and certainly the Office of Sport. I will ask Karen Jones to talk about our engagement with sporting organisations that want to be part of the Active Kids vouchers, because they have to register. Can we do more? I am advised that the Office of Sport is currently planning and doing more. That includes the intervention engagement programs with remote, Indigenous and culturally diverse communities as well as children with disability across New South Wales. Encouragingly, over 67,000 children with disability and 126,000 children identifying as Indigenous have redeemed vouchers since the start of the program. I certainly agree that we should not be complacent with the initial success of this program. We need to do more.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: How many vouchers did you say had been redeemed? You said about 2.5 million. You must have a figure.

Dr GEOFF LEE: My note here advises 2.5 million vouchers.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So 2.5 million vouchers redeemed.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes, that is the advice that I have been given.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is that the most current figure?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am happy to take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There is an immediate problem there because you highlight on your Active Kids website how many vouchers have been created, do you not? It is quite a big, bold figure on your Active Kids website showing how many vouchers have been created.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I would have to refer back to the website.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you know how many have been created?

Dr GEOFF LEE: As I said, we offer the program and the families and parents redeem vouchers by applying to Service NSW.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, a random series of words related to the Active Kids program is not really responsive. Do you know how many vouchers have been created?

Dr GEOFF LEE: If this helps you, Mr Shoebridge, one of my learned colleagues—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why don't I help you? I have the figure here from your own website. That might be quickest.

Dr GEOFF LEE: If you do not mind, I am happy to answer.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You tell me. I am happy to wait.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Point of order: Before we go down this path, it would be helpful if we could establish going forward that the honourable member asks a question and the Minister is entitled to answer it before he is interrupted with the next question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I fully accept that, but answer the question. Those two words are critical to the frustrations that we are seeing here—answer the question.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Perhaps allow him the opportunity to do that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was: How many vouchers have been created since the start of the program?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Thank you. I did not have that information but one of my learned colleagues has been able to provide it. This was last updated 13 January 2021. Total vouchers created and downloaded is 3,234,236.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Okay. The good news is that I have some more up-to-date information for you. I am relying on your website, which may be wrong. This is what I was trying to help you with earlier, Minister. According to your website it is 3,734,925.

CORRECTED

Dr GEOFF LEE: Sorry, I did not mean to mislead the Committee. I was relying upon the statistics on the website. Obviously the statistics have been updated since January. You are absolutely right. I would assume the website to be the most up-to-date and accurate figure.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Did you say when you gave that earlier answer that you were relying on the website?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No, I said I was relying upon the updated version of 13 January 2021, which is two or three months old.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So 2.5 million vouchers have been redeemed and 3.7 million vouchers have been created. What has happened to the 1.2 million gap?

Dr GEOFF LEE: They have not been redeemed.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I did not use mine. I redeemed it but did not use it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So the figures that you tout on your website about how successful this project is—you have successfully got people to print out a voucher but in a third of the cases it has never been redeemed. Nothing has ever come of it.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am probably best to hand to Karen Jones, the CEO of the Office of Sport, but can I say that COVID-19 had a dramatic effect. I do not know if you were in the room at that time but as I alluded to, in the March-April period when we actually stopped all community sport, this was a grassroots support for families and their kids to actively engage in sport. All the research has said that it has made a real positive difference in the activation. I will ask Karen Jones to talk.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, I am putting to you the difference between what you tout on your website as vouchers created—you tout 3.7 million vouchers created but fail to tell the truth about the program: that a third of those are never redeemed. Why do you not put that information on the website? Is it because you want to have a misleadingly positive story on the website? Is that the reason?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No, we are very proud of our program. I will ask Ms Jones to explain the potential reasons why, if you have that information. But out of all the States and Territories and jurisdictions right across Australia, ours is by far the best and most generous and largest out of them all, even adjusting for size of population.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You are very good at vouchers.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Mr Shoebridge, you sit there and refute that this is a good program. When you have an electorate where people actually find it difficult to send their kids to community-based sport because of the cost imperatives, you would understand that giving them the opportunity of a \$100 voucher twice a year is significant in their lives. All the research that we do actually shows that it is a positive program that is delivering results. It is one of those things that families that actually redeem those—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Point of order: The Minister's answer is not responsive to my question. I am asking about why the website touts 3.7 million vouchers created and why it does not tell the whole truth and point out that a third of those have never been redeemed. The Minister's answer is simply not responsive.

The CHAIR: Minister, I will uphold the point of order. In your answers, you do need to be directly relevant to the question.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Or even ballpark relevant. I would be happy with ballpark relevant. I would be happy with the same continent.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: He can answer however he wants.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Do not go in circles.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I will ask Karen Jones to detail that, but can I say to you that we are very proud of the 3.7 million people that have downloaded that form.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I have.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I think the Hon. Natalie Smith has downloaded it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Natalie Ward.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Natalie Ward, sorry.

CORRECTED

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why don't we stop this embarrassing exchange and get to Ms Jones, who might actually give us some information?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Things happen between when you download it and when you redeem it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Things happen between the brain and the mouth too.

Ms JONES: Yes, there are differences between the number of vouchers created and the number of vouchers redeemed. But I will say that Active Kids does have a higher than average redemption rate for voucher programs more broadly and I am more than happy to provide you those statistics on notice. I will say that the Active Kids program is designed so that there are two vouchers of \$100 each available every calendar year. The first voucher becomes available on 1 January and the second voucher becomes available on 1 July. People who create those vouchers have a full 12 months to redeem them, so there will always be a lag between the number of vouchers created and the number of vouchers redeemed. Last year we also went through COVID-19, so community sport was cancelled for a period. There was heightened uncertainty amongst the community about whether or not community sport would continue so during that period families may also have already created their vouchers but then chose not to redeem them, given that community sport was not active.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is it right that a third of the vouchers created have not been redeemed? Is that about right?

Ms JONES: I will take the statistics on notice but, yes, there is a difference.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have people followed up about why they did not redeem the voucher? You must know who has the vouchers. Do you send a prompt or a reminder?

Ms JONES: The Active Kids program has a very strong evaluation program associated with it and that is a partnership that we have with the University of Sydney and the Sport and Recreation Intervention and Epidemiology Research [SPRINTER] program. They look not only at voucher creation and redemption but also the impact that Active Kids is having on the physical activity and sport participation of school-aged children.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was: Do you follow up with somebody who has printed a voucher that is about to expire? Do you follow up with them and say, "Your voucher is about to expire and you had better get on with it"?

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You must know that, Ms Jones. You must know you do not, so just tell us you do not.

Ms JONES: In all honesty, I will take that on notice. We have a full Active Kids team at the Office of Sport that does a number of administrative tasks and that may be one of them, but I will take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, I asked you whether or not you thought Active Kids had been rolled out fairly across the State. Have you ever gone onto the website?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you ever got a briefing about how Active Kids has been taken up across the State?

Dr GEOFF LEE: From time to time Active Kids is mentioned as one of our great programs that has been very successful and also an area where we need to focus better on.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So could you answer my question? Have you ever got a briefing about how Active Kids has been taken up across the State?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Were you told, for example, that in Bourke only 12 vouchers have ever been created?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I cannot specifically remember.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: In Brewarrina only five vouchers have been created.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, I cannot specifically recall the towns and their actual numbers but certainly, as I indicated before in my answer, we have talked about expanding the communications so that people can take them up in our regions. We have talked specifically about things like the multicultural communities. It is difficult

CORRECTED

for people from non-English-speaking backgrounds to access the site and to actually understand how they can actually use it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Sorry, Minister, I am talking about the numbers for this year because I am going off the numbers for this year. So far in this year—and I did not want to mislead you—there have been 12 vouchers downloaded for Bourke, which is 3 per cent of the eligible population; so far this year there have been five vouchers downloaded for Brewarrina, which is 2 per cent of the eligible population; and so far there have been 57 vouchers, or 7 per cent, in Walgett. Were you aware of those kinds of low rates?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Certainly I would say on those low rates that you have indicated, no, I was not, in terms of Brewarrina and Bourke and those specifics. Can I say that it is available to all school-age children from 4½ to 18 years old. I think Karen accurately reflected the difficulties that we have had during COVID-19 and whether community sports were actually going to be played, but adding to that the winter sports actually have not commenced. It goes in spikes, when winter sport is about to start, but I will let Karen talk about that delayed reaction in terms of demand at different times of year as different sports come on and come off in terms of registrations.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you saying that the low rates in Bourke, Brewarrina and Walgett are because of COVID?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No. What I am saying is that there are a number of reasons why there is a disparity between how many have been redeemed and—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I have not given you that data. This is not about the disparity between redeemed—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: David, let him answer.

Dr GEOFF LEE: —my advisers say that the website notes that 711 have been through Bourke and 1,315 in Walgett have been downloaded.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Over the course of the whole of the program. I am talking about this year.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I will take it on notice. I agree with you, if those are the figures that are justified. I am happy to accept those.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I will give you a comparison to some other parts of the State. Again, for this year: Ku-ring-gai, 38 per cent uptake; Lane Cove, 40 per cent uptake. In wealthy and privileged parts of the State this is going really well but in less privileged parts of the State it is just not touching the sides, is it, Minister? It is an unfair system.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I think if you talk to my national colleagues you will find that they are very supportive of the Active Kids vouchers. Can we do more? Yes. Can we reach—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But if we talk to your Federal colleagues—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Point of order: David, just calm down.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: This is nonsense.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: The interjections are unnecessary.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: They are just nonsense answers.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I withdraw that.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: He has come here in a bad mood but, really, he has to allow the Minister to finish his answer before he starts the next one.

The CHAIR: I accept the point of order.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Even I accept the point of order.

The CHAIR: Very thespian.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am happy to let Karen try and better explain it than I am clearly able to satisfy you, Mr Shoebridge. I will ask Karen to provide perhaps a better communication strategy than I am able to do at this present time.

CORRECTED

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is called an answer. "Better communication strategy" has otherwise been known in other committees as an "answer". Ms Jones?

Ms JONES: Yes, thank you. If I can just answer your previous question, Mr Shoebridge, on whether or not we remind people about the expiry of the vouchers that they have created. I am informed to say yes, we do. We do actually send targeted emails to parents and guardians who have actually created vouchers but have not yet redeemed them. That might be whether or not they have redeemed one or two vouchers during the calendar year.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Per child.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Jones, I have had reports from a number of parents who have not had that. Is it across the board or is it targeted?

Ms JONES: I will take the detail of that on notice but I am advised by my Active Kids team that, yes, we do actually follow up on vouchers that are not redeemed. In terms of take-up rates, particularly out in regional New South Wales, what I can add to what the Minister has already commented on is that in 2018 more than 36,000 Active Kids vouchers were created for children in regional New South Wales, particularly those who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander children. In 2019, as a result of direct targeting by the Office of Sport and the Active Kids team, that actually increased to 62,000 redeemed in regional locations. At the Office of Sport we have actually undertaken a range of initiatives to improve the uptake and redemption of Active Kids vouchers, particularly in our Aboriginal and Indigenous communities. In some of the communities that you actually referred to, including Menindee, Walgett, Taree and Moree, more than 500 children in these communities are actually supported directly to participate in the program.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Jones, do you have any data on the differential between the proportion of First Nations kids who have had vouchers created as against non-First Nations kids?

Ms JONES: I can take that on notice. Yes, we do have that data.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Does it also include vouchers proclaimed or redeemed?

Ms JONES: Redeemed, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Could you provide that on notice?

Ms JONES: I will take it on notice. Thank you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You talk about the global number created in regional New South Wales. What is that as a percentage of eligible kids in regional New South Wales?

Ms JONES: Again, I will take that on notice. That is a level of detail that I do not have with me today.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Again, can you give the differential between eligible kids in regional New South Wales as opposed to metro?

Ms JONES: Yes, we can do that. I will take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Again, if you could break it down into the vouchers created and vouchers redeemed?

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice, yes. That level of detail I do not have with me.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Jones, you have given more detail than I was hoping for, so I am not complaining.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Go to the top of the class. You are the teacher's pet.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Well, that's—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It is a small hill to climb in this Committee, Ms Jones.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Teacher's pet I would call it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can the vouchers be used for sports camps, Ms Jones?

Ms JONES: The vouchers are for sports programs and they have to be for a continuous period of at least eight weeks.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What is the rationale for excluding sports camps, particularly over the school holidays and the like? This is often an area where parents would see huge value in having a voucher. Why exclude sports camps?

CORRECTED

Ms JONES: The objective of the Active Kids program is to instil good behaviours in children to have physical activity. By instilling those behaviours over a regular period, over a longer duration, has proven to demonstrate that those habits are then carried on hopefully through all of their lives.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Given at best we are getting take-ups of vouchers across the State in the order of 32 per cent in terms of the eligible population, don't you think it would make sense to expand the criteria, to expand the reach of the program to include, if nothing else, sports camps—you know, having kids go to an athletics camp over the school hols, or having kids go to a tennis camp over the school hols, rather than potentially sitting on the sofa with their device?

Ms JONES: The actual parameters of the program have been in place now for at least three years and have actually demonstrated through the evaluation of the program that it is quite successful in terms of improving the physical activity levels of school-aged children and also the habits that they are creating, to carry on with that physical activity through their lives.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: But if you are only getting to 32 per cent of the eligible population—it may work for that 32 per cent. What about the 68 per cent that have not been touched? And it is more than that if you account for vouchers redeemed.

Ms JONES: That 32 per cent that you refer to is something that I will take on notice and qualify for you. I will get you the accurate figure around participation in the program.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: It says, "Population uptake 2021." That is the data. I am just going off the website.

Ms JONES: Okay.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I might ask a couple of questions about the grant to Penrith Panthers. Is this still an Office of Sport initiative? Does it still have carriage of the Western Sydney Community and Conference Centre project, obviously considering it has previously been acknowledged that it contains no actual sporting amenities?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I think you are referring to a 2015 election commitment, is that the one?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The 2015 election commitment was for sports facilities, so I am not really referring to that because we are now talking about something completely different but, yes, that is the money trail.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am advised that the contribution for that project was a matched contribution from the Australian Government funding. The commitment was made to support the local tourism and entertainment economy and to support the construction of a stadia facility that would benefit the local community. The conference centre would feature floor space and be equipped to host large events, trade shows and exhibitions. It was originally intended for the centre to include indoor facilities for sport. However, these were removed from the scope in 2017. In March 2020 responsibility for the administration of the 2000 election commitment to the Western Sydney Community and Conference Centre was transferred from the Minister for Sport to the Minister for Housing and Property. The funding agreement for the Penrith Panthers is being managed by Housing and Property. I will ask Mr Coutts-Trotter to add anything.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Only that, from memory, that transfer happened on 27 March, so quite soon after estimates that year. Housing and Property have taken it on and have been managing the contractual arrangements since then.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: In terms of how much money has been paid so far and other details of where that expenditure is up to, that is no longer something for which you are responsible?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: No, it is housing and property within the DPIE cluster.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I just add, Ms Jackson, in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* dated 11 March 2020, it was stated that the Opposition had referred these matters to the Independent Commission Against Corruption. Therefore, it is probably not appropriate to undertake further review of the documentation relating to these matters because it has been referred.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is it being investigated by ICAC?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I do not know.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Then that is hardly an answer.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am just saying what the current state is.

CORRECTED

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The fact that it has been referred does not mean that it is being investigated.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Take a point of order if we are going to get into a conversation about it, because it is not even your time, is it?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Has the Office of Sport transferred money to DPIE for the purposes of them continuing the management of the project?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I will take that on notice, unless Ms Jones—

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I do not have an answer, I am just looking to my colleague, Ms Jones.

Ms JONES: Yes, with the actual transfer of the funding agreement over to housing and property, the funds were also transferred across.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Twelve million dollars?

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, whilst we do not have the exact figure of how much money was transferred, does it concern you that funds—millions of dollars, presumably—were transferred from the Office of Sport to DPIE for the delivery of a project that has nothing to do with sport, as opposed to that money being used by the Office of Sport to deliver sporting facilities?

Dr GEOFF LEE: My view is that during election times such as 2015, election commitments are made. They are funded from Treasury and those funds go to the most appropriate area. When the most appropriate area was Property to look after it, they got the money.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The funding commitment in 2015 was, as you say, a budgetary allocation to the Office of Sport for the delivery of sporting facilities.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I would say to you that it is an election commitment. That scope had been changed in concert with the Federal Government's co-contribution and it is most appropriate for Property to manage that fund and that is why we put it over there. It does not matter where that money—it is all ratepayers' money. It is all taxpayers' money from New South Wales.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It is a broken election promise, though, isn't it? Because the promise was for the Office of Sport to deliver a sporting facility at Penrith Panthers and that is not what has happened. So it is a broken promise, isn't it?

Dr GEOFF LEE: That was before my time, the change in the scope of the project. But I am advised that in concert with the Federal Government the scope was changed, and according to the stakeholders and before my time. I had nothing to do with that. I simply came into the portfolio and then said it was best managed by Property because it was an election commitment based around features of that, not the Office of Sport.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I would agree with you, Minister, that the decision to transfer the project to DPIE, considering its subsequent scope, was probably the right one. It was not appropriate for the Office of Sport to be managing the delivery of a project that had nothing to do with sport. What I am saying is, does it concern you that all of that money was taken out of the Office of Sport so that they were more limited in delivering their sporting facilities to deliver a project that was never part of the election commitment?

Dr GEOFF LEE: As I said, it was an election commitment in 2015. Election commitments are funded from the Treasury. That scope changed way before my time that I was Acting Minister in those days. That scope was changed and it was deemed to be that the right agency was Property NSW to manage those contractual obligations with the Penrith Panthers.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Who is undertaking the business cases for the suburban stadiums? Is that you, Mr Draper, at Infrastructure NSW?

Mr DRAPER: We are not responsible for that one.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Who is responsible for the business case?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The Office of Sport has responsibility for those three business cases.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do you have a time line on those, Ms Jones?

Ms JONES: We are actually in the process of preparing the business cases now. In fact, we are in the consultation stage. We are hoping to present those business cases to the Government in the middle of this year.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: With regards to your opening statement, Anzac Day is arguably the most important day on our nation's calendar, and I agree, Minister. The question is, is the Government providing additional funds to help RSL sub branches organise and host Anzac Day services and marches?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I say that the sub branches are largely responsible for their own individual commemorations, services and marches themselves. We as a whole of government offer our help to facilitate those, whether it is through the police or advice in terms of how to set up and effectively run them safely, especially during COVID safety time. One of the most important clearly is in Parramatta but there is one at the cenotaph which is the largest publicly available one. Certainly RSL NSW is the custodian of that commemoration and march, and that is coordinated and supported by the Department of Premier and Cabinet and also the Office of Veterans Affairs, together with City of Sydney. So we provide support in terms of how we actually set it up and run it to make it happen.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I take it from that, there is no allocation of funds.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: How can the Government leave RSL sub branches in the lurch, Minister, when you just said that it is arguably the most important day on our nation's calendar. Yet, in the current problems with the pandemic and dealing with this problem, you do not allocate a cent toward those particular services.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Certainly I would still agree with you that it is one of the most important, if not the most important, days on our national calendar. Can I say that certainly we are working with RSL NSW in terms of the cenotaph and the march in Martin Place and providing every assistance through Health and through DPC in the organisation and the support for that event, but it is certainly under the custodianship of RSL NSW. The primary responsibility for veterans is a Federal Government primary responsibility. Can I say that the budget is not huge for our Office for Veterans Affairs and that we often raise challenges of the cost shift down from Federal Government to State Government. Whilst we do work very well with the Federal Government and Darren Chester—we must commend him for his work, his openness and his frankness—the responsibility to veterans is primarily a Federal Government responsibility. We are doing what we can to do everything that we can to support those, but I will ask Ms Mackaness to elaborate on the work that the RSL and the sub-branches do in terms of support for Anzac Day.

Ms MACKANESS: Thank you, Minister. Where we do support the community really strongly is through our community war memorial grant program. Clearly all the commemorations around the State happen at those very special locations. We do work really collaboratively with communities across the State to make sure that they are in good order. We do provide some funding to make accessibility and so forth. We work very closely with the Commonwealth; there has been a large communications campaign. There is a ministerial council, which is now a task force, and there is a Commonwealth, State and Territory committee. That committee has a group that looks at communications around Anzac Day. Where we do support incredibly is the communications; so, the driveway program and—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: But there is no funding for Anzac Day services allocated now?

Ms MACKANESS: Generally they have been managed locally across the State by the community, by the local government, and the RSL branches and local police working in combination to deliver those events. I acknowledge that during COVID it is a particular difficulty for them to manage those COVID-safe arrangements, but I am really confident with the way New South Wales is going that there will be a lot of services managed.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Have they asked for help? Have they asked for funding? Have they communicated either to you, Minister, or perhaps through you, Ms Mackaness, that the cost of compliance is something that they are struggling with and they would like support?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am not aware of any direct approaches to funding an Anzac Day service this year, nor last year, because we cancelled them. I mean, RSL cancelled them; we supported their decision. Ms Mackaness, you may be aware of any approaches.

Ms MACKANESS: There have been no approaches to me, and we are very in tune with the community; we take calls directly all the time from sub-Branches, supporting them with their various grant applications. So, no, we have not. I am aware that the sub-Branches are contacting RSL's State office and that they are under a lot of pressure to support and help all the sub-Branches deliver appropriately. They have actually called out the younger veterans to step in and help because a large part of it is a logistics exercise to ensure that the community can participate.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: But you, Minister, did not stand up, extend a hand and, given the current circumstances, say, "Here's some funding towards Anzac Day services in these current tough times", did you?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Not in those words, but certainly we are working very closely with RSL NSW and we have already started communicating with the sub-branches. In fact, we have communicated with every single sub-branch already. We are starting to look at preparations and reaching out to them and saying, "What can we do to help?" Perhaps our biggest help is not monetary; it is actually navigating the health system and making sure we have COVID safety plans and compliance with the latest health orders. That is appropriate. But we certainly work very closely with RSL NSW, Ray James and Jon Black at looking at what we can do for RSL sub-branches right throughout New South Wales.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I put it to you, Minister, that when you said "arguably the most important day on our nation's calendar" it was merely lip-service, was it not?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What backup did you provide the sub-branches in support of their Anzac Day services?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, this is just the start of the communications program with it. Even this week I have been talking to RSL NSW about the commemoration and the march. Last week I understand—and I was not able to attend for personal reasons—the Health Minister and Richard Broome had a meeting with Ray James. I think Jon Black was there and my agency was there, and Health was there to look at facilitating the commemorations at the cenotaph here in Martin Place, and the march. Health actually offered to reach out and do everything possible.

Can I say, it is more than the Office for Veterans Affairs. It is also the police that provide valuable support—and members of the community, as well as our ex-service persons' associations right through the State. We have already started that process with every sub-branch. We have contacted every sub-branch, saying, "Be prepared for these certain factors that you will have to look out for." As updates occur and as we get to the final date—25 March, obviously—we will continue to support them in any way that we are able to.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Did you say 25 March?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Before I hand over to my colleague, if you get requests for financial support, will you consider them?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Sorry, are we talking about the same Anzac Day? Did you say 25 March?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Sorry, 25 April. That is my birthday. Apologies. If I could correct the record and say "25 April".

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Apart from your birthday, Minister, if sub-branches of RSLs approach you for some financial assistance, would you consider their applications?

The CHAIR: There is a facepalm moment.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Of course, we will do anything that we can. But, as I said, money is limited in that portfolio and that agency.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Mather, we had a brief discussion in your absence about the business case for the suburban stadiums policy, which I understand is being managed by the Office of Sport. Is Venues NSW involved in that? Have you provided any direct or indirect written briefings to the Office of Sport in the development of those business cases?

Ms MATHER: Thank you, Ms Jackson. As you say, the Office of Sport is actually running the investigation and they will be doing the work associated with the feasibility assessment. I understand we will have the opportunity to consult as part of that process. That has not occurred as yet, but we will be considered as part of that process.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: When the Office of Sport initiates that conversation, is that something—have you at Venues NSW been preparing a brief or a submission or an opinion in relation to that?

Ms MATHER: Not at this stage. That will be part of the consultation process.

CORRECTED

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Jones, I appreciate that the time frame is not formal, but did you have any update on when that consultation might occur or when that part of the process might occur?

Ms JONES: Yes. Like I mentioned before, we are in the middle of the consultation process now. I do not have the consultation schedule in front of me, but I would assume that Venues NSW will be consulted in the coming weeks.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Okay. I just wanted to ask, Minister, about the reducing social isolation grants. The Combatting Social Isolation for Seniors during COVID-19 grants program was \$600,000. Is that correct?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Let me just turn to my notes so I can give you the exact figure.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I understand Minister Anderson, who was the acting acting senior Minister, announced a new round recently.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Actually, there can only be one "Acting". I get taken off and he gets put on; I have learned that since then. Can I say that social isolation for our seniors was identified early on in our discussions with stakeholders and our community leaders. What we did was created an innovative way to combat that social isolation—including my parents, who I asked not to go out, even though they think they could have gone out. We fought with them about that one. Certainly I launched a combatting social isolation grants program. I am advised that the \$700,000 grant program ended up supporting 24 recipients who identified projects that supported seniors to stay connected, including a telephone service, Staying Connected and Keeping Busy, by Cobar council, and the Grow Together program, which connects seniors through online gardening.

Separate to the grants program, I was also proud to support Australia's Biggest Online Seniors Workout. It was very exciting there at Gordon. This is an innovative event we ran in collaboration with the Active Seniors Health Centre. I am pleased to report that over 6,000 people participated. It is amazing what they can do over Zoom to do the demonstration of those innovative ways to keep fit and active and flexible. Also, through the NSW Seniors Card, in partnership with the RSPCA—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Point of order: I asked a specific question about how much funding was available—

Dr GEOFF LEE: It is \$700,000.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: —for a specific grant and also my time has expired.

Dr GEOFF LEE: It is \$700,000, Ms Jackson.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you. Do you have questions?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I do. I was just waiting for the Minister to take a breath. First of all, Ms Jones, I think I put to you that there had been a 32 per cent uptake of vouchers. I think that was only this year's uptake to date. I think a fairer reflection—when I went back and looked at the website for the last two years—is it is about 68 and 67 per cent in terms of the uptake for vouchers. I thought I should not leave the 32 per cent unaddressed on the transcript.

Ms JONES: Thank you.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Perhaps if you could give the actual uptake—the redemption rates for the last few years—that would be helpful.

Ms JONES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, there has been a persistent gender bias towards boys in terms of the uptake of the voucher program throughout the course of the program. The last few years it has been stubbornly at about 53 per cent for boys' sports and 47 per cent for girls' sports. What are you doing to address that?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Certainly one of our Government priorities is the Her Sport Her Way strategy, looking at everything we can do to encourage participation of women and girls in sporting activities. I think you will find that it is a persistent issue. I agree with you. Evidence, that I have seen anyway, suggests that young women of 12, 13 and 14—Karen Jones is obviously more an expert in this area—decide to drop out of sporting activities for various reasons in terms of their participation. I do not want to reiterate all the programs that we use to support females in sport, but I would ask Ms Jones if she has a comment about what could be done. Certainly we have identified the need to increase female participation, at all levels.

CORRECTED

Ms JONES: Thank you, Minister. As you might know, Mr Shoebridge, the Office of Sport has the Her Sport Her Way strategy, which targets women and girls in sport and particularly seeks to grow their participation in sport. That strategy is based on a raft of evidence that we have gathered around women's and girls' participation in sport. I think it is well reported that particularly engaging teenage girls in sporting activities ongoing is a challenge and it is a historic challenge. The Active Kids program is making some headway into that space.

However, under Her Sport Her Way we do have a number of initiatives and a number of actions that target women's and girls' participation in sport and seeks to grow that. I point you towards the year two action plan that we currently have this year that builds upon not only the achievements of the year one action plan but also a strong focus on supporting leaders and enabling participation opportunities for women and girls. We also have a number of leadership programs available also for women and girls in trying to inspire them and encourage them to participate in sport.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Just on the voucher uptake, there has been a persistent differential. It has actually got marginally worse between 2019 and now. It was at about—the figures say 48 to 52 in 2019, and then it went down to 47 to 53 last year, and it is still at 47 to 53 this year. Despite those projects that you talk about in terms of the voucher programs, it has got marginally worse.

Ms JONES: And that could be due to a multiple of factors, including COVID-19.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Did COVID-19 delay the rollout of the Her Sport Her Way strategy?

Ms JONES: No, it did not.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Do you have a target date for when you are going to have parity on the voucher program?

Ms JONES: No, we do not, but I will take that on notice.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The final page of your Her Sport Her Way document shows an ongoing and persistent gap between girls participating in, I think, three sporting or sports-like like events a week compared to boys. There does not seem to be a target for when you are going to bridge that gap. Is that right?

Ms JONES: The overall objective of Her Sport Her Way is to encourage the growing participation of women and girls in sport, and we do that via all the different focus areas and pillars through that program. I will take on board what you are saying around that ongoing gap and take that—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: What about the absence of a target?

Ms JONES: Again, I will take that as well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, do you think if you are going to try to achieve something that a good way of starting is having a target?

Dr GEOFF LEE: We are absolutely committed to doing everything we possibly can. I am happy to take that on notice as the—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You will take on notice whether having a target is useful? Is that what you are doing?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No, I am just saying that we have said we will take it on notice in terms of the target, but I am pleased to say that this Government—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There is no target.

Dr GEOFF LEE: —is totally committed to increasing the participation of women and girls in sport.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Ms Jones, is there a target?

Ms JONES: There is no target but, as I said before, Her Sport Her Way is a research-based strategy. So I will look into the fact as to whether or not a target was actually canvassed as part of that research and I can provide you that information.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So, Minister, please do not take on notice whether there is a target or not; that was not helpful. Because there is no target.

Dr GEOFF LEE: My apologies.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: You have heard that twice now from Ms Jones.

CORRECTED

Dr GEOFF LEE: My apologies, Mr Shoebridge. I would not want to delay you.

Ms JONES: Can I just say that the overall aim of the strategy, though, is to get more women and girls participating, not just a target.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: All right. Ms Jones, I think it would be really helpful if we got an answer about what, if any, consideration was taken for targets and why they are not part of the strategy.

Ms JONES: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Perhaps you might take on notice any reflections on why, despite Her Sport Her Way being into its second year, the data has degraded slightly in terms of the vouchers.

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: To you, Minister, but it may be through you to Mr La Posta. I will ask you first: Are you aware of the rising number of attacks, particularly against the Sikh community in Western Sydney but also against other minority groups among the Indian diaspora?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Absolutely. Can I say, that being a multicultural society—one of our strengths, as I always say, is being a multicultural society. The Indians and the Indian subcontinent make up a valuable part of that community. Whilst we are a harmonious and cohesive community, there are difficulties from time to time, and I certainly condemn any attacks on anyone, including the Indian community, whether they are Sikhs or Hindus or any religion, or any part of the community. So let me—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Have you had any reports on people being attacked because they are identified as part of the Hindu community?

Dr GEOFF LEE: If you will allow me to finish. I take this very seriously. We have spent significant amounts of time—and I will ask Mr La Posta to outline what we are doing at the moment in terms of overseas problems that have permeated into New South Wales. Whilst they are relatively small in terms of how many Indian migrants we have, they are troubling and, as I said, we do condemn any attacks for any reason—any racism or hatred or violence against our fellow citizens. I am certainly pleased that I have met with the different community members in different meetings about that. We take this very seriously. Most recently, we have had a statement to say that we are working with a number of community groups to make sure that we continue our community harmony and address these issues up-front. Can I congratulate the Australian Council of Hindu Clergy; the Australian-Indian Sports, Educational and Cultural Society; Federation of Indian Associations of NSW; the Hindu Council of Australia; the Indo-Australia Hindi school; and—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you reading the names from the joint statement, Minister?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes, the joint statement.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Why do you not just table the joint statement?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I do not have—unless Mr La Posta has the joint statement in front?

Mr LA POSTA: I do not have a copy with me.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We can table it throughout the course of the day. That would be quicker.

Dr GEOFF LEE: We can table it. What we want to do is get everybody together, government agencies, but I will ask Mr La Posta to say what we—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, but before we go to Mr La Posta could you answer the question: Are you aware of the rising number of attacks?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Alright, yes.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Point of order—

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am just saying it is an important issue that we are looking very carefully at—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I understand.

Dr GEOFF LEE: —and that we have worked with a whole heap of different agencies, including community groups, and we understand those pressures.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister. I appreciate the answer is yes, and I am more than happy for Mr La Posta to add some detail.

CORRECTED

Mr LA POSTA: Thanks, Mr Shoebridge. This is, unfortunately, an escalating issue, and we are doing our best to de-escalate the issue in a domestic context in Australia. In some respects it is not a new issue—the tensions between the two communities—but it is being escalated at the moment because of the domestic legislation reform happening in India at the moment.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And the farmers' strike, Mr La Posta.

Mr LA POSTA: There is nothing I am not going to answer today, Mr Shoebridge, in terms of giving you honesty. The thing for us—there are probably two things. It is certainly playing out in the media at the moment and being widely discussed, but the Minister and I held a forum back in October with a wide range of leaders from both Sikh and Hindu communities to call for peace, for calm, and that was off the back of an attack that happened in Harris Park, where a young Sikh man was attacked. Off the back of that meeting—we brought the police along to that meeting and the police affirmed that charges were laid and, obviously, we are hopeful—with regard to any convictions or any of those sorts of things, that is a matter for police—that we were able to bring those communities together. In recent times—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are you talking about that incident in October last year in Harris Park, Mr La Posta?

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Just let him finish.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Is that the attack you are talking about?

Mr LA POSTA: That was the start of the violence in a New South Wales context, yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I understand, yes.

Mr LA POSTA: With regard to the most recent protests happening with Indian nationalists, with the Sikh community feeling quite vulnerable at the moment, as you know, and protests in places such as Blacktown and others over the weekend near temples et cetera, Gurdwara, we brought the Indian community in about a week ago—again, leaders from both Sikh and Hindu communities—and leaders from the broader Indian community, remembering that there is not just two religions in India. It is one of the most diverse countries in the world. We called and we helped facilitate with those community leaders a joint statement. Nine of the 11 groups that were part of that did sign the statement. We continue to work with the groups. As late as last night I was on the phone trying to work with our friends and leaders within the Sikh community to try to bring them in because we see that statement as an important first step with regard to community relations and social cohesion; certainly, not the end outcome.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The two organisations that did not sign it because, as I understand it, they did not believe it reflected the seriousness of the concern and the particular violence directed around their communities—which organisations were they, Mr La Posta?

Mr LA POSTA: The Australian Sikh Association and Turbans 4 Australia, Mr Shoebridge.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: The reason the Sikh community, in particular, are raising the issues is because they know they are very visible on the streets. Their kids, their young men, in particular, but their community is, therefore, more easily targeted because they are more visible on the streets, Mr La Posta. Do you agree?

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Shoebridge, there is a common theme. Right now we are talking about the Sikh community, but I would say any community that has visible differences—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Correct.

Mr LA POSTA: Islamic community, Sikh community, anyone that has a visible difference—at times is prone to these sorts of targets. That is why it is the role of our agency and our Minister to roll up our sleeves and work with them collaboratively, which is what we are doing, Mr Shoebridge.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Alright. Minister, are you aware of the most recent attack that I have heard of, which was again at Harris Park—

Dr GEOFF LEE: On Saturday night?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: And again as recently as Sunday night, where four young men from the Sikh community were celebrating the fact they got a new car, and then it was smashed. They were stopped on the street and it was smashed. They were identified in the course of the assault, I understand—the assailants identified the reason they were smashing was because of the occupants being from the Sikh community, and it came from a far-right extremist political position.

CORRECTED

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes, I am aware of that, Mr Shoebridge. I must just reiterate our rejection of any extremism, the right, the left, whatever it is—any violence within our community—and rest assured we are doing what we can in terms of addressing the situation. Any extremism, whether it is overseas or not and permeates into New South Wales, we are addressing. Can I ask Mr La Posta—firstly, they did give me a copy of the joint statement if you would like me to table it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Happy to table it.

Dr GEOFF LEE: It is not the signed one, but it carries the same wording. I am certainly happy for—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Even I will believe that it is the right one if you are tabling it.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Thank you, Mr Shoebridge—an astute member of the panel.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Are you all right?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Can I ask Mr La Posta to talk about that specific incident?

Mr LA POSTA: Minister—

The CHAIR: Overworked, overworked.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: He has calmed down now.

The CHAIR: This campaigning thing is hard.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Shoebridge, you made a reference then that I am not sure is helpful nor accurate with regards to far-right extremism and a far-right attack.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Alright, well, do you see—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Can you let him finish, David?

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I thought you had finished, Joseph. Mr La Posta?

Mr LA POSTA: I think it is really important right now that we get and ascertain the facts in a really accurate, pragmatic and well-considered way. We are hearing a large range of divergent views on this issue at the moment, and I had this precise conversation that I am having with you right now with one of the leaders in the community last night, and even one of our ambassadors who plays a pivotal role in helping our agency combat racism and online hate. We need to let the police do their work with regard to investigating this attack. That is the first thing. The police are taking this matter very seriously by virtue of the fact that in all of our recent engagements with the Indian community, I have an assistant commissioner sitting next to me, who is the multicultural champion on this. With regard to charges, the specifics of the assault, the undertaking of their investigation, all of those things are matters for the police.

With respect to who perpetrated the attack and the motives behind the attack, we still need to let the police get to the bottom of that, and we will work with the police to try to make sure that their approach is as proactive as possible to get to the bottom of that. But I am not sure a narrative around extremist views right now—far right or, potentially, what other members of other areas of the Hindu community are trying to do, which is make it a separatist issue—are necessarily helpful right now in a domestic context. I guess, in a sense, I call for calm, and I do not think that sort of inflammatory language, with the specifics of this issue that is playing out, is necessarily helpful.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Well, Mr La Posta, I have not seen a single report of a violent act coming from any other part of the political spectrum from the Indian community, other than the extremist right-wing Hindu nationalist part of the community. Have you got any other incidents that you can report?

Mr LA POSTA: But, Mr Shoebridge, with all due respect, I am not sure how you can say that it was that exact person that perpetrated the attack on Sunday night, unless you are privy to facts that I am not in my work with the police.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: We have had Sikh temples—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Let him answer, David.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Sorry, you can finish, Mr La Posta. I accept that.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: This is serious shit.

CORRECTED

Mr LA POSTA: It is really important. And, again, I am happy to work collaboratively, with the Minister's blessing, with any of our members of Parliament to try to de-escalate this and make sure that this situation does not become uglier in this context.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I think Mr La Posta is right in the sense that it is wrong to jump to conclusions at the moment, and we do not want to vilify any particular group at the moment. We are in dialogue with all different community members, and it would be wrong to classify until the police do their investigations and we have come up with the evidence to base our decisions on. But, certainly, I am going to continue to be the champion of cohesion and harmony in the community, like we have been for the past 18 months.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes, but sometimes being the champion of harmony in the community involves naming and calling out extremist elements that are tearing down that harmony in the community. General platitudes may not be the best response if the violence and the aggression is coming from a known source, Minister. Do you accept that?

Dr GEOFF LEE: No. I will accept that—as you know, Mr Shoebridge, I am more than happy to call out anybody who does the wrong thing. I am saying we have to be careful, we have to gather the evidence. The police are doing the investigation at the moment, and it would be wrong to jump to a conclusion. I meet with the community regularly. Joseph is taking a very active and personal interest, and I thank him and his agency for working very closely with the police.

Mr LA POSTA: That is my job.

Dr GEOFF LEE: Well, you take a personal interest in looking at it. We have discussed it this week even. Yesterday was the last time we discussed it—how we actually help de-escalate the situation—because we do not want to vilify. Part of the process is not to unsettle the community. Part of the process is to show that we are all Australians and we all have the same values, but we also should be proud of our heritage.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Minister, does Multiculturalism NSW have any oversight of the fact that one far-right Hindu extremist organisation called Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which is designated as a militant extremist religious organisation in the Central Intelligence Agency's *The World Factbook*, is providing scripture instruction in New South Wales public schools? Do you have any role in vetting that or speaking with the education department and reviewing who is providing scripture lessons in New South Wales public schools?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I think the provision of scripture in the public school system is a matter for the Department of Education and the appropriate Minister, Sarah Mitchell. I do not—

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I asked this of Minister Mitchell yesterday, and I got an answer from Mr Scott, where he said—I will just read it, if you will bear with me—in relation to this:

The NSW Department of Education has close connections with the NSW Police Force. We have police officers who work with us. We are informed by them that the organisation that you have spoken of today is not identified as a terrorist organisation or a terrorist organisation in New South Wales. They are not known as an organisation of concern in New South Wales. Where New South Wales police are aware of any concerns regarding any group or organisation known to be in our schools, they advise us immediately.

Is it true that there is no reference to Multicultural NSW? The test for scripture is whether or not they are prescribed as a terrorist organisation by New South Wales police with no input from Multicultural NSW?

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Shoebridge, I have no line of sight over this, so I am happy to take it on notice. What I am also happy to do is stand up Community Resilience and Response Plan [COMPLAN], which we have already done specific to the earlier issue you raised, which involves the Department of Education, the New South Wales police, Anti-Discrimination Board, colleagues right across the Government, and the Office of Community Safety and Cohesion, which Mr Coutts-Trotter oversees. I will stand up that group and look into whether there are elements of these sorts of divisive angles with regard to scripture or any of those organisations that you referenced and whether that is permeating our Department of Education. It is our responsibility to inform our Government colleagues if there is any of that sort of activity being undertaken that we are aware of.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Just for the record, I appreciate how sensitive this is and I appreciate that there need to be steps working across the community. I am not pushing back against what you are putting to me, Mr La Posta.

Mr LA POSTA: Thank you. I appreciate that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can I ask you what, if anything, is being done by your office, Minister or Mr La Posta, to deal with neo-Nazis and neo-Nazi extremists. Is that on your radar? What, if any, work are you doing in that space?

CORRECTED

Mr LA POSTA: Of course extremism is on our radar. Of course we are very mindful of the research and the reporting that is showing it. Of course we work incredibly closely with colleagues in a Federal-State context to try to think about what role our agency can play to address these things and potentially address them. We have to be careful in terms of what our role and remit is. It is not a law-enforcement agency; it is an agency that is about proactively thinking about how to make our community organisations stronger and avoid opportunities for people to fracture our community and push agendas. There was no greater example in terms of people trying to push agendas than the COVID-19 pandemic. I am incredibly proud of the fact that, in spite of that pandemic, by and large, New South Wales demonstrated that it was a strong, cohesive and connected society.

With regard to the specifics on extremist views, absolutely, we work on and are very well advised on all different areas of extremism. It is our responsibility to stay abreast of those issues and think about how as a Government we can proactively implement measures that can help. With regard to those sorts of organisations that are identified as either terrorist or extremist organisations, that is a matter for the CVE Minister. We obviously work incredibly closely across the CVE Minister, police Minister and our Minister for community relations and multiculturalism.

Dr GEOFF LEE: I lend my support, as I said before, that I condemn any forms of racism, discrimination or prejudices. Can I say we are not just reactive in terms of standing up COMPLAN and looking at whole-of-government agencies, working together to address issues of any extremism, but certainly our proactive compact we are continuing to deliver. It is our flagship community partnership in action. I am proud to say that in July last year I announced a further \$3 million of funding to boost the program. I will ask Mr La Posta to tell about some of the research that has shown that it is actually working in the community, with something like 40,000 schoolkids alone being influenced by grassroots community-led organisations that work within the community to tackle social cohesion and harmony, and enhance it.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: My question was really about neo-Nazis and far-right extremism more generally. I know, if they are a prescribed terrorism organisation, the police handles it. But it is that grey area and organisations that are on the fringe of that, and conduct in the community such as we saw just very recently. There was a mannequin in a Westfield in Sydney, which had a whole lot of Nazi symbols on it, only a couple of days ago. What is your role in that sort of grey area, not quite a prescribed terrorist organisation but deeply troubling right-wing extremists?

Mr LA POSTA: You are right. A clear majority of Australians support multiculturalism, and that is positive. We have to continue to empower that group of people to make that percentage of people, which is, I think, in excess of 85 per cent, larger and stronger. With regard to the fringe elements, absolutely, we need to stand up against them. We need to unite. It is not a political issue, it is a bipartisan issue across all different organisations. We need to stand against any of those organisations that perpetrate hate, violence or seek to erode—remembering that the terminology that you are referencing is fundamentally an undemocratic terminology. It goes against the very fabric of our democratic society in Australia. So we have to stand up against all of those different forces. Our agency has a proactive role to obviously call it out, to work with our colleagues across the various different arms of government and to obviously listen to the feedback from the community.

I think the issue that you raised before is an important one. We are taking that feedback from the community very seriously, to understand if they are the motives that are behind it, no different from some of the other issues. Am I across the issues, what happened in Halls Gap and what is playing out in Victoria? Absolutely. Am I across all of those issues? Absolutely. Do we need to make sure that we provide a commensurate response and, as the Minister said, a timely response at the right time? Absolutely. Is condemning it enough? No. We need to condemn it and think about policies, initiatives and proactive measures to try to break down some of those areas. That is not just a State responsibility, that is a societal responsibility, and in close partnership with the Federal police and our Federal Government agencies as well.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Minister, just before my colleague Mr Shoebridge was asking questions, we were talking about the Combatting Social Isolation for Seniors during COVID-19 grants, \$700,000, including the money for the Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing. This was a repurposing of the original Seniors Staying Social grants program that existed prior to COVID-19, was it not.

Dr GEOFF LEE: To my understanding, yes, it was.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: There was a \$600,000 program prior to COVID-19 for Seniors Staying Social, and it was repurposed as a Combatting Social Isolation for Seniors during COVID-19 grant program. Do you not think that social isolation was a greater problem as a result of COVID-19 and may have required some additional investment than the money that you had already committed to the issue prior to the pandemic hitting?

Dr GEOFF LEE: I am sorry. What was the question?

CORRECTED

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do you not think that social isolation among seniors was a greater problem as a result of the pandemic?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Yes, I do. I think all reports from all our community groups, all the evidence we have heard—I will ask Mr Coutts-Trotter to talk about it—certainly, COVID-19 asking for elderly people to stay home and only go out for essential purposes caused significant issues within the community. So I agree with you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Why then was additional funding not provided? The \$600,000 was identified as an adequate response prior to the pandemic—Seniors Staying Social. Exactly the same amount of money was given a different title. But you have just acknowledged that it was actually a much bigger problem.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Actually, the total value of the grants approved by the Minister to combat social isolation for seniors was a bit over \$700,000, so it is more than \$600,000. The process for pulling that together took place. I think the call for proposals was during April. Recommendations went to the Minister in May, and were endorsed by the Minister pretty swiftly. I am happy to talk to you about the process of grant assessment if that is of interest. There was additional funding put to it. But the key thing was to respond quickly as well.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Was the additional funding \$100,000 that was reallocated from the NSW Ministerial Advisory Council on Ageing?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do you think that is adequate, Minister? You have had this massive global pandemic that has particularly impacted—as you said, your own parents—so many elderly people and the only additional money you have put towards that huge challenge was \$100,000. Is that adequate?

Dr GEOFF LEE: Look, no, I think that is unfair in its characterisation of our commitment to our seniors. There were many other programs such as—Mr La Posta, I will ask you to explain the multicultural ones we did with our seniors. There are other whole-of-government programs.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: As I am sure Ms Jackson remembers, for example, we have tens of thousands of seniors living in public and social housing and within the public housing portfolio. At Minister Ward's direction, we began a process of making contact with those people, starting with those over the age of 80 and then working through. In the course of that program we spoke directly with tens of thousands of older people living in public housing communities around New South Wales. So there are a whole range of efforts from the Government to try to make contact—to check in on people, make sure they have some kind of social connection, that they were not isolated. So this is an important part of that response, but only a part of the response.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: I think it is wrong to have Mr Draper here and not ask about the Sydney Football Stadium.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I asked Mr Draper a question and he answered, "no".

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can we at least get an update from Mr Draper about the cost to date of the Sydney Football Stadium—whether it is on budget and when it will be completed? It seems wrong not to have that information on the record.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Point of order: The Committee sits to 12.30 p.m. Public servants are back this afternoon, although I would love if we said a half-hour and we could knock this whole thing over. Be that as it may, I think, otherwise, we are here this afternoon—

Mr DRAPER: I should say I will not be here this afternoon.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: No, Mr Draper is at a funeral.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Right, okay.

The CHAIR: Mr Draper, do you have an answer?

Mr DRAPER: I think Mr Shoebridge is after a general update of where it is at. It is going very well; it is on time and on budget, I am pleased to say. I have a spend to date of up to 4 January, so it is little bit behind, but up to that date we have spent \$324 million on the project. There are about 600 people on site and you can see that most of the civil works on the site are completed and the structure is—you can properly see if you go to the area—emerging. A lot of the roofing materials have been delivered to site—the structural steel et cetera. So it is progressing really quite well.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So \$324 million to date and it is still on track. What is the budget that it is on track to hit?

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Mr DRAPER: The budget is \$828 million overall. That includes stage one as well as stage two.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When is it proposed that it will be completed? What is the date?

Mr DRAPER: The end of July 2022 is the date we have with the contractors. We are still travelling pretty well against that date.

The CHAIR: Thank you very much. Are there Government questions?

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: None.

The CHAIR: On that basis, we will conclude and resume at 2.00 p.m.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

The CHAIR: We might get started again.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thanks everyone for returning this afternoon. Ms Mather, I might start with you. I asked a couple of questions before lunch about Venues NSW's engagement with the suburban stadiums policy. In developing a bit of a framework for responding to the Office of Sport feasibility study process have you given any thought to the impact of stadium disruption? Has that been a factor that Venues NSW has been considering?

Ms MATHER: Thank you, Ms Jackson. It is very early days in terms of the feasibility. Really the first stage of the consultation process will be an interview. I am committed to an interview—I cannot remember when it is but it is in the coming weeks. That will be the first stage, which will inform our discussions and engagement, but we are certainly available to contribute in any form to the assessment.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So it is not that the issues around stadium disruption have or have not actively been considered; it is just that that is down the track, is it?

Ms MATHER: Yes, that is right.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Who managed the appointments to the new Venues NSW board?

Ms MATHER: The Minister.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Board member Todd Greenberg has recently been appointed CEO of the Australian Cricketers' Association, who obviously work very closely with Cricket Australia and Cricket NSW. They are also primary hirers of Venues NSW property. Have any concerns been raised about conflict of interest in relation to that?

Ms MATHER: Not that I am aware of, but any matters of governance are really dealt with by the chairman and the board.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I think you just answered my next question. In terms of assessing potential conflicts of interest, that is the chairman of the board's role. Is there any kind of independent body or probity process around potential conflicts?

Ms MATHER: Again, matters of governance are really dealt with at board level. There is a process for directors declaring their conflicts or any matters of interest, and where there may be the potential for a conflict of interest or any perceptions around a conflict of interest there is a process for dealing with those in any matters that come before the board.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So there is an existing policy.

Ms MATHER: Exactly.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Has that been signed off by the Minister? Do you know if he has had any engagement with that, or is it just purely managed at the board level?

Ms MATHER: The charter for the board and the governance matters are all signed off by the Minister.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Who is managing the Sydney Cricket Ground [SCG] members' facilities project?

Ms MATHER: Venues NSW.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: What is the budget for that project?

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Ms MATHER: We have just entered into a contract. Following a planning process that went through the same transparent public process that the stadium itself went through, we went through the same process for those stadium club facilities and a contractor was appointed following a process around all of that at the end of last year. The contract is for around \$56 million, but that includes other facilities in addition to that. We are funding those directly—Venues NSW are funding those facilities directly.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: And what are those other facilities?

Ms MATHER: They include some function facilities.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is there a start and finish date of that project? Is that part of the contract?

Ms MATHER: Yes. The construction certificate has just been issued and the facilities are designed to be open in line with its new stadium next year.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The same time frame as Mr Draper gave in relation to the overall stadium project.

Ms MATHER: Exactly.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Was any of the SCG members' facilities project placed on the site of the Sydney Football Stadium [SFS] redevelopment? Did the project that you are managing and overseeing impact or require modification of Infrastructure NSW's SFS redevelopment project?

Ms MATHER: No, they are quite separate. The members' facilities will be in broadly the same area that they were before.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Will that project have any impact on the SCG practice wickets?

Ms MATHER: Not of itself, no. The practice wickets, we are doing some work on those to upgrade those to include new player amenities, dugouts and so on, so we are doing that at the same time.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Just confirming that during the construction of the SCG members' facilities there is no limit on the operation of the practice wickets as a result of that project—it is quite a separate—

Ms MATHER: It is a separate project, but we are doing some work on the practice wickets at the moment so that they are open in time for the Ashes at the end of this year. This is something that we have been working on with Cricket Australia and Cricket NSW and we agreed last year that when we get to the end of this cricket season we would start those works. Those works are underway at the moment and they will be finished in December.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Will they be finished in time for Australia to host the ICC Men's T20 World Cup?

Ms MATHER: They will be finished in time for the Ashes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Obviously there was a previous agreement between the Government and the Australian Rugby League Commission [ARLC] in relation to the grand final at ANZ Stadium, where there was some discussion about that. Was any money actually paid in relation to that agreement?

Ms MATHER: I would have to take that on notice. I do not think so.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I mean obviously the previous policy to redevelop ANZ Stadium—various kind of agreements were come to in relation to how that would be managed, including the location of the grand final.

Ms MATHER: I see what you are asking.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The Government has now obviously changed its policy in relation to ANZ Stadium, so I was wondering, as I said, had the Government already paid money to the ARLC in relation to moving the grand Final. Had any sorts of those exchanges occurred before the Government reversed its policy on ANZ?

Ms MATHER: Sorry, I had not understood where you were getting to. Now I understand. Look, they were separate agreements. As you correctly point out, the Government has actually decided not to progress with the redevelopment of Stadium Australia. In the meantime what has been agreed is that there will be around \$80 million or so of significant spectator enhancements and some critical roof works that were required. That will be done in time to actually meet the women's world cup, which we will be hosting in 2023. But separately there is a long-term memorandum of understanding with the NRL around actually hosting their grand final and State of Origin, and other final series games across the network. There are continuing discussions around that.

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The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Because obviously it was part of those ongoing discussions that the 2020 and 2021 grand finals would need to be moved from Stadium Australia. That was the plan.

Ms MATHER: That is right. They were going to be hosted at the SCG and SFS.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That is right. That has now changed. Just to confirm, are you aware if any money was paid to the ARLC as part of that?

Ms MATHER: No, I am not aware.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: You are not aware? Okay. How much office space does Venues NSW lease and where is that office space?

Ms MATHER: Venues NSW actually has offices at the moment in the Entertainment Quarter [EQ]. It is sort of an office space. I could not tell you the actual square metreage but everybody fits in there. So the newly merged entity has actually come together in that same space. We are all together under the one roof. They are temporary facilities. When the stadium is completed next year, we will move back into Moore Park.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: What is the cost of that temporary office space?

Ms MATHER: The temporary office space at EQ?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes.

Ms MATHER: I would have to take that on notice and come back to you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is it the plan for the entire Venues NSW consolidated admin staff to move back to Moore Park when you can?

Ms MATHER: Yes, that is right.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Are you looking at acquiring any other New South Wales sporting venues, for example, the tennis centre or the aquatic centre at Sydney Olympic Park?

Ms MATHER: No, we are just focused on the eight venues that we have. It is giving us plenty to do.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So there is no preliminary planning work occurring in relation to other acquisitions?

Ms MATHER: No. We are focusing on what we have.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Mr Coutts-Trotter, I wanted to ask you a quick question to clarify something that Minister Lee said this morning.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Right.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: As part of the exchange in relation to him being the acting Minister, he confirmed that in fact he is now not the acting Minister—

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: No. He is the actual Minister.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: He is in fact the Minister. I wanted to confirm that because I had not seen that he has in fact been sworn in officially into these roles or—

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Good question. I do not actually—I cannot confirm that.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: He was. Sarah Mitchell was present.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Oh, okay. Thank you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Okay, so he has been officially sworn in?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you, Mr Khan. I appreciate that. I had missed that, but it is good to have that confirmed. Perhaps this is for you, Ms Jones. I wanted to ask just a couple of quick questions about the NRL Regional Taskforce. It was announced by the Deputy Premier, not Minister Lee. I just wanted to ask where that sits.

Ms JONES: It does not actually sit with the Office of Sport.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: All right. There you go. So are you engaged with that at all? What is your involvement with that?

CORRECTED

Ms JONES: No, we are not.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Ms Jones, would you have an expectation that you would have some engagement with that NRL Regional Taskforce—probably the major sporting code in New South Wales' task force specifically to sort of manage the opportunities of those sporting events in regional New South Wales? Have you asked to be involved?

Ms JONES: A number of government agencies pursue sport initiatives and they always reach out to the Office of Sport and seek our advice. I am sure that when the timing is right the Deputy Premier would do the same.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So it has not happened yet?

Ms JONES: It has not happened yet.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Did the Office of Sport commission Ernst & Young to conduct a report on the financial impact of COVID on State sporting organisations?

Ms JONES: It was not on the financial impact of COVID; it was around the sustainability of the sports sector, how it would respond to COVID-19 and the general impacts to them.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: . How much did that report cost?

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice. I think the report is still ongoing, to be honest, so I will take it on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Just while I am asking questions, were you able to clarify whether that information that I requested earlier— ?

Ms JONES: No, it is still coming. I checked during the lunch break. It is still coming.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: In terms of the Ernst & Young report, you said it is still ongoing. When might a final report be available from them? Do you have a time frame?

Ms JONES: No, I do not have it in front of me. Again, I will take that on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: When it is finished will it be made available to the State sporting organisations? Do you have a plan of how you might engage back with them once you have the final report?

Ms JONES: Depending on the recommendations and whether or not we think that they would be beneficial to the sport sector—anything that is beneficial—then, yes, we would release to them.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: What role did the Office of Sport play in assisting State sporting organisations during the development of the return-to-play protocols?

Ms JONES: The Office of Sport did a lot of things to support the sport sector during the impact of COVID-19. Not only was community sport in particular impacted with the shutdown in March, sport did not actually restart until 1 July. That was quite a significant period. I want to acknowledge that it was predominantly the winter sports that were impacted during that time. Communication was incredibly key for the Office of Sport. We were the conduit between NSW Health and the sport sector. I think the Minister mentioned this morning that there were weekly meetings held online with the sport sector and we often engaged experts from NSW Health to come and communicate direct COVID messaging to them. On top of all of that the Office of Sport also engaged a recovery group. That recovery group included not only Office of Sport professionals but also select representatives from the sport sector as well as the active recreation sector, so representatives including representatives from PCYC and Surf Life Saving NSW, for instance.

Again, we were meeting up fortnightly at the peak of the pandemic. The reason for that was really, again, to gauge the response of the sport sector to COVID-19 for us to really understand what the issues were and then also for the Office of Sport to bounce off any sort of draft strategies that we might have to address some of their concerns. On top of all of that we worked incredibly closely with NSW Health and also with the State Emergency Operations Centre [SEOC] at the time to ensure that the right messaging was getting out to sports about what they could and could not do—particularly when sports started to return on 1 July—around the interpretation of the public health orders and also any sort of specific quarantining arrangements, because we did also play a role in terms of the return of professional sport as well.

In terms of financial support, we were successful in obtaining \$27.3 million in the Community Sport Recovery Package. That was to assist sports not just with the impacts that they might have experienced during COVID-19 but also to help them prepare for the return of sport. It was basically released in two tranches. The first tranche was direct payments to State sporting organisations and State sporting organisations for people with

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disability, of which there are about 95. There were also allocations that went to surf lifesaving, PCYC and our regional academies. Those direct payments, as I said, would help State sporting organisations offset the impacts that they had worn during COVID-19 and also help prepare for the return to sport. We also acknowledge that a number of community sport organisations and grassroots sporting organisations were also impacted. Once it was announced that sport could return, everybody was keen to do so. As part of that \$27.3 million, we also coordinated \$1,000 direct payments to grassroots sports clubs. We did that with the assistance of State sporting organisations. Again, those \$1,000 direct payments were to go towards them preparing for the return of sport in a COVID-safe way.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We might come back to the recovery package in a little bit. Specifically in relation to the Return to Play protocols, were you involved in the development of the Australian Institute of Sport Return to Play framework?

Ms JONES: The Australian Institute of Sport and Sport Australia Return to Play was done at the Commonwealth level. It was informed and discussed through National Cabinet. It was communicated back to New South Wales, but if you cast your mind back to when it was actually released, every State was at a different stage in terms of COVID-19. At that time, whilst we did not adopt the actual protocols themselves, we did take on board some of the strategies that they had for Return to Play and they are the strategies that we ended up rolling out after 1 July. I will say that our Return to Play framework was informed by the public health order. Whatever public health order was current at the time, it was very clear about how it applied to sport and active recreation across the State.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: You may be aware, Ms Jones, of a letter that Football NSW wrote to its member associations on 3 June last year. The letter talked about working or trying to work with the New South Wales Government in relation to the return of community football. It said that the acting Minister had advised them to seek an exemption to some of the requirements and went on to say:

There was no form, no set of questions to address. We have been given no indication of whether our application has been successful or even when we will hear back.

I am wondering why such a major community sport in New South Wales, football, would have been given so little communication or information about that process.

Ms JONES: I do not necessarily agree with that. I was in regular communication with the CEO of Football NSW. During a lot of our communication with sports, and not just with Football NSW, there was talk of compliance with the public health order at the time. If they did want to seek an exemption to the requirements of the public health order then we outlined what that process was. They were encouraged to put in any applications that sought exemptions early, because we knew that the actual assessment process would take some time. Again, during the height of the pandemic, things were moving very quickly. We needed to make sure that the assessment process was thorough and that if an exemption was granted then it was done in a COVID-safe way. Frustrations that might have been communicated through that correspondence that you are referring to were typically in response to their membership cohort and the desire to return to sport a lot quicker than was planned or anticipated under the public health orders. That is the view of Football NSW, but I do not agree with the fact that they were not communicated with. They were.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: And part of that communication was you providing advice to them about how they might seek an exemption?

Ms JONES: Yes, we absolutely outlined the process to them about how they could seek an exemption.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Mr La Posta, I will ask you a few questions about the COVID-19 economic support to multicultural businesses. Can you tell us a little bit about the grants and subsidies that are available to multicultural businesses?

Mr LA POSTA: Specific to multicultural businesses?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes.

Mr LA POSTA: That does not actually sit within my remit. There was a program by the New South Wales Government with regards to support for small businesses. I do not think it was specific—I could be wrong—to multicultural businesses. I think it was to all small businesses. A sum of funding—I could not tell you the exact amount off the top of my head—was administered by a different department than ours.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: So through Multicultural NSW, there were no grants for small multicultural businesses throughout New South Wales—none.

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Mr LA POSTA: There was COVID grant support to community organisations through Multicultural NSW. With regards to the specific small business piece that you are talking about, there was a government small business grants program. That was not administered by our agency and I could not tell you the specifics.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Was your agency assisting the Government with that?

Mr LA POSTA: We would have shared the material that was coming from whichever part of government it was—I could not tell you. I would guess the Small Business Commission and probably others would have had line of sight over it.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Ask Minister Tudehope, I think.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: We will do that. In the meantime, as Multicultural NSW, would it not have been of interest to your organisation to find out what was going on with multicultural small businesses in terms of COVID-19 and support them?

Mr LA POSTA: A hundred per cent. When we talk about small business grants, that includes our community. If there was government funding available in any sector then we would have helped in making sure that our community organisations, our business chambers and those groups that we partner with would have had that material. We have run forums and other things with those organisations as well, predominantly focused on health and safety pieces, to make sure that they have the material they need and all of those things and that the messaging is clear. As the Minister said earlier, we ran one in Harris Park with the Small Business Commissioner and members of his team to listen to any concerns that they specifically had around the recovery, the economy and those things as well. I can take on notice what we specifically did to support the rollout of the grants or the penetration of that messaging in our communities through translation.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, because I have this table here that basically records some of the small businesses in various electorates. For example, in Seven Hills 94.6 per cent of small businesses missed out. First of all, there were complaints that people did not know about the grants. Secondly, a significant number of businesses never received anything. If the Government puts out a grant for multicultural small businesses then those small businesses, particularly in western Sydney, missed out. In Riverstone, 94.5 per cent of small businesses missed out. In Fairfield, 94.2 per cent missed out. In Lakemba, 94.2 per cent of businesses missed out. The Government creates grants but then over 90 per cent—95 per cent of businesses do not receive it.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, I will not contest any of the facts that you have just put to us.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Propositions, anyway.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: They are facts.

Mr LA POSTA: They are your statements and I will not contest them. As the Hon. Mr Khan said, matters relating to small business do not sit within my remit. Was there a specific multicultural small business grant? I cannot confirm that. My understanding was that the Government launched a small business grants program that all businesses could contest to. In terms of the equity, allocation or any of those things, that is probably best directed to the small business Minister.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You were partly involved in it, as you have indicated earlier.

Mr LA POSTA: There was a grant of funding. I can take on notice what role our agency played with respect to the dissemination, communication and translation of that material to those multicultural small businesses. Did I have any line of sight over the access, determination or allocation of that small businesses grant program? No. I did have line of sight over a very proud COVID Community Support Grants program that the incredible team in my agency turned around in a matter of weeks, which was about what the Minister spoke about before: getting emergency relief and support to 120 grassroots community organisations to help them connect with seniors who are isolated; helping to support some of the various different religious organisations, which are continuing to do wonderful work in connecting with their communities; helping to give rice and bread to people who did not have staples; and helping to support people with transport cards because we knew that we wanted people to be able to move safely from one part of the city to another for essential health things. That is a grants program I can talk with absolute authority on. I can talk about some of those examples. With this one I cannot.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is all good work, Mr La Posta.

Mr LA POSTA: Thank you, Mr Moselmane.

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The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Can I ask if you can take it on notice in terms of the figure of the grants that were available and what was put out to those small businesses?

Mr LA POSTA: Certainly.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The other issue that was raised earlier by my colleague Mr Shoebridge with regards to racism and so forth—Multicultural NSW is trying to address racism and vilification and so forth.

Mr LA POSTA: We are.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: But the level of attacks on our multicultural communities, particularly the Australian Chinese community, given the pandemic and so forth, is rising and it is rising rapidly. The attacks are significant. I mean, you have probably seen that report—

Mr LA POSTA: The Lowy report this week?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, where around 20 per cent reported attacks, physical attacks and verbal abuse.

Mr LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I mean, that is a significant number of those people who reported, based on that sample of around a thousand or so people.

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, 1,040.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What has Multicultural NSW done, particularly in reaching out to the Australian Chinese community to address those concerns?

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, certainly. Thanks, Mr Moselmane. Two things: First and foremost, I condemn any racist attacks, and note that a number of participants in that Lowy survey experienced both verbal and physical attacks. I stand strongly and condemn them, as does the entire agency and the advisory board of Multicultural NSW. Racism and hate has no place, nor does discrimination or vilification, in our society in New South Wales. The second thing is, that report came out this week and, unfortunately, as you have said, Mr Moselmane, it reinforced some of the things that people within our agency already knew, which was that throughout the pandemic Sinophobia was on the rise and we knew that some of our communities were being identified based on their appearance or ethnicity.

The sad fact about it is a lot of the targets had actually never even lived or been to mainland China. It was based purely on their appearance, which again is just abhorrent and seeks to undermine, I think, what is our incredibly—and this is something I am very proud of—cohesive way of life in New South Wales, which you cannot say for all countries across earth and you cannot say for all States within Australia. But it is something that we should all be incredibly proud of. I do acknowledge that our agency did a lot of work in this space. Did we fix the problem? No. Could we fix the problem? Arguably not. But as I said before, we were pretty committed to working in collaboration and partnership with all of our different community organisations and we had separate and dedicated forums for our Asian and South Asian communities as well to support them through these things.

There is one part that I think is important to acknowledge, which was that we did not necessarily see a rise in the reporting to our two formal channels in this space, which are the Anti-Discrimination Board NSW and the New South Wales police. Mr Moselmane, what we thought was incredibly important was running educational campaigns about where people could report to. So we ran forums in July 2020 with the Chinese Australian Forum entitled "Reporting Racism: Know Your Rights". Multicultural NSW brought the Anti-Discrimination Board; New South Wales police; the Office of Community Safety and Cohesion, which I must admit under Mr Coutts-Trotter's leadership does a terrific job; Legal Aid NSW; and the Federal Race Discrimination Commissioner, who is obviously a proud man who identifies as being Chinese Australian and participated in this online forum with Chinese community members.

We ran another forum in December, where we organised opportunities for Chinese community leaders to talk to us about how they were feeling, what their sentiments were and, equally importantly, how we could help them to hit a big reset button on 2021—knowing that they were the community at the start of 2020 that probably felt the brunt of a lot of the uncertainty about this virus—and how we could support them in a COVID-safe way to be able to relaunch their Lunar New Year, which we know is a significant celebration, and to help them restart 2021 in the right way.

I think this is important because it helps to talk to one of your earlier concerns about how government can come together to solve this. We have in our legislation, the Multicultural NSW Act 2000, the ability to be

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able to convene a group called COMPLAN, which is the NSW Community Resilience and Response Plan. COMPLAN brings together a lot of the agencies that I just mentioned before. We analyse a lot of the data and statistics that each agency reports, including the Department of Education. We were very mindful how this may or may not play out in schools as well with young people. We have brought that group together seven times throughout the pandemic to discuss these sorts of insights and think about how each of the agencies can provide a commensurate response and support them.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Are their reports public—COMPLAN's?

Mr LA POSTA: The COMPLAN reports? They have all got meeting minutes and all of those sorts of things as well. It is a report that goes up to our Minister.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: But it is not published for the public?

Mr LA POSTA: It is not published for the public but I am happy to take that on notice around the specifics on those.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: If you do not mind.

Mr LA POSTA: Sure.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I think that would be very helpful, thank you, Mr La Posta. I thank you also for your answers to Mr Shoebridge earlier, particularly where you were proactive in terms of the Hindu-Sikh problem.

Mr LA POSTA: Thank you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: With regard to the Australian Chinese community—because it is a hot issue, it is an ongoing issue, and the pandemic is not going to go away, the virus is with us to stay—have you thought of a potential roundtable discussion like you have had with the Hindu-Sikh issue, so you get the main, big organisations physically around the table and discuss issues and how to address them?

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, we certainly have. There are three things to that. The first thing is, the Lowy research only came out this week, so we are all getting across it in a very quick manner. The second thing is, there is a lot of interest and curiosity and also a number of people who are trying to be proactive advocates in addressing some of these issues. Our agency will work with whoever we need to across the different jurisdictions—local, State and Federal governments—to think about how we can formulate and devise the best strategies to make our Australian Chinese communities and our Chinese Australian communities feel as safe as they possibly can and not be subjected to those sorts of things. I think the third thing is, during the height of the pandemic, Mr Moselmane, roughly about 90 per cent of all of our engagement was online. We boosted what we are very proud of, which is our Remove Hate from the Debate campaign. That has now engaged over 900,000 people to really target online hate and racist rhetoric.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What was that number?

Mr LA POSTA: Remove Hate from the Debate: 900,000 people have now been engaged through that program. That was a program that we have boosted for some sub-segments as well—that is a mouthful—which you spoke to just before, particularly around geographical areas where we know there is a high concentration of the Indian diaspora and Australian Indian communities. We have sought to really try and push that campaign as well. We have used role models who come from those communities as well. I know there has been lots of feedback historically about the Islamic community. We have picked our first hijab-wearing ballerina in Australia to lead that campaign on our behalf. We are very much trying to keep pace, keep in touch and also devise as many strategies as possible. Our intention will be that we will take that Lowy report seriously, we will continue to utilise the existing things that we have in place and then think about what strategies we can make. Our Chinese Australian community is also one of our fastest-growing communities as well. One in 20 of us was either born in China or has Chinese heritage, so it is an important part of all of our society that we need to work with.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: So a roundtable discussion could be one of those solutions.

Mr LA POSTA: Certainly. Good idea.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I am not sure whether you would know, Mr La Posta, or you may have heard of the attack on Cumberland City councillor, Kun Huang?

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, I have been made aware.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Have you made any contact with the councillor?

Mr LA POSTA: I have not.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Has anyone else in Multicultural NSW contacted him?

Mr LA POSTA: I can take that question on notice and ask my engagement or resilience teams if they have reached out to the councillor.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Because I know the Race Discrimination Commissioner has contacted Mr Kun.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Chin Tan.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Have you seen the words from the attack?

Mr LA POSTA: I am happy for you to table it, Mr Moselmane.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I am happy to table it through you, Mr Chair.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: It is one thing to show the witness a document; it is another to table it. My concern would be that it is then published on the website and that might make the situation worse, right?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Councillor Kun has published it on social media.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: He might have, but I am not quite certain whether it is advisable for the Parliament to be distributing what is essentially racist material.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is very racist.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I will be guided by the Committee.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: But that does not stop him from looking at it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes. Here is another copy if you want to give it—

The CHAIR: There is no way we are going to publish this.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, it is terrible stuff.

The Hon. NATASHA MACLAREN-JONES: Thank you, Chair.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is terrible stuff, particularly—

The CHAIR: I will just make a decision. That is it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, excellent.

The CHAIR: I am sure you will feel the same if you read it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Mr La Posta—

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, Mr Moselmane.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: —if you look at the last paragraph there, he says, "No pest control can get rid of you Chinese people unless we fumigate you altogether." I mean, that is terrible stuff that this person had communicated to a councillor. I am aware that this matter has gone to the police, but the level of racism is so vile. It is incredible that some people in our community would put such words in writing to elected representatives in our community.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, without talking in the specifics of this, because I think Mr Khan has made the point, I condemn every fibre of this letter. It does not stand for my experience or what all of my colleagues in the New South Wales Government stand for, which is a peaceful, harmonious, inclusive way of life, and it certainly does not stand for the beliefs or values of our agency, our advisory board and certainly not our Minister as well. Can I speak on behalf of this individual, who chose to write this letter? Absolutely not. I am more than happy to think about an approach in terms of how we can continue to do this sort of work because, unfortunately, the letter that you have tabled today to this council, which has been shared, is material that is available. To be honest, it highlights the importance and the role of agencies like mine to bring us together. We are part of the glue and the fabric that is responsible for binding us all. So it just says to me, Mr Moselmane, we have a lot more work to do and we will keep rolling up our sleeves and doing it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you for that, Mr La Posta. Will you contact the councillor?

CORRECTED

Mr LA POSTA: Can I just take that on notice, Mr Moselmane? And I only say that because—just let me think through that. It is not to say that we will not. Any member of our community has our support but, at the same time, I am also very mindful that the appearance of the CEO of an agency contacting someone can then create precedents in all sorts of different things across the board. What I do not want to do is potentially make this a political matter. What I am happy to do is think about the right way to be able to support this individual to know what supports are there and, more importantly, empower this individual with any sorts of avenues that the New South Wales Government makes available to them, through the Anti-Discrimination Board, the New South Wales police and others, so that, if any member of their community is experiencing similar things, they know who to talk to, to deal with these sorts of matters.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That is good enough for me, thank you. With regard to other matters of discrimination, the Islamophobia report—we have addressed that a number of times. The attacks on Muslim women in particular, because of the visibility of Muslim women, has always been on the rise. The question was, and I think I asked it before: Why hasn't Multicultural NSW created a monitor—a record itself—to monitor and keep a record of the attacks that happen not only on Muslim communities but also on members of the Jewish faith, members of a Chinese background and other communities that have suffered as a result of racism?

Mr LA POSTA: There are two parts to your question. Can I talk specifically about the Islamophobia piece and then talk about the broader registering of these sorts of things, or do you want me to do them in a specific order?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: As you please, that is fine.

Mr LA POSTA: First thing, as the Minister said before, the COMPACT funding program now has, Mr Moselmane, an Islamophobia register.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: That's good.

Mr LA POSTA: The Islamophobia Register Australia has been funded under the Multicultural NSW COMPACT program to provide support to victims of Islamophobia and to work with other victims of groups to promote a unified response to hate in all its forms. The proven \$12.2 million COMPACT program aims to inspire and empower young people to stand up and stand united as champions for community harmony against the divisive forces of hate, fear and violence, and we have certainly talked to them. COMPACT has been evaluated as a first-of-its-kind initiative that has made significant progress towards its aims of building social cohesion and community resilience in a short period of time.

As the Minister said before, he has boosted the funding to that program, which, for our agency and certainly the Office of Social Cohesion and Safety, is music to our ears because it allows us to run more initiatives such as the Islamophobia register. We will evaluate the effectiveness of this specific program. We continue to evaluate the Community Action for Preventing Extremism program, which was the CAPE program, that was delivered by Altogether Now, which was targeted at far-right extremist groups, and we will continue to work on the Remove Hate from the Debate program and think about broader social cohesion messaging to try to stamp out, wherever we can, or proactively tackle, racism and hateful behaviour.

With regard to the reporting piece, so the second part to your question, we are not a reporting agency so it is not in our statutory responsibility nor under our legislation. Those two agencies are the Anti-Discrimination Board. So if we receive any inquiry, it goes straight to the Anti-Discrimination Board and their specialist team navigate us to whether it is a police matter. So, if it is a criminal offence that then needs to be communicated to the relevant police area commands or to the relevant police numbers, or if it is a discrimination matter that then needs to be managed by the Anti-Discrimination Board. Our agency does not register these things and I think I have been pretty consistent in each of those meetings outlining what our remit is and is not.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you. Before I pass on to my colleague, what was the funding for COMPACT?

Mr LA POSTA: Three million dollars.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I just wanted to ask Ms Jones some more questions about the Community Sport Recovery Package. In the development of that \$23.7 million package, were the State Sporting Organisations consulted by the Office of Sport or anyone in the development of that package?

Ms JONES: Not specifically, but consultation was very regular with State Sporting Organisations around what the impact of COVID-19 has been on the sport sector and also what their immediate needs were.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Did you look at other relief packages in other Australian States?

CORRECTED

Ms JONES: Yes, we did. We did actually have a look at what the other jurisdictions were doing and I am pleased to say that the Office of Sport and the New South Wales Government were one of the first ones to offer such a large package.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: How much of that package has been spent? Has the full amount been acquitted?

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice because it is still ongoing. I cannot actually give you a final figure. For instance, at the moment, we are actually having a cross-border fund component to that for sporting clubs, particularly grassroots sporting clubs, that may be registered in New South Wales but actually play in Victoria in competitions. They were not captured as part of the first round of the grassroots allocation, so we are working our way through those clubs now. I will take it on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: In terms of the Grassroots Sport Fund—you mentioned the thousand dollar payments—there were 12,500 clubs referred to in the announcement when the announcement was made. How many local sporting clubs have been awarded money?

Ms JONES: Again, I will take that on notice because it will also depend on the settling of the cross-border fund in relation to that as well, because they are grassroots clubs that would receive that. But you are right. The original announcement included 12,500 and that was based on information that was given to us by State Sporting Organisations.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So it would be useful to have both the number of clubs and also the percentage of eligible clubs.

Ms JONES: Sure.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: How much money was spent in the administration or processing costs for the Community Sport Recovery Package—how much of that \$23.5 million?

Ms JONES: It was absorbed within the Office of Sport.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Just looking forward in terms of the upcoming winter season—because as you said it was really the 2020 winter season that bore the brunt of COVID last year—do you have any specific strategies you are looking at to prepare the sporting organisations and encourage participation in those winter-month sports?

Ms JONES: Again, we have regular communication with our State Sporting Organisations, and sports and the active recreation sector in general. We regularly communicate with them whenever there is a change in the public health order to let them know about what the new requirements are and how that may or may not impact themselves. At the moment we are doing that typically through our direct messaging that we do to them, but should things change and should things heighten then we will revert to those regular weekly meetings with sports.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Good to be proactive about making sure that they know the public health orders, but is there any other engagement around, once they know what the public health orders are, assisting them if they are having trouble with compliance or have questions about how that applies to them?

Ms JONES: Yes. In our sector sustainability team at the Office of Sport we have set up what we call sector capability contacts where they can reach out to the Office of Sport and make representations on behalf of their sport or communicate what their issues are and then we respond. We can either investigate those issues for them and seek a response, whether it be through NSW Health or alternatively we can then point them in the right direction about where they might be able to seek further assistance, and sometimes that might even be through the Office of Sport. For us, using that sector capability team, you will have a look on our website, we also provide a number of online tools as well as instructions around how they may choose to make their sport more sustainable and more resilient to future pandemics.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Again, in terms of any plans for advertising campaigns or other outreach campaigns to encourage participation—targeting families or saying, "Kids, get back into sport"—is there any funding available to actually specifically encourage participation?

Ms JONES: No, there is no additional funding for that. But the Office of Sport—we are very active in our communication to the sport sector, particularly through our social media channels, around what opportunities there are. Again, reverting back to our Active Kids program, there is a lot of promotion work that goes on around that.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The drop in Active Kids redemptions last year that was discussed earlier with Mr Shoebridge—

CORRECTED

Ms JONES: Yes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The funds that were saved because there were less vouchers redeemed—have they been redeployed or is that remaining within the Active Kids program?

Ms JONES: It remains within the Active Kids program and that still sits with the Office of Sport.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I wanted ask a couple of quick questions about motorsports because in 2019 there was a consultation paper put out for a review of the motorsports Act and I do not think that has been completed, so I wondered where that was up to.

Ms JONES: The motorsport legislation—at the moment it is actually in two streams, if you like. The first stream is around the safety component and that is the discussion paper that you are referring to. It looks at how we can actually strengthen some of the safety and accountability measures for motorsport. The second piece—we have been working with Destination NSW at looking at the motorsport events that are held across the State. As I said, we are currently working with Destination NSW on that and we are hoping to have legislation come to Government for consideration this year.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: And so, that legislation relates both to the safety discussion paper—

Ms JONES: There will be two pieces—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: There will be two separate pieces of legislation?

Ms JONES: There will be two separate pieces of legislation initially, with a view to actually merging them in the future.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: And the time frame for both of them is 2021?

Ms JONES: We would hope 2021.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: My understanding is that New South Wales police are no longer undertaking inspections of motor vehicle race meetings at prescribed grounds and that this has caused some disruption and delays for those people. Are you aware of that and what support have you been providing?

Ms JONES: Yes, we are aware of that, and that is one aspect that the legislative amendment seeks to address.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Okay. The other option for having licences issued—again, receiving feedback that people are being told that they will not be able to get licence issues until days before their planned event. Obviously that makes it pretty difficult to plan an event if you cannot get a licence until a few days before. It is good that the issue in relation to the police is being addressed in a medium- or long-term way through the legislation, but what is the Office of Sport doing to try and deal with this more immediate issue of delays?

Ms JONES: Yes. Look, safety is of paramount concern in motorsport, as you can appreciate. We do take that very seriously and it is the main consideration in that legislative piece. Whilst we are aware that the police are no longer undertaking those inspections, we do actually ask that those tracks still be safe. Unfortunately, that does take some time and it does actually take some time for that licence to then be processed through the Office of Sport. With the legislative amendment, we are also looking at our administration processes about how we can work with the sector to ensure that they not only receive their licence in an appropriate time frame but they are also guaranteed of a safe track and a safe working environment.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So, there is nothing else that is necessarily forthcoming in the short term, other than just that legislative solution?

Ms JONES: Correct.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Okay. I might just ask a couple of questions about Her Sport Her Way before passing back to my colleague. In the Her Sport Her Way plan there is a mention of facility design guidelines.

Ms JONES: Yes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am just wondering when we could expect to see those.

Ms JONES: They are still currently being worked on. What we are very aware of is—I think it was mentioned this morning—the importance of having adequate female facilities to encourage female participation in sport. Those facility guidelines—we will be drawing upon expertise from the sport sector, but also from architectural firms, around what are really good, design-efficient solutions that can be delivered quickly. So, yes, you can expect to see those guidelines shortly.

CORRECTED

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Shortly? And are there any particular sports or sporting facilities that are going to be the focus of those?

Ms JONES: No. Obviously we are looking at, as I said this morning, growing female participation across all sports. You can look at the traditional sports, particularly the field sports, where they typically have two change rooms: one for the home team and one for the away team. Traditionally they have also been male-designed facilities. What we are finding works best is if there are actually four change rooms. That is to enable a home and an away team, but also male and female, or at least allowing for a quick transition between matches and teams rather than having to wait for one team to vacate the change room before the new team can come in.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Mentioned in the action plan in relation to the facility design guidelines, there is an innovation forum and a virtual round table. Have they been scheduled? Have they occurred? When are they occurring?

Ms JONES: Yes, I can provide you with the dates of those. It is actually quite impressive to see all the engagement that we do get over Her Sport Her Way. I think thousands of people have engaged with the process to date, whether it be through the Year One Action Plan or the Year Two Action Plan. We do definitely benefit from all of that engagement; we do draw upon the expertise in the room at the time. So, I can give you the dates—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So, they have both occurred?

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice. I will give you the dates.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Back to you, Mr La Posta. With multicultural communications, we are advised that the Government is seeking to change the pay and conditions of interpreters and translators, including decreasing their pay by up to 50 per cent. Can you confirm whether that is true or not?

Mr LA POSTA: I can confirm that we are in the process of working with the Public Service Association and the Industrial Relations Commission to modernise an award that is over 20 years old. When I spoke to the Minister around the modernisation of this award I did make the point that when this award was being considered I do not think any of us were using the internet and iPhones certainly were not available. So, we have not necessarily kept pace in this space with the technology solutions that are available, nor have we kept pace in this space with a lot of the competitors that have moved into the interpreting and translating market. So, the modernisation of the award seeks to create more flexible conditions.

What I will say is that we have roughly 1,100 staff in our interpreting and translating business. Many of them are interpreters. Across our telephone interpreting and our face-to-face interpreting, they provide a really, really important service to our community. I do not want to see the quality of that service drop. I still want to maintain very good pay and conditions so that our interpreters and translators choose to work for us, not for any of the other providers, first and foremost. With regards to the specifics in terms of where we are at—like I said, I do not want the quality to go by trying to race to the bottom in terms of salaries and wages, but I do need to create a more flexible award so that we can compete.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Modernising the award—does that mean up to a 50 per cent decrease in salary? That is the rumour that is going around—potentially up to 50 per cent.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, there is the potential for people to pick outlying, extreme examples and say, "If I was getting this at this level then I shouldn't be getting this anymore." One of the things that I am mindful of in our current award is that they get 54 per cent loading. I am not sure any other industry or business that any of us works in gets 54 per cent loading at the moment. They are the sorts of elements within the award that we are looking to review because unless we maintain a service that is comparable cost-wise—and then hopefully beat them on quality—we will not be able to compete for the work.

Our intention is to keep this service in government hands, which I think is incredibly important. There are a lot of other States that do not necessarily have a service like this in government hands. But, to do so, I have to be able to compete with the private sector and others that are playing in this space. If I do not, I will not be able to maintain nor grow the work that I would like to give and the employment opportunities that I would like to give; hence why we are modernising the award.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: So, you will be modernising the award, but will there be any retrenchments or loss of interpreters and translators as a result?

Mr LA POSTA: I hope it is a job creation opportunity, Mr Moselmane. I will unashamedly tell you: If I can get more work, I can employ another 1,300, 1,400 or 1,500 people.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: By cutting the salary, you will have more money to pay for more?

CORRECTED

Mr LA POSTA: It is not necessarily about cutting the salary. What I am not saying is that I want to pay people less for the work. What I need to do is work on the minimum hourly arrangements, some of the leave loading arrangements and some of the other things that are in there which, in my opinion, are antiquated. By doing so I can create opportunities.

We provide an essential service into the courts in New South Wales. A lot of those court assignments that we provide will not be impacted by this, but we also provide services where we AVL into police stations in places like Armidale, where there might be a domestic violence matter and language is a barrier. If we maintain the existing conditions under our current award, a lot of those smaller roles that we play, any of the audiovisual technology that we have, all of those—we would not be able to keep pace. We are already falling behind a lot of our competitors in this space so it makes us unsuccessful at tendering for even government work, because government has to go through open and transparent tender processes. Therefore, if we do not modernise the award, unfortunately it brings into question the sustainability of this service because we will not be cutting any employment entitlements if we have not got any work to give them.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You understand that that particular service is not just about a dollar figure. A dollar figure is important, but it is providing a community service.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, no argument.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: There is a huge demand, there is a huge need, for that community service, and equating that community service to a dollar figure is the wrong way to go.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, I do not disagree with you. I think the most important thing in this service is the quality of this service. While a lot of our inter-jurisdictional and even our Federal Government colleagues were being criticised for the accuracy of their translation, we were not. That is because we have some of the best interpreters and translators that are employees of our agency, and I am incredibly grateful and proud of the work they have done in this pandemic. Premiers and Health Ministers have made decisions to change requirements. We have been able to communicate them within 24 to 48 hours to give people the material they needed in 52 different languages where it was hard to reach and connect with. I am incredibly grateful to that workforce.

What I do not want to do, Mr Moselmane, is lose that workforce because I cannot get them enough work to be able to sustain them. And right now, if we do not accept more flexibility within that award, that is exactly what is going to happen. We have already lost big tenders because we were not price competitive. I agree with you that for us it is not about price, but when the Government or private providers or other businesses are making a decision, price is a consideration in their decision-making. Again, I am happy to pay our interpreters and translators hopefully the best wherever we can, but at the same time we do need to make some concessions on that award. We have been partnering and working with the PSA since October 2019 and the Industrial Relations Commission for the best part of the past three or four months to hopefully negotiate an outcome that works for everyone. Fingers crossed.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I know you say you have engaged with the PSA, but what about the interpreters and translators themselves? Are you engaging with them?

Mr LA POSTA: Yes. We have run various different stakeholder forums for them to give us their feedback. To be frank with you, the starting position that we had when we first met with them differs significantly from the position that we are at today. We listened to them. They gave us some really, really valuable feedback about why some of those entitlements were originally there. We have been able to probably meet them a fair way on a lot of those things, even things like the minimum hours within the courts and so forth. We are working with them to try to protect and maintain those to the best of our ability. But unless there are some concessions made by all parties, we will not get to our satisfactory solution. I am confident we will, but I obviously cannot give you that assurance right now because we are still in the midst of negotiations.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Are you basing your solutions on any particular model?

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, we are. We are looking at all of the other different States, the national services and all of those things. Mr Moselmane, take comfort in knowing that I still want to get the best conditions. They are a very casual and transient workforce. If I do not get the best working conditions for this workforce, they will stop working for me and they will start working for them or them or them. So unless I maintain strong conditions and good rates of pay, I will lose the quality, which will undermine the whole brand of the Government. We do not want to do that.

What we want to do is negotiate a happy medium where we can create more flexibility in the working arrangements, utilise technology more—like I said, more AVL opportunities where we can have one interpreter

CORRECTED

that can then go to five or six different police stations in a day throughout regional New South Wales. This did not exist when the award was written 22 years ago. We have now got technology solutions and other opportunities to be able to provide more service. As I said, hopefully it is a job creation opportunity. I have unashamedly got pretty strong business plans where I would love to double our workforce in the coming years, but to do so I have got to have the work.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: And what is the projection?

Mr LA POSTA: And if I do not have the work and the tenders and the contracts, I cannot do it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: When do you expect to complete this discussion?

Mr LA POSTA: That is a great question. That is probably more directed to the Public Service Association than to my agency.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is there a target you are working out so the interpreters and translators know?

Mr LA POSTA: As I said to you, Mr Moselmane, I have been negotiating with the PSA since October 2019.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Okay. I will move on to a couple of other questions in that area. Given that providing access to justice for all members of the diverse New South Wales community is a Government responsibility, what funding has been provided to deliver interpreting and translating services to New South Wales courts?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We might flip between us. We are a very satisfied customer of the interpreting and translating service that my colleague was describing. Obviously when it comes to access to justice it is a fundamental service and it is so important that the work of interpretation is accurate, and that can be a real challenge in an environment as anxious as a court. So we value the quality of the service. I can take on notice how much we spend on the service, unless you have the figure, Mr La Posta.

Mr LA POSTA: The Government underwrites it for \$5 million a year, and then any shortfall in that we cover it for the moment. What we do not want do is ever get into a situation where people do not have the access that Mr Coutts-Trotter spoke about.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: And has it been \$5 million every year? I don't have the budget in front of me.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, this is a fantastic question. It has been more than that. That is part of the reason why we need to modernise our award because our cost to service has gone above the remuneration that we get from providers and others such as the courts. It then comes as a hard cost to our agency. What we will not do is not send the interpreters to the courts because people have an entitlement and a right to that service. We will not get in the way of that.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Absolutely. The next question is of a similar nature, but regarding the NSW Police Force. What funding is the Government providing to NSW Police Force to ensure that high-quality, professional interpreting and translation services are accessible to members of the community engaged with the criminal justice system?

Mr LA POSTA: The courts are our biggest client at the moment, although I hope to get lots of our Government colleagues on board as more clients come, Mr Moselmane. The second biggest client is the NSW Police Force. We provide the majority of interpreting services into police stations for everything from a statement affidavit right through to some of the most heinous crimes that police navigate and negotiate. And it is our interpreters who are often the people who play a critical role in the interpretation of the material between the various different parties and our police force.

With regard to the contracts and the specifics of the contracts, they are matters that are commercial in confidence, which I cannot disclose. But the reality of the service is, in dialogue with Commissioner Fuller, who has been incredibly supportive of our service as well, we hope to maintain and grow our work with the NSW Police Force, as they understand that the demographic of our State, as you know, is changing more and more, and these services are only becoming more and more important for more and more people.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Can you take on notice the part about the funding?

Mr LA POSTA: The specifics on the funding?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes.

CORRECTED

Mr LA POSTA: Certainly.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Thank you. Just a quick question on the status of the Coordinator-General for Refugee Resettlement, Peter Shergold.

Mr LA POSTA: He has been given an upgrade. He is now our Coordinator General of Settlement, which is a broader role. The reason I am very favourable to his role having a broader remit is, for anyone that knows Professor Peter Shergold, he is a man of great substance and also influence. He is wonderful at bringing our Federal Government colleagues to the table on all sorts of weird and wonderful issues that relate to our new and emerging communities. I think it was probably about nine months ago that he signed a two-year extension in that role, which is very much about providing targeted support to our refugee and brand-new migrant cohorts, and helping make their settlement journey as successful as possible.

I think it is important to acknowledge that the responsibility of settling these cohorts, particularly refugees, is not a State responsibility, it is a Federal responsibility. But because of the sheer number and the role that our State plays in terms of its national significance—somewhere I think between 30 per cent and 40 per cent of these cohorts, and new and emerging communities settle in New South Wales—it is important that we have people like Professor Shergold, who can bring all of that together and help us navigate our Federal Government colleagues, then connect with mayors, local councils and all of those things on the ground to help advocate and represent their interests in the State and Federal context as well.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: The description of his job is somewhere on the website?

Mr LA POSTA: Coordinator General of Settlement? I am happy to take that on notice, too.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: How much more is he remunerated now that he has been upgraded, as you said?

Mr LA POSTA: He's not.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You said that he has been upgraded.

Mr LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Without any further remuneration?

Mr LA POSTA: Correct. He is the person who—

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: It happens. There used to be two secretaries. There is now one.

Mr LA POSTA: Mr Moselmane, I do not want to speak for Professor Shergold. He has lots of competing demands for his time. He is incredibly emotionally invested in this space, and we are very grateful for that leadership and that emotional investment. So I can assure you that whatever we remunerate Professor Shergold with, I probably speak to him three or four times more.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is the remuneration federally funded or is that—

Mr LA POSTA: No, State funded.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I might ask this question then—

Mr LA POSTA: Give them to me all at once because then maybe—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, sure, because—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Maybe we can get out of here?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: —we have got some in Veterans, so I will ask as much as I can here.

Mr LA POSTA: Thanks, Mr Moselmane.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In terms of Multicultural NSW advertising, how many people are on the Multicultural NSW database for community news?

Mr LA POSTA: I would need to take it on notice.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You can take it on notice.

Mr LA POSTA: Sure.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: How often do you send emails to this database?

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Mr LA POSTA: It depends. The reason I say it depends is because it is part of a review that I am looking to do at the moment, which we have already commenced, which is I think first and foremost filtering the database to make sure all the contacts that we have our up-to-date, current and all of those things. The second thing is to get clear in terms of what the objectives of that database are because there are some days that you will get essential COVID safety material; there will be other days where you might get something from me around condemning, say, the attack that happened in Parramatta a couple of years ago where a man brutally attacked a woman who was sitting there with a group of friends just going out for a night out. So depending—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: What is their primary purpose?

Mr LA POSTA: The primary purpose is to communicate essential information on behalf of the agency.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Right, okay. The reason I ask is that I think all MPs also receive ads from you, Multicultural NSW.

Mr LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: For example, on 3 February this year the entire database received an EOI for a lease opportunity for Scheyville Camp Precinct. Why would Multicultural NSW in community harmony send out a lease promotion?

Mr LA POSTA: At times there are a small number of contractual agreements that we have with some of our partners, one being the ABC, where we share jobs or information that is relevant to our community stakeholders. It is not a practice I am overly fond of, and I do not think it necessarily—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: So why is it done?

Mr LA POSTA: To be honest with you, Mr Moselmane, I am happy to take that on notice and think about reviewing that database in its entirety so it (a) becomes more effective and (b) only communicates essential information. I think, like all of us, though, in the past 12 months I have had key, more important things to focus on, which I think we have done largely well. But I am very happy to take that on notice and look at the relevancy of that database because what I do not want is people disconnecting from that database or unsubscribing because they are receiving nebulous or irrelevant information.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: We received one just the other day in relation to City of Sydney grants are now open. I can understand that; it is a bit more about grants for the community.

Mr LA POSTA: It talks to the point before about the small business grants.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, but in terms of a lease—I mean that is a bit stretched.

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, no argument here.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In terms of that advertising, you do not charge for them?

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes, do you get money for them?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Do you get money for them?

Mr LA POSTA: There will probably be a small agreement or a transactional agreement that is in place that is about then thinking about how we can reinvest back into that database to think about more targeted messaging or more messaging or to grow the database or those sorts of things.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Can you tell us what sort of amounts? You can take it on notice.

Mr LA POSTA: I am happy to take it on notice. They would not be worth this conversation right now; I can assure you of that. That is why I am very happy to review that service as quickly as possible because what I do not want is MPs receiving emails from us and thinking anything other than, "That is really helpful. I want to share that with my community."

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, especially a lease.

Mr LA POSTA: Point made.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Just the other day we received the strategic plan 2021 to—

Mr LA POSTA: Just yesterday, Mr Moselmane.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yesterday I received it in my email.

Mr LA POSTA: Good.

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The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: And that is a fact. When was it published?

Mr LA POSTA: Yesterday.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Exactly. I received it yesterday.

Mr LA POSTA: You did! That shows that the database is working.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Hot off the press.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is working. Just one question. I will have to have a look at it carefully, but I have at least one question out of that one. I know you do not have it in front of you but countering hate—

Mr LA POSTA: Sorry, what page, and I will try to pull it up.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Okay, I will read—

Mr LA POSTA: I had hoped to have my iPad ready to go but my son has drained it with all of the *Bluey* videos he has been watching.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It actually does not have page numbers.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Get him an Active Kids voucher.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It does not have page numbers here—

Mr LA POSTA: He will not redeem it.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That is what I was going to say. There is no shaming for screen time from me. Watch more, watch more!

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It does not have numbers here, but if I may, Mr Chair— where is the Chair? The Chair has gone. Deputy Chair?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We are Chairless.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Sorry.

Mr LA POSTA: We are all familiar with *Bluey*.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Countering hate and polarisation—

Mr LA POSTA: Hang on, sorry, Mr Moselmane, what page are you referring to?

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I cannot see any.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: There are no page numbers.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: There are no page numbers in this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: There is a picture on it.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, there is a picture.

Mr LA POSTA: Yes, hang on. Let me pull it up, and I will talk with authority rather than second-guessing myself.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Yes, sure. I will just read it while you are looking.

Mr LA POSTA: Sure.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It says "countering hate and polarisation".

Mr LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Under that heading, you say "A small number of individuals with fringe views seek to divide us by inciting fear, hate and violence." You say "a small number".

Mr LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Is that based on statistics? Is that based on some evidence?

Mr LA POSTA: It is based on statistics. It is based on the fact that through the Scanlon research and other research that has been commissioned in this space, overwhelmingly the majority of people are very positive about multiculturalism and the contribution it makes in our Australian way of life.

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The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Okay. It just did not have it, so I was wondering what the figures are. When you say "small", is that 1 per cent, is that 5 per cent?

Mr LA POSTA: I do not think there is a percentage out there that would volunteer that they are part of some sort of extremist movement or group and there is a national survey that captures that. I think what they are identifying is using—or what we do is identify statistics that are associated with police reporting and those sorts of things to identify the issues. We also work very closely, and I touched on this before, with our Federal Government colleagues who are in this space all the time but then work collaboratively with States to understand what the spectrum of issues is in their various different jurisdictions. I am comfortable saying it is a small, vocal minority, and it is really important that we maintain it to be—well, it is important we shrink it, but it is really important that we do not give too much oxygen to that small, vocal minority where they start to permeate mainstream views.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: We hope that it remains small, but it is important to understand the figure. When you just say "small", small could be 5 per cent or it could be 10 per cent, but 10 per cent is significant even though it is smaller than 90 per cent.

Mr LA POSTA: I think the important part of that plan, Mr Moselmane, is that it acknowledges that, because the plan could easily not have talked about that group and the importance of our focus of our work to address that group. So the fact that the plan is bold enough to say that there is a small number of people in New South Wales who seek to push those divisive views and that our agency in collaborating with our other government partners is willing to tackle that I think is a very positive step that should be applauded, not necessarily that we try to quantify it or politicise it, as to whether it is 2 per cent or 3 per cent or whatever. That is more my take on it.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I have a couple of questions about Myuna Bay, perhaps to Ms Jones?

Ms JONES: Yes, and I can go back to you and give you some more information about the think tanks for Her Sport Her Way if you like, in terms of the dates.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am sorry, the—

Ms JONES: Before you go to Myuna Bay—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Yes, you just have some dates, do you?

Ms JONES: Yes, I do have the dates. The think tank session for Her Sport Her Way will be held on 23 March, and registration is through our website, so people can go on there and register. Also, today there was an announcement around the Her Sport Her Way grants, and information sessions on those grants will be held on 10 March.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you. The current status of the design and community consultation on Myuna Bay—obviously, the site has been closed for a number of years now.

Ms JONES: Yes.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I just wanted an update.

Ms JONES: Sure. We are still in discussions with Origin Energy around the design of the new centre. I think it was in the middle of last year that our Minister actually went out and announced the new site out at Lake Eraring. We are still talking with Origin Energy around the scope and the design. We are also regular attendees—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: This is the coal ash issue.

Ms JONES: I beg your pardon?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

Ms JONES: Yes. We are also regular attendees at the Eraring residents action group meeting. They meet every month.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I am sure that is a joy, Ms Jones.

Ms JONES: But in terms of engaging with the local community and, obviously, understanding their concerns, it is an important step that we have representation at that committee.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is there a time frame on the resolution of the discussions with Origin Energy? Are you aiming for—

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Ms JONES: They are still ongoing. The planning process has commenced in terms of the Lake Eraring site, particularly around rezoning. That is currently under consideration by the department of planning, and we are waiting on their decision on that. Should that be approved, then we will have more certainty around the site and then we will move to design.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Do you have a budget for the construction? If you do have a budget, can you confirm that that cost is being met by Origin Energy?

Ms JONES: The cost is being met Origin Energy. We do not have a budget at this stage.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The status of the old Myuna Bay sport and rec camp, are there plans for the rehabilitation of that site and who will be meeting those costs?

Ms JONES: Again, Origin Energy will be meeting those costs. The site is currently closed and has been closed for two years now. The only presence that is on the site is security to make sure that the site is not vandalised, for instance. However, the commitment was given that that site would be rehabilitated once the new centre has been completed.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: So we are not going to see progress on the rehabilitation of the old site until the completion of the new site is done?

Ms JONES: Correct.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I think these are my last questions in relation to sport. Don't get too excited. I only have a couple of seniors questions after that. Hunter Sport and Entertainment Precinct, if you resolved the Hunter Sport and Entertainment Precinct I would not have to ask on behalf of my colleague Tim Crakanthorp, the member for Newcastle, what has been done to progress this important project.

Ms JONES: For that—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is that you, Ms Mather?

Ms JONES: —I might refer to Kerry, if that is all right.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Apologies.

Ms MATHER: That is me.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Any update on the Hunter Sport and Entertainment Precinct?

Ms MATHER: We are actually working closely with them. We are contributing to the planning work that is being carried out by the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation, which includes our 50 hectares of land in that precinct. There is some work actually already going on. There is about \$30 million of investment under way at the moment in the Newcastle centre of excellence for the Knights, which will be completed later this year, and the international hockey centre, which is also underway.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: It's going gangbusters.

Ms MATHER: It is, yes. Both are very exciting. There is a significant amount of construction underway on our land. We will continue to look at other opportunities that present themselves along the way as well. We are working with the corporation, with New South Wales Government, with the local authorities and a new board subcommittee has actually been created for Wollongong. So they will all be involved in actually looking at those opportunities.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is there any plan or hope or aspiration or target for having the precinct completed before the 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup?

Ms MATHER: I think that would be ambitious, based on my understanding of the work that has been done to date. The work that has been done to date has been very much around a stakeholder consultation on a very preliminary—masterplan would probably be an overstatement of where it is at the moment. It is actually on a sort of a land use plan, as in land use planning options.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The concept plan was released in 2017 is my understanding, Ms Mather. I appreciate that probably predates your time, but that was some time ago now.

Ms MATHER: Since then, Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation have put some money into actually taking that further and have developed a couple of scenarios around site planning. From there, there would be further planning work to actually take it to the next stage. In terms of the FIFA Women's World Cup, certainly, the McDonald Jones Stadium will be well and truly ready for that. Some work was actually completed in September last year. I was up there the other day, actually, going through all the back-of-house facilities. They

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are second to none in terms of what we can present to hirers. We are yet to hear which of the venues will actually be anointed for the FIFA World Cup, but we are hoping that Newcastle will actually get a good share of the venues, because it is really ideally placed in a fantastic market and, of course, football has had a great experience with the Asian World Cup up there.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: In terms of the Hunter Sport and Entertainment Precinct, has any consideration been given from Venues NSW to actually fund the business case, to commit to getting that happening so that this project can proceed a little bit faster than it has been?

Ms MATHER: This is prior to my time, but I think an application has been made for the development of a strategic business case for funding and we are awaiting that.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Who has that application been made to?

Ms MATHER: I think the application was made—Karen would have been involved in this; it was before my time—to Treasury.

Ms JONES: I will take that on notice. I am not across that yet.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I imagine it would be Treasury or the ERC process, but I just wanted to confirm that you had put in that bid and you are waiting to see whether that gets funded or not.

Ms MATHER: That application was made.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Has any money been spent on the project so far? How much money have you committed so far?

Ms MATHER: A significant commitment has been made, associated with the two major construction works that are underway at the moment. In relation to Newcastle, in relation to the Newcastle Knights centre of excellence and also in relation to the international hockey centre and then our own contribution to those works in the lead-up to that site planning.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Would you be able to take on notice those actual figures?

Ms MATHER: I can do.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you, Ms Mather. Will any land from the precinct be sold to fund the project? What is the status of that?

Ms MATHER: I am not aware. I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Thank you. Mr Coutts-Trotter, just a couple of questions to you in relation to seniors.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: I thought you said you only had a couple of—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I had a couple of questions on sport.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Sorry. You raised my expectations.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: The final report of the royal commission in relation to ageing came out. So I just wondered what engagement the department has had with that final report.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: The New South Wales Government's involvement with the ageing royal commission is through the leadership role as performed by NSW Health. A range of other organisations within Government, obviously, have a keen interest, including the Ageing and Disability Commissioner. So we collectively are digesting that report. I understand the Commonwealth has indicated it is going to respond more completely by May, so we will wait on the Commonwealth's response. But fundamentally the Government's position in relation to that commission is being led by Health.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Just in relation to the seniors strategy, we have got the action plan for the first year of that 10-year plan. What is the budgetary allocation for both the seniors strategy and the 2021-22 action plan? How much money is attached?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Indeed. I am embarrassed to not have a figure so I will take that on notice and respond to you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That would be useful. Just in terms of the seniors team—it might be called the ageing team—within DCJ, how many people are working in that team?

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Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Again, I will take that one on notice if that is okay.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Who do they report to? Which deputy secretary? I suspect that there would be a deputy.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: They report to my colleague Simone Walker.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Are they then included in the reasonably large restructuring?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: They are part of a division that is being restructured. That is why in part I take it on notice, just to confirm to you the—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It would also be useful to know if there are any—

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Any changes or reductions in the team associated with seniors.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: That is right.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Sure.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: We heard the other day, 175 redundancies in that team. So it would be useful if you could take on notice how many of those, if any, are planned for the ageing team. I appreciate the vaccination rollout is being led in part by the Federal Government and, to the extent that the New South Wales Government is involved, by NSW Health. But the senior citizens are a major first cohort. We have seen already issues in other States in relation to misadministration of vaccines, vaccines not coming on time. Perhaps they are teething issues. But in terms of anxiety senior citizens in New South Wales might feel, is there any work being done at all out of DCJ just in terms of comms or engagement with seniors' groups about the vaccination rollout?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: There has, but it is peripheral to the main work, which of course is fundamentally done by the Commonwealth but then the work at a State level through NSW Health. For example, I was talking to my colleague Elizabeth Koff this morning. I do understand many of these issues were pretty well canvassed at the estimates with Minister Hazzard yesterday and he actually came back in the afternoon, which is a worrying precedent.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: It is a classic Minister Hazzard move.

The Hon. COURTNEY HOUSSOS: That would be right.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: I do not mean to be flippant about the topics under discussion. The Commonwealth—obviously the aged care sector is only part of what you are talking about and the populations you are talking about—has clear lead there, except to the extent that NSW Health operates, I think, nine facilities that are aged care facilities. Then, in those regional centres where they are operating a mix of essentially small-scale hospitals and aged care, NSW Health will take responsibility both for the people who are resident there at the moment and, of course, for the staff. Likewise, the Commonwealth take responsibility for the aged care system in New South Wales and other States and staff working in the aged care system. We are going to play a big role in supporting Health in communicating with and generally supporting access to older people in public housing particularly, so that will be a big focus for us.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: Is that out of the seniors team under Ms Walker or is that Mr Vevers' work?

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: No, that is really through my colleague Paul Vevers.

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: Shaoq has promised only two questions.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: In two areas. Maybe more, it depends on the response. I will be quick. Maybe some of them will be taken on notice. With regards to the National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention, Mr Coutts-Trotter might help—

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I think it is Ms Mackaness.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Or Ms Mackaness—whoever wants to respond, I am happy. On 5 February the Federal Government announced a National Commissioner for Defence and Veteran Suicide Prevention that would be established. What has resulted from that appointment?

Ms MACKANESS: Thank you for your question. New South Wales has been working very cooperatively with the Commonwealth since, I think I mentioned earlier, the establishment of the ministerial council in 2016. Traditionally veterans have been the responsibility of the Commonwealth, but increasingly the States have been working with the Commonwealth to support veterans living within their jurisdiction who are accessing services within the State. It has actually been fantastic to be involved during that time because a lot has

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been achieved. All of the attorneys-general came together to support the work of that national commissioner and there is a working group now that is actively feeding into the reporting and the support that is being provided to that national commissioner to really make a difference in that space. It is feeding down into, our own department, the cluster. The NSW Police Force is assisting in that space as well in terms of reporting into Health any suicides that might take place. They are now assisting with the collecting of that data and reporting in. So the ministerial task force that the Minister for veterans sits on is a continuing group. I think the COAG structure has ceased in some way—

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: Yes.

Ms MACKANESS: —but veterans has actually continued as a really important area of government responsibility. There is a whole lot of work that is being done as a whole of government. I think the Minister mentioned earlier today that we have been working across government to look at what supports we have in place for veterans and what more can we do, because suicide prevention is really a whole-of-wellbeing approach. All of the policies and programs in Health—the Towards Zero Suicides, the Premier's initiative—all of those programs are accessible to veterans and their families. We have the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare and we have our veterans employment and education programs because we know a pillar of wellbeing is actually employment and education. There is a great deal happening in that space, and the secretary can probably comment further about the input of the Attorney General into that space.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: No, but thank you.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: When this idea came, was Veterans New South Wales or the Minister consulted as to this particular idea?

Ms MACKANESS: Yes, absolutely. It was raised through the Commonwealth so as well as the ministerial round table that became the task force there is the Commonwealth State and Territory committee working group and I have been sitting on that group. Its work is broad ranging: we look at issues of veterans in jail, we look at cross-jurisdictional issues of transport, animals that support veterans and regulations in various States and difficulties of transports across boundaries. There are a whole lot of considerations our defence force is national and veterans live in different States and that can be difficult. So we are working really hard to try to better coordinate all of the things that support veterans living across Australia.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Has this ministerial council provided or made public any reports on its workings?

Ms MACKANESS: It is largely run by the Commonwealth in relation to sharing information. You may be aware that there is now a Joint Transition Authority for the Department of Veterans' Affairs [DVA] and Defence working together to ensure that the whole-of-life journey for veterans and our Defence Force people is well managed. Previously, you would be part of the defence force, you would leave and, unless you had an issue, you would not be part of the DVA system. Now they are working with a Joint Transition Authority. So there has been a lot of work done by the Commonwealth on national reports. That is why we have national figures for suicide, for homelessness—through all their reporting. The Commonwealth is now getting much better at trying to give us the data in each jurisdiction so that we can work better to respond to that data.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: For veterans and the public to know what is going on—what this group has been doing—where do they go to find those reports?

Ms MACKANESS: Mostly the Commonwealth work is published. Any of their reports on homelessness or their own inquiries are published—they share that data.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Does the veterans affairs New South Wales publish it?

Ms MACKANESS: We publish anything that we are doing ourselves; so we have just published the two-year report for our Veterans Employment Program. Historically, one of the issues for us has been data collection. I am really pleased to say that all Commonwealth States and Territories worked together to ensure that there was a question in the census, which is being implemented this year. That is going to help us incredibly on knowing where our veterans are located. Even the Commonwealth did not have clear data on where all veterans were located historically because unless they applied for assistance through DVA they were part of the community. So the census question will be incredibly helpful for a whole range of reasons. With our Veterans Employment Program, when we initiated it we had no idea how many veterans worked in the New South Wales public service. We now have a veteran question and we have been collecting data now for about five years.

We have a really good record now of the trajectory of veterans within the public service over the past five years and that is published on our website. So all of the work that New South Wales is doing, we have a very well-informed website. Everything that we do we try to share and we also attend all the forums with the

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Commonwealth. The DVA has an ex-service organisation quarterly working group. We go and we actually presented to that group some of the ideas that we were shaping around the veterans strategy in New South Wales. We participate in DVA forums and we also communicate very directly. I think the Minister mentioned this morning, with Anzac Day we did a joint letter from the Minister and Ray James, the State president of RSL, which went out to all the sub-branches across the State to communicate with them about Anzac day guidelines and where to go for further information. Our space is very much a collaborative exercise between Commonwealth, State, local government and all the communities and ex-service organisations.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I will come to that point in particular where I think veterans affairs New South Wales or the Minister put out a 5 February press release entitled "Supporting the investigation into veterans suicide". I am not sure whether you recall that? I just want to know how exactly had the New South Wales Government worked with the Federal Government to save the lives of veterans, particularly with reference to that press release?

Ms MACKANESS: You will have to forgive me, I am not sure I saw—

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Do you want to take it on notice?

Ms MACKANESS: Yes. I will have to look at that press release to understand better.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: It is probably a question to the Minister but, in any event—

The Hon. TREVOR KHAN: He was here.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I could not because you objected all the time. The final couple of questions: Improving the lives of New South Wales veterans, continuing on that theme, how many people responded to the online survey that was put out?

Ms MACKANESS: That was fantastic. We promoted that again through the RSL and through the sub-branches, through the War Widows' Guild, through Legacy, through our own networks. You may be aware the Anzac Memorial falls into our jurisdiction and we employ veterans there, the younger veterans. Veterans tend to have their own networks and, through the Veterans Employment Program, we have a network. We had well over 2,000 responses. Then we held forums, which was quite tricky in COVID, in which we did all the Zoom stuff that everyone was doing. We had 16 forums across the State; we invited regional areas to participate.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: You are answering all my questions.

Ms MACKANESS: That is good. We do really work hard to engage with the veteran community. It is most effective through the ex-services organisations themselves.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Was it publicised through the ex-services group? How was it publicised to veterans?

Ms MACKANESS: Through social media and also through a letter, again, from the various presidents and the Minister to those groups, but also through our own channels advocating for their colleagues to get involved and to respond. It is the first time, I think, a State has asked for veteran input into what we are doing. I think New South Wales is the first State to be looking at developing a strategy.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: And did that include the sub-branches?

Ms MACKANESS: Yes, indeed, although I must comment, some of them are more digital-savvy than others.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: I can understand that. Where those forums were held, were they all, as you said, through Zoom and—

Ms MACKANESS: They were digital but we did reach out regionally and through MPs—Greg Warren attended one with us. We had a women's-focused one and an Indigenous-focused one. So we did work very hard to get a diversity of inputs from people about what we were doing well and what information people needed. One of the great initiatives we have set up is the Service NSW web page for veterans, which is like a gateway to all of the different things that the New South Wales Government is doing to support veterans, and that links back to our own web page, which has the tools for veterans employment and the veterans education programs, for example, and there are lots of things — the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare.

Another thing that we have worked on with the Commonwealth is their rollout of veterans' wellbeing locations across Australia. There are six funded currently; \$5 million is being invested in Nowra and, in a sign of how collaborative we are, I sat on the project steering committee with the RSL to develop the project. RSL

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LifeCare tendered for that and that is now being delivered by RSL LifeCare, but, in fact, the New South Wales Government is acknowledged because all of our services will be promoted through that location.

We are linking the local health district down there to the National Centre for Veterans' Healthcare so that veterans in the regions can get maximum benefit of collaboration and connectivity to world-class services. We have sport involved, because sport has helped contribute to a Vet Fit program where Veterans Sport Australia is also funding a position down in Nowra to help develop sport programs. So community activity and connectivity is very important for veterans when they leave the service.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Just one final question. Those veterans who are not computer-savvy or knowledgeable about how to use computers and so forth, what other means do you have to reach out to them?

Ms MACKANESS: I am very proud of my small team, who answer every phone call. Our grants program, if we have elderly World War II veterans who are trying to apply and they cannot, then we will assist them in how they need to, over the phone. We are very conscious of supporting every veteran who gets in touch.

The Hon. SHAOQUETT MOSELMANE: Excellent. Thank you.

The Hon. ROSE JACKSON: I do not have any more questions.

The CHAIR: I note that you took some questions on notice.

Mr COUTTS-TROTTER: We did.

The CHAIR: The secretariat will be in contact with you. There are 21 days, or sooner, please, in which to reply. Thanks very much for coming today.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.