

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 3 – EDUCATION

Monday 2 December 2024

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

EDUCATION AND EARLY LEARNING, WESTERN SYDNEY

CORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:15.

MEMBERS

Ms Abigail Boyd (Chair)

The Hon. Scott Barrett
The Hon. Anthony D'Adam
The Hon. Rachel Merton (Deputy Chair)
The Hon. Tania Mihailuk
The Hon. Sarah Mitchell

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Welcome to the supplementary hearing of the Portfolio Committee No. 3 – Education inquiry into budget estimates 2024-2025. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past and present, and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today or watching online. My name is Abigail Boyd. I am the Chair of the Committee.

Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Education and Early Learning. I ask everyone in the room to please turn their mobile phones to silent. Parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses in relation to the evidence they give today. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of the hearing. I urge witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants. I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of these procedures.

CORRECTED

Mr MURAT DIZDAR, Secretary, NSW Department of Education, on former affirmation

Ms DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES, Deputy Secretary, Public Schools, NSW Department of Education, on former affirmation

Mr MARTIN GRAHAM, Deputy Secretary, Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing, NSW Department of Education, on former affirmation

Mr PAUL MARTIN, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Education Standards Authority, on former affirmation

The CHAIR: Welcome. Thank you very much for making the time to give evidence. Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. During the session there will be questions from Opposition and crossbench members only and then 15 minutes allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m. and 12.45 p.m. We will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you for being back here with us again. On behalf of the Committee, we pass on our best wishes to Mr Ruming. I understand he is not well. We hope he is on the mend and we look forward to seeing him in February. I wanted to start with some questions, through you, Mr Dizdar, maybe to Mr Graham because it's within his division. In the last estimates in September we were asking some questions in relation to the Teaching, Learning and Student Wellbeing division of the department. There was some media about restructures and positions that were going. Would you be able to give us an update on where that work is up to? I am happy for either or both of you.

MURAT DIZDAR: Good morning to the Committee and thanks for acknowledging Shaun Ruming, our deputy secretary, who is on the people group side. He did want to be here but he is not well at all. Mr Graham can give you the details. We've been working to align that division to make sure it's in line with the plan for public education with the election commitments of this Government. More to the point, there was overlap and duplication of expertise in that area. I think what's really important to highlight—and Mr Graham can give you the numbers—is that there was concern that we would be removing people from their roles who were on the teacher side, what we call non-school based teaching staff. In fact, we'll have well over a thousand non-school based teaching staff in that area despite returning some back to their substantive positions in schools. It's not well understood out there. It's understood well on the school side that those roles always have an end date—that they're secondments from the school gates, normally for a period between one to three years. So, in the natural course of education delivery, there are always people that come from the school gates and return back to the school gates.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: At the last estimates hearing back on notice we were told that a net 245 of the NSBTS positions out of a total of 1,296 would be impacted. Are they still the numbers or has that changed?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll get Mr Graham to give you the number, but there is only a net reduction in that division—he'll correct me if I've got it wrong—of 37.4 GSE roles.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can I get some specifics?

MARTIN GRAHAM: Since we last met, we put out a consultation draft of our new structure and that contained the number of new positions. We had an enormous amount of feedback from our staff. As a result of that, we went back through and we looked at every area, looked at the positions that we would need so, when we came back with our final structure, there was a net reduction of 218 NSBTS positions—the non-school based teaching service positions—and 37 GSE positions. That was the final structure.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In your division—and I appreciate what Mr Dizdar said about this being a Government commitment. But, prior to this restructure—I'll use that terminology—how many positions were there within your specific division and how many are there now?

MARTIN GRAHAM: There were 2,464 positions in the division and in the parts of the division that moved elsewhere but are still the staff—2,209. So that's the reduction of 218 non-school based teaching service staff and 37 GSE staff.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Of those 218—I'll start with the non-school based. Have they all gone back to substantive roles in schools?

MARTIN GRAHAM: Some of those positions were vacant, so it's not exact match, like for like, but there were a number of people who decided, "Actually, I'm not going to seek a new position in the structure. I like teaching. I'm going to go back to my school." And then there were some people who were unsuccessful in a role.

CORRECTED

All of those people have now been informed. We've completed that process, so they're in the process of either going back to their substantive role or being matched with a school-based position.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is anyone leaving altogether? Have you had any people take up a redundancy package?

MARTIN GRAHAM: There are no redundancy packages because they are temporary roles, mostly—the non-school based teaching service roles. I think there are a small number of people, I understand, who are saying, "Look, I was close to retirement anyway. I'm going to take this as an opportunity to retire."

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm happy for you to take it on notice if there's a breakdown of those positions—how many will be still within the department or intending, and how many are actually leaving the employment. Again, I'm happy for you to take it on notice. I don't expect you to have that.

MARTIN GRAHAM: Yes.

MURAT DIZDAR: Can I just stress that all 218 of those positions, given Mr Graham said some were vacant—those that were substantively occupied have a right of return to a school role, so there's no redundancy that applies to that category of workforce. Your question was about those who leave entirely that don't take up that option. I'll just indicate, Ms Mitchell, it's probably likely to be around March that we know what that figure would look like because the school year would have kicked off, the placements would have all occurred.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate what you say—that there is a right of return—but I've also heard anecdotally that some people are not going back to their schools. That's a matter for individuals. But if you can give us that data when you have it, that would be great. Of those positions, in terms of any based in the regional offices like Coffs Harbour and Tamworth—again, they're two areas that I've heard that there are a number of those positions that are going. Is that spread across the State? Where are they based in terms of that?

MARTIN GRAHAM: We'll be placing people regionally. What we've been doing—so we don't have a particular type of person often in every region. What we do is say, "Look, we're looking for people with this particular experience and, if you're located regionally, we will employ you out of that local office."

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but those who are NSBTS at the moment—some of them could be working in the regional departmental offices and then are going back. Is that correct?

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's right. But we will still be having regionally based staff in all of the regions.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is there an overall reduction in the number of staff in regional departmental offices across the full department? That's probably a better one for you, Mr Dizdar.

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't have a single figure, but I would like to give this to the Committee because I think it's really important context. I just want to find it and not get it wrong for you. Here it is. In June '20, the support arm of the organisation that we call support office—it was better known as corporate office, if you like, which has a footprint right across the State. We were 5,634 staff.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So June 20 this year or June 2020, do you mean?

MURAT DIZDAR: June 2020. We were 5,634 staff across the entire State by way of support to schools. By June '24—this year, four years later—we were 8,720. So the support arm had grown considerably while we were dropping 23,000 student enrolments, while we had something close to 2,500 teacher vacancies. My view as secretary is that we did not have the right balance between—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thanks, Mr Dizdar. What I would like to know—in June 2024 there were 8,720 in that support arm, as you say. What is that number going to be by June next year? Obviously, you've been given targets by the Government to reduce the number of staff that you have. How many positions and how is that changing? What's the target number that you've got?

MURAT DIZDAR: I would value finishing off my earlier answer, because I think—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate that but we don't have a lot of time. We're here because we want to get more data and more information from the department. In June 2024 it was 8,720. There's a restructure in place. What is the end target for the number of staff in that "support arm", using your terminology?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to answer that as well. I was indicating that the support arm had grown exponentially while we had 2,500 teaching vacancies and a drop in enrolments. There were roles that lay vacant that were unoccupied, that were unused. There was duplication that had developed that needed to be addressed. There is no Government target for the reduction on the support side. There is a PSSE Government target across

CORRECTED

every agency that we would reduce PSSE counts by 15 per cent, and we are well on track to deliver that target. That is the only personnel target we have, and we are about halfway to meeting that target.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In terms of some of the other areas for restructure, I think I asked you last time about any reductions of positions within PES and where that was up to. Are you able to provide any updates in relation to those staffing numbers?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, I can. Sorry, just bear with me. Mr Ruming would have had it at his fingertips, but I'm just finding it for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That's all right.

MURAT DIZDAR: We're increasing the number of positions in PES overall. We are appointing more investigators and embedding the final recommendations of the Tedeschi review, and that was to bring the average number of cases per investigator down. We're actually putting in more investigators. That investigator number is going from 19 to 24. We're taking out two director roles in that structure. Overall, PES is going up in workforce.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When you say you're going up in workforce, what was it previously and how many will it be after that?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me get you the exact number.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: On notice?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. But, overall, we're going up in number, with more investigators.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: These are similar questions, just in relation to the early childhood division. Again, I appreciate Mr Barraket is not here. What are the changes in staffing numbers in the early childhood division?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me grab that for you too, Ms Mitchell. With the Early Childhood Outcomes division, we're consolidating our structure from six directorates into five directorates. They're grouped by function and aligned to deliver priority work, including the 100 public preschools commitment, supporting the growing ECEC workforce and supporting those communities where there are shortages of early childhood provision. In PSSE roles, we're going from 25 to 23, a reduction in two positions. In non-PSSE roles, we're going from 523 to 512, a reduction in 11 positions, some of which are vacant.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just lastly, the same questions for the School Infrastructure division. Is there any sort of consolidation and changes to roles there too, please?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me get you the exact number on notice for that one, if that's okay?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great.

MURAT DIZDAR: Because that's got some movement of roles from infrastructure into people group, into the operations group and into comms and engagement. That was an area of the organisation that was operating in parallel and had duplicative functions, which I've been taking back in, for example, in comms and engagement, consolidating those roles; in health and safety, consolidating those roles. So I want to get the accurate number for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great, if you could give that to us on notice. I will move now to some questions around the additional school development days that there will be in 2025. I note that there were some comments from yourself in an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* saying that there would be supervision at schools on those days, but the Teachers Federation made it clear there would not be. What is the message to parents? Should they be keeping their children at home on those additional days or will there be supervision at schools?

MURAT DIZDAR: Firstly, school development days are really critical. It enables the entire workforce to undertake professional learning and development. Most of it is in fact system directed. We've done days on Aboriginal education and days on explicit teaching. It goes to the professional development of our teaching and non-teaching staff. Ever since school development days have existed, they have always been student-free days. They are designed for the staff to undertake learning.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Dizdar, I genuinely appreciate that, but it's a specific question. There was mixed messaging in terms of those additional days, particularly at the start of the year. For a mum or dad who is watching now, do they keep their children at home or do they send them on those additional days?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't think there is any mixed messaging. Forever and a day, those school development days have been designed for teachers and non-teaching staff to undertake professional learning. They

CORRECTED

are student free, but there has always been supervision available if parents cannot make any alternate arrangement. When Ms Summerhayes and I were principals that was the case, and it still remains to be the case. The thing that we've also improved for parents is that there's no longer a staggered start to the school year. You'd be aware that in high schools, for example, you'd have years 7, 11 and 12 start, then you'd have years 8, 9 and 10 start. In primary schools you'd have kindergarten start over a period of two weeks. We have everyone starting on the same day.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In relation to the Performance and Development Framework and the specifics of that in the most recently signed agreement, can you update or advise the Committee in practical terms what has changed? There has been some public commentary that, effectively, the department won't be able to make any changes to that framework without union agreement. Is that correct?

MURAT DIZDAR: We don't plan to make any changes at the moment to the Performance and Development—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But my point is, if you were to, you'd need to get union agreement to do that. Is that correct?

MURAT DIZDAR: We're not considering making any changes, but if we were to consider changes down the track, we'd consult with the Teachers Federation, the PPA and the SPC. We indicated in the award that that would be a formal consultation that we'd undertake with the federation.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate what you're saying, that there's no current plan, but it's a three-year agreement. There might be a chance that you'd need to do that. If you don't reach agreement with the union on any changes, does that mean that they would not go ahead under the award that was signed recently?

MURAT DIZDAR: I think it's hypothetical. We'd work with them productively if there was to be any change. But I reiterate we have no need to make change. In our view—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Again, I appreciate that. I'm trying to get to the detail of what was in the signed award.

MURAT DIZDAR: —it's a performance and development framework that's working really well. One of the things that the workforce is keen for us to do is not to make change for the sake of change.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate what you're saying, but I'm trying to get to the specifics. There is a signed award. If there are to be any changes to performance development, do you need union agreement? Was that part of the deal that was signed?

MURAT DIZDAR: We need to consult with the union.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And if they don't agree with what you want to do, does the department have the right to come in?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't envisage we'd be in a position like that. We'd work through with them.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But I'm asking if you were—because this could happen. There have to be details in what's been signed. If you reach a stalemate, do you as the employer have the power to make those changes or do you need union agreement to do it?

MURAT DIZDAR: With all due respect, Ms Mitchell, it is a hypothetical. I have indicated to the Committee that we don't have any intent to change it. It's working well. We did agree with the federation that if we were to contemplate changes, we'd consult with them.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So there's nothing in writing that says any changes need to be agreed to by the union?

MURAT DIZDAR: The award agreement indicates that we need to consult with the union.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But not have agreement, just consult?

MURAT DIZDAR: We've been working very productively with all the stakeholders. If we were to contemplate a change, we'd look at working productively with them.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But I want to know specifically the wording. It's only "consult", not full agreement. Is that correct?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't have the exact wording in front of me.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take that on notice and supply it to the Committee? It's actually important in terms of the detail.

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you, that would be great. In the couple of minutes that we have left, do you have any updated data in terms of the number of resignations and the number of retirements since the Committee last met?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, I do.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you provide those, please?

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure. Again, just give me a moment and I'll find it for you. In the 2023 school year, we had 1,078 retirements, which was 2 per cent of the workforce. That was down from a decade ago, 2013, at 1,860 retirements, or 3.8 per cent of the workforce. On the resignation side, in the 2023 school year, we had 2,050 resignations. I don't have the comparable figure.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: To pick up on that point, that data was first supplied to the Committee back in 2023. When Mr Ruming was here last time, he indicated that that data came to the Committee in 2022, so there hasn't actually been any new data. I know he's not here, but Mr Ruming said that there would be more data due to be looked at in March of 2024. But you're still giving me the data that the Committee first got back in 2022. Why isn't there any updated data?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll have to go back and ask, Ms Mitchell. That's the data I've got in front of me.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'll come back to this, but there was an article in the Herald last week that gave new figures saying that there were 2,604 resignations and retirements in 2024 compared to 2,860 in 2023. None of those figures match up. I am really keen to know what the latest retirement and resignation data are, because what you are giving us is now almost a year and a half old.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me go and check that. That's the data I've got front of me—that I read out to you. Let me go and double-check and make sure we get you the picture perfect data of it.

The CHAIR: Mr Dizdar, in August at our budget estimates, the Deputy Premier acknowledged that the department's document entitled *Supporting the school community during the current conflict in the Middle East* needed to be looked at after I pointed out the discriminatory impact it was having in our schools. Has that document been reviewed?

MURAT DIZDAR: We've been going and looking at all of the material advice that we've been given on the Israeli-Palestine conflict—the Middle East conflict.

The CHAIR: In relation to that document?

MURAT DIZDAR: All of it—all of the advice we've been given.

The CHAIR: Has that document changed?

MURAT DIZDAR: Since October 2023 we have issued 11 pieces of correspondence to the workforce that relate to how to best support our school communities through an evolving war, how to work with our students and communities around racism and religious intolerance, how they've got a personal right to participate in activities but they've got to respect their professional responsibilities, and how the impact on the Israeli-Gaza conflict is widespread in our school communities. We've made available to them support material around supporting our students and communities in a time of crisis.

The CHAIR: Do you think that all of that is working? When I pointed out in the previous budget estimates the discrimination that was occurring with teachers and staff, the Deputy Premier acknowledged that this needed to be looked at. Has some sort of clarifying document been sent out to ensure those events don't happen?

MURAT DIZDAR: I know that our school communities—there are 2,216 out there—have been doing an enormous job in navigating a very difficult space.

The CHAIR: How does something like the Condell Park situation occur? I'm sure you are aware of this. Someone who is wearing a cultural item that has been worn by their family and culture for thousands of years on official occasions and ceremonies suddenly gets punished for wearing that, and then we end up with a student not being allowed to go to their school formal. Do you think that is a sign of this policy working?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'd really value finishing my earlier answer and then I'm happy to answer to Condell Park. I believe schools have been doing a huge job under very difficult circumstances right across this State. This Middle East conflict can no doubt heighten people's sense of insecurity and can evoke a range of emotions. We're talking about a war that has been occurring. There are heightened international tensions. Schools don't create these tensions. Schools have to then respond and deal—

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Sorry, with respect, we know about the context in which the guidance was issued. When I asked questions on notice in the last budget estimates session, and also separately, I was told that that document was not a policy. It was a communique, not a policy. Yet the article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* talking about this Condell Park incident on 22 November says:

A spokesperson for the NSW Department of Education said its rules were clear about keeping school events apolitical ...

Are they rules? Is this communique a rule?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm not going to comment on the Condell Park situation because it's the subject of proceedings in the Human Rights Commission and I have to be respectful around the confidentiality around that. I'm happy to talk broader, if you'd like.

The CHAIR: Mr Dizdar, as secretary of the department that has issued a series of documents, do you take responsibility for schools having interpreted those documents in ways that have given them cover to be discriminatory in this way?

MURAT DIZDAR: Our schools, we have asked of them what we've always asked: that they remain apolitical.

The CHAIR: But you would agree, wouldn't you, that wearing a Palestinian scarf is not a political statement; it is a cultural statement for somebody from Palestine.

MURAT DIZDAR: Chair, with due respect, if I can finish answering the question you asked me, then I'm happy to go to the next question. I get half a sentence in and you're onto the next question.

The CHAIR: Okay, if you could be relevant to the question.

MURAT DIZDAR: I think I'm being very relevant to the question. I'm addressing it directly. We've asked our schools to remain apolitical for a very tricky situation: a global conflict. They are to not adopt a side. They are to remain neutral in supporting their school communities. We've been quite clear around that.

The CHAIR: But Mr Dizdar, how does that relate to—if you agree, as anybody with education such as yours I would hope would agree—when you've been wearing a symbol of your culture that has been worn for thousands of years, that cannot possibly be a political statement, can it, Mr Dizdar?

MURAT DIZDAR: It can be.

The CHAIR: In what way can it possibly be a political statement?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me answer. With the current international tensions in the Middle East, there is a heightened risk that wearing of national colours or displaying of flags and conducting similar activities can be interpreted as dividing students on national culture.

The CHAIR: Mr Dizdar, that is just—

MURAT DIZDAR: Well, you might not agree, Chair.

The CHAIR: With respect, that is ignorant and racist to be suggesting that somebody's cultural item that they've worn for thousands of years—just because the right-wing media have decided that it's somehow a political statement. We know as educated people—you're in charge of the education department—you know that this is just a cultural item, don't you, Mr Dizdar?

MURAT DIZDAR: It can unintentionally—I was trying to finish—impact on the wellbeing of students, staff and the community because of that heightened sense of tension.

The CHAIR: What about the impact on people from Palestine who are just going about their business wearing their cultural items in the same way as anybody from any other culture? They're now dealing with this discrimination and racism because of this guidance, or documents, or rules, and leadership that your department has been responsible for. Are you not worried, Mr Dizdar, that these people who now are suffering from this sort of discrimination are suffering because of a document that you have issued?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't concur with how you characterise the advice that we've issued. We have not issued advice so that we can be discriminatory around who we serve—far from it. We've issued advice under very tricky conditions for school communities. A global conflict that's away from us that impacts and has heightened tensions and feelings around what that can look like for community is not easy. We'd rather come to the table and just deliver teaching and learning and not contend with that conflict. But I have students of a variety of backgrounds in my context and it's incumbent on me and my staff to be neutral around that, particularly during times of heightened sensitivity.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Mr Dizdar, how on earth is it neutral to declare unilaterally that one person's cultural item is political while one other person's cultural item is not, just because, as you say, there is a war going on many, many miles away? How is it at all acceptable, in Australian society in 2024, to discriminate against people because of their culture?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't concur that we've—our advice has been to—

The CHAIR: You are completely okay with what's happened at Condell Park?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't concur that our advice has had an intention to create discriminatory actions inside our school gates. Our workforce has required support from us at a very difficult time.

The CHAIR: It has not received it, though, has it, if the impact is discrimination and racism in our schools? It is not political to be wearing a cultural item. What is political is to be silencing people because there's some sort of fear that it could be viewed by some as political. Don't we have an obligation to teach and educate our students about what symbols mean and what is an appropriate cultural item to wear?

MURAT DIZDAR: We take that obligation very seriously. That is why we have a strong anti-racism stance in public education. We take that very seriously.

The CHAIR: It's being breached at the moment, though, isn't it, Mr Dizdar?

MURAT DIZDAR: No, it is not at all. I don't concur.

The CHAIR: We'll see what the Human Rights Commission has to say about it.

MURAT DIZDAR: That is your view, Chair. I don't concur.

The CHAIR: I understand you don't concur. Does the Deputy Premier, who said that she would look at this and actually seemed to have some compassion for this issue, when she said this would be looked at—does she agree with you that this is completely—

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order: You can't ask questions of the secretary about an opinion of the Minister.

The CHAIR: That is completely fair.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You could ask if you've had discussions about it.

The CHAIR: I can ask, though, have you had discussions with the Deputy Premier around this communiqué since the August budget estimates when she agreed it should be looked at?

MURAT DIZDAR: I've had very many discussions since 23 October with the Deputy Premier around this.

The CHAIR: About this?

MURAT DIZDAR: About this matter.

The CHAIR: Do you believe you are following the policy guidance of the Deputy Premier then?

MURAT DIZDAR: No. I have been indicating to the Deputy Premier what the department stance is around this, and in best navigating what is a global crisis—a war across the globe—that is impacting on our school context. You might have the view that you don't concur with that. I've been briefing her on it.

The CHAIR: I can see what's happening on the ground. It's very disappointing. I will go to my colleague.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Good morning. It's good to see you all. I just wanted to ask a couple of quick questions. One I wanted to ask is in relation to the recent shutdown that the Minister for Transport and the Government were potentially going to have across a Friday to Sunday starting, I think, on 22 November. Did any of the departmental transport officials, either from the Minister's office or heads of the department, contact you in relation to any impact on the schools on Friday?

MURAT DIZDAR: Organisationally, we had been in contact with Transport for NSW around it.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Specifically about the impact on Friday 22 November, and knowing that a lot of schools would do remote learning?

MURAT DIZDAR: Around the potential impact if it took place—the industrial action—so that we could give any necessary communication to our people on the ground.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Did you contact principals in that case to prepare for remote learning?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: We went back and looked at what we had done in the past. Because it doesn't have a universal impact everywhere in the State, we were in a position where we were going to put some advice for our directors of educational leadership to those areas that would be more impacted. It didn't come into play. We were ready to do it if needed.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Did any schools still do remote learning, though?

MURAT DIZDAR: Not to my understanding. Not because of the industrial action—that was planned.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Schools had to make plans on the Wednesday. At that time it was pretty clear from media reports that the action would continue on Friday, and they had to notify parents on that day. I think that by the time this was resolved very late on the Thursday, at about 5.00 p.m., it was too late for some of those principals of the high schools that were impacted to then contact parents. I understand remote learning did continue for some schools on the Friday.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to check.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Will you take that on notice for me? I don't need to know the names of the schools. I'd like to know the number of schools that did have to make provisions, such as remote learning on the Friday. I'd also like to know, Mr Dizdar, how many sporting and other events had to be cancelled. I understand exams as well were cancelled or postponed by schools on the Wednesday for that Friday. I'd like to know the full impact on schools—in Sydney, in particular—in New South Wales.

MURAT DIZDAR: Ms Mihailuk, my understanding at the time was that there was no material impact on our schools. I'll check if any were non-operational.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I think you should check, Mr Dizdar. Obviously, I am cognisant of some impact myself. I know from talking to other parents that sporting activities were postponed. Once they thought it was industrial action on the Wednesday, sporting activities were postponed on the Friday. Also, a lot of other activities, including exams, were postponed.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me see what I can reasonably get on that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'd like to know the number of schools that had an impact directly as a result of this industrial action potentially being proposed on the Wednesday and then stopped late Thursday.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me see what we've got available.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: In these sorts of instances, Mr Dizdar, do you expect that the heads of Transport will contact you as well, given the seniority of your position and the need for you to contact schools? To me, it looked like the Government just wasn't cognisant. I asked a very clear question on the Thursday in question time, and it was obvious to me that the Government—or, certainly, the department of transport, the Minister and the Premier—did not really take into consideration the impact on schools. Everybody worried about the concerts and so forth on the weekend, but they didn't really have a clear understanding of the potential impact on Friday. Is there a way, Mr Dizdar, that you can perhaps speak with the Premier, or certainly with the Minister for Transport, to let them know that these types of industrial actions have significant impact on schools?

MURAT DIZDAR: Ms Mihailuk, I'm not sure I can speak for former events. Certainly, on this event, we had great contact from the transport department. We were right across the possibility that that would occur. In fact, we were geared to give appropriate communication to our schools.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Did you give appropriate communication to schools?

MURAT DIZDAR: As I said to you, the potential impact—and it didn't go ahead—is not uniform across the State. We were in a position where we were going to give advice, through our DELs, to those areas that were going to be more impacted. It didn't come into play. I've got to commend my Transport colleagues. They were communicating to us throughout and were very cognisant that it could have impact on schools.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You may not know this; you might have to take this on notice. Do you know how many school students catch trains in the Sydney region?

MURAT DIZDAR: I wouldn't have that data.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Could you take that on notice? I'd imagine it would be well into many thousands.

MURAT DIZDAR: We're close to 800,000 students, so it would be a large number.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: It would be a large proportion of that, right?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I can only imagine that if, suddenly, there are no trains on the Friday—the vast majority of these 800,000 students possibly take some sort of public transport, if not trains.

MURAT DIZDAR: It would definitely have an impact on school attendance and what it means for families. Some would make other arrangements to get them there. In my experience, it would have an impact.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: If a school tells their students that they've got to do remote learning, presumably a parent has to take a day off to manage that at home on a Friday.

MURAT DIZDAR: I do not believe that that came into play at all in any of our contexts, but I am happy to go check that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'd like you to take that on notice, Mr Dizdar. Without going into detail, I am aware of some remote learning having taken place on 22 November.

MURAT DIZDAR: Okay. Let me check that, Ms Mihailuk.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I've got a few minutes left before I go into the next session. I'd like to ask you about the mobile phone ban. I note that there was a survey. Mobile phone usage was banned in New South Wales public schools, as you know, in October 2023. I'd like to know how we're measuring the effect of the ban. You're going to probably mention this to me, but I know that there was a survey. The Department of Education released results of a survey of 1,000 school principals which touted the supposed success of the phone ban. Can you elaborate a little bit more on how they prepared that kind of data?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. Ms Mihailuk, we do an annual principals survey that goes to our principals across the State. Because it's a departmental-led survey, we're able to put in the questions we'd like feedback on. Previously, we haven't put in stuff on the mobile phone ban. We were able to insert that question. Remember that this phone ban applied to high schools. That's where it came in new.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Yes, to New South Wales public high schools.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. We've got about 1,000 schools that serve high school students. They are high schools, central schools and schools for specific purposes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Who conducted the survey? Is this a survey that the department does, or does a third party do the survey?

MURAT DIZDAR: It's a department-led survey, yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But is that handed over to a third party to undertake?

MURAT DIZDAR: It's handed over to our Centre for Educational Statistics and Evaluation, CESE, which does all our research arm and evaluation arm.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I am interested, for example, with the data they have come up with that 81 per cent say that students' learning has improved since mobile phones were banned. How do you assess something like that? How does the centre assess data like that?

MURAT DIZDAR: These are direct questions that we asked of our principals in schools. In my movements—and Ms Summerhayes might add to this—principals are reporting less disruption in classrooms.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: No, they have said specifically that children's learning has improved.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, and it goes to less disruption in classrooms. It can go to less suspensions around mobile phones and less detentions and less parental contact.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But that is different from improved learning, Mr Dizdar. You would accept that? Improved learning is suggesting that there are better outcomes in NAPLAN results, for example, and literacy and numeracy results. Isn't that what improved learning would ordinarily mean?

MURAT DIZDAR: Where you're spot-on is when teachers are reporting, and that's what they are reporting.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: No, this is the principals reporting. This is only a principals survey, Mr Dizdar.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, they are reporting about what the feedback is they are getting in the school. When there is less distraction—

CORRECTED

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Do they conduct a separate survey? Do the principals conduct a survey of their teachers?

MURAT DIZDAR: No, this is a statewide survey that I'm speaking about.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: And that's a statewide survey only of principals, right? Only principals participate in this survey.

MURAT DIZDAR: When principals are responding to that, Ms Mihailuk, they are responding in relation to their school community and the feedback that they're getting.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: It is quite a big statement to say that 81 per cent say that students' learning has improved since mobile phones were banned. We need to get a little bit more than just a survey from principals to indicate that. I would have liked to have seen: Are the results different in NAPLAN across year 7 or year 9? Are there better results coming out of year 11 yearly marks? Where are the improved learning outcomes and how is it being assessed, Mr Dizdar? It can't just be a survey of principals who are saying, "Yep, it is all great."

MURAT DIZDAR: I think it's outstanding feedback. Secondary principals can be some of our harshest critics.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: It's hard to measure what this feedback really means. I would have liked to have heard more from teachers specifically in terms of the mobile phone ban.

MURAT DIZDAR: Can I also give you another data point you might be interested in?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Yes, if there is more data, I'd be happy to have it. You can take it on notice. Any data you have about the mobile phone ban I'd like it.

MURAT DIZDAR: I have one in front of me I can give to you.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Yes.

MURAT DIZDAR: This is from the Department of Customer Service, so not from our department. They ran a customer sentiment survey from 24 April to 1 May, and it said that—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: 24 April to 1 May?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: What year?

MURAT DIZDAR: It is from 2023, and it said that 72 per cent of parents were positive about the idea.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Hang on, so from 24 April 2023 to 1 May 2023 that department conducted a survey before this ban came into play?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: The ban came into play on 23 October, so how—

MURAT DIZDAR: I was going to give you one before and then one after.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Okay, so the parents were saying that they were upset at that point?

MURAT DIZDAR: No.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But this is about improved learning outcomes.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order: Can we just allow Mr Dizdar to complete his answer?

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order.

MURAT DIZDAR: Before the ban, 72 per cent of parents were positive in New South Wales about the idea of the introduction of the ban for public high school students.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I support it myself.

MURAT DIZDAR: And then—this is the Department of Customer service again—25 March 2024, 72 per cent responded that they were positive about the impact of the ban on their children.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Dizdar, I just want to go back to some more staffing numbers. Just before our time finished before, I was mentioning an article in *The Sydney Morning Herald* that was published on 19 November this year that said there were 2,604 resignations and retirements in 2024 compared to 2,860 in 2023.

CORRECTED

I appreciate you said you wanted to take that on notice, but could you just take on notice for me, firstly, whether that data that was provided to *The Sydney Morning Herald* was correct and, secondly, the breakdown of those numbers of how many were resignations and how many were retirements?

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Last time we got some data from Mr Ruming about the overall numbers of permanent, temporary and casual teachers employed by the Department of Education. Are there any updated figures that you can provide for us with that breakdown? Again, I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me get the breakdown for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Sorry, you're going to take it on notice? When you said you'd get the data for me, I thought you were looking at your—

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. It's not at my fingertips. Let me get it for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could provide it on notice. There was a table that we got last time, so if we could get an update of that.

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll update the table.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And then also just the latest vacancy data that you have for public schools. I know that the Minister recently has been using figures from the start of term 3, but you would appreciate that is now a few months old. Do you have any of the latest vacancy data for us? Just across the system of what the current vacancy numbers are.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me have a look at what I have that I might be able to give to you. I have term 3, week two.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But we're term 4, week seven or eight now. You don't have any updated data?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm just having a look for you, Ms Mitchell. No, that is what I have in front of me, so let's go back and take it on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could take it on notice. If you can get us that even before the end of the hearing today—if possible. It is only a statewide number. It shouldn't be too difficult to get for us.

MURAT DIZDAR: We will see if we can do that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate that. The policy change for the conversion of temporary to permanent roles for both teachers and SLSOs—we have had the overall figures in terms of the number of people who have taken up those opportunities, but can you provide any data in terms of how many of those teachers and SLSOs have either had a reduction in hours, have changed schools or have left the department since that policy was implemented?

MURAT DIZDAR: Firstly, there wouldn't be any reduction in hours.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So no SLSOs have lost days or any hours?

MURAT DIZDAR: No. In fact, when we offered, we offered to increase hours. There can only be a reduction in hours for an individual if they requested it. That's the first thing. The second part of your question?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: How many have changed schools—so were made permanent after being at a particular school but their position is no longer at that school and they have had to move somewhere else?

MURAT DIZDAR: This temp to perm was to appoint them at their current site. They were all appointed to their current site because they had done three or more years of temp at their current site. The only way they could then move from their current site is through promotion or resignation or nominated transfer process.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So every single one of those—and I will just stick with teachers—who were made permanent under this policy continue to be at the school that they were at unless they have asked to move? So their positions are all there for them at that school; no-one has been moved anywhere else.

MURAT DIZDAR: No.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Not one teacher?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: No. They were appointed to that school, and the only way they can move is through promotion elsewhere, through retirement or through nominated transfer from the system, which is being worked through and is always worked through in term 4 and in term 1. I could give you that figure at the end of term 1.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In really simple terms, say I am a teacher at Neutral Bay Public School. I had been a temporary there for at least three years. I've been given a permanent role there. I don't want to leave. I'm happy at that school. I'm still able to stay at that school. I'm not being moved. I'm not being told I have to go and teach anywhere else.

MURAT DIZDAR: You are appointed there, and what happens is if you don't want to move, so you are not chasing a promotion, you're not retiring, you're not resigning, you stay there, but you are part of the school's normal staffing processes, which include nominated transfers. If at Neutral Bay—the example you gave—we dropped student numbers and we needed one less teacher in this scenario, the principal would work with the staff to see who would want to nominate and get a move. If there wasn't anyone, they would work on the school needs and then someone would move. That could be that person. It may not be that person.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I just picked Neutral Bay at random. Just to be clear, I haven't spoken to anyone at Neutral Bay.

MURAT DIZDAR: Great school.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It is a great school. Theoretically, there are people under this position who got their permanent role at a certain school but may find themselves being transferred somewhere else if their staffing numbers at that school have gone down?

MURAT DIZDAR: They could.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you have any data that you can provide on notice—and it might be next year and I appreciate what you are saying about terms 4 and 1 and the changes—of how many have actually been made permanent but are being transferred to another school or have then chosen to leave the department altogether because they haven't been able to stay at their preferred school?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, we can look at that. It's a difficult piece, but we can look at it.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Because, again, I've had reports coming from colleagues and others that it is a great idea in theory, but a lot of people are finding that the roles at those schools aren't there anymore because of staffing changes. People are either leaving or going to non-government schools because, while they've been made temporary, there isn't a position for them at the school they want to be teaching at. That has come back as a concern.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me look at that, but it wouldn't be until the end of term 1 when that staffing process is all done. Also, maybe this piece of information will help: It's not a last in, first out process.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate that.

MURAT DIZDAR: When that Neutral Bay example comes up with one fewer teacher, you work with your whole staff on who that nominated transfer might be.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Does the same apply for SLSOs, in that positions have been made permanent but if the budget structures don't allow for the number of SLSOs to be at a particular school, they may also be placed elsewhere or be looking for other roles?

MURAT DIZDAR: Roughly the same procedures. They're not the picture of exactly the teaching, but roughly the same.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When you talk about an overall figure of people who've been made permanent, whether they are teachers or SLSOs, there is actually a proportion of those people who are either going to be at other schools at some point or potentially leaving, just because of the nature of the staffing system?

MURAT DIZDAR: Close to 17,000—16,500—were made permanent, both teachers and SLSOs. They maintain permanency in the system. Nominated transfers are a natural part of staffing operations as numbers of students go up and down. They've always been there. These people are now permanent and can be part of that process.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That 17,000 over time—

MURAT DIZDAR: I rounded off that figure.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: —will likely go down as people move or maybe get given a job at a school that they don't want to go to.

MURAT DIZDAR: They're still permanent.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but it may not be for a longstanding position.

MURAT DIZDAR: Once you're permanent, you can't lose your permanency.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but you can be told to go elsewhere and you then make that choice if you want to take that role or not.

MURAT DIZDAR: Some go of their own accord, like I said. For others, unfortunately, the school comes into play where there's a drop in numbers.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I understand.

MURAT DIZDAR: It's a nominated process.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Thank you very much, Mr Dizdar. This probably fits with you. Could I touch on the code of conduct? I know that Madam Chair has spoken about this earlier today. Does the code of conduct remain in place today, relevant to New South Wales schools and teachers?

MURAT DIZDAR: It does.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: If I make reference to correspondence that I have had from the Deputy Premier relating to the application of this, do the controversial issues in schools procedures form part of that code of conduct.

MURAT DIZDAR: Correct.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Mr Dizdar, we've spoken previously about Davidson High School and the reports and concerns there relevant to students of the Jewish faith. The correspondence from the Deputy Premier in reference to that cites that the materials screened in the classroom were reported as anti-Jewish, anti-Western propaganda by a self-described socialist YouTube account. The Deputy Premier refers to that as ill-advised. How is this not a breach of the teachers' code of conduct?

MURAT DIZDAR: Firstly, I want to commend 95,000 teachers out there who do a sterling job in delivering the syllabus every single day. As a former teacher in the system, you're making your professional judgement around what resources and material you use to bring that syllabus and curriculum to life. It can be tricky because when you're going to address what can be deemed a controversial issue, you've got to have balanced perspective around that. I'd like to think I got it right every time as a teacher but, occasionally, you may not get that right. It is appropriate that referrals are made and, in this case, I can tell you, Ms Merton, the appropriate referrals and actions took place. You could be talking about a teacher who has had an exemplary teaching career and record, and the judgement on this occasion, in hindsight, was not optimal and led to controversy. You may end up where appropriate counselling and reminding them of their duties is sufficient. In other cases, you might have an employer that has got it wrong on numerous occasions and you might need to take other action.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Thank you, Mr Dizdar. You've captured that, in terms of being ill-advised and not thinking through the screening. I think Davidson High School is an example of that, in terms of being ill-advised. My question is how is this example not a breach to the code of conduct?

MURAT DIZDAR: Respecting the privacy of the individual, I want to assure you, Ms Merton—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: I'm not asking for private details.

MURAT DIZDAR: I want to assure you, Ms Merton, that the appropriate referrals were made, and appropriate action was taken with that employee.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Parents, the school community and the school reported that the individual teacher in this instance continues to teach within that school.

MURAT DIZDAR: Like I said, the appropriate referral was made. That matter was assessed, and the appropriate, required disciplinary action was taken with that staff member, commensurate and in line with their track record of service in public schools.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Mr Dizdar, could you run me through the process for reporting breaches of the code of conduct?

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure.

CORRECTED

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: How does it work in an example like this, with a concerned parent, a family of the Jewish faith and an individual student who is very distressed, has had a long absence from school and doesn't want to return to the classroom? How does the code of conduct work in an instance like this—and I have the highest respect for the teaching profession—of ill-advised screening of this material?

MURAT DIZDAR: I encourage parents to make that report to the school principal. The school principal then refers that to Professional and Ethical Standards for independent assessment and examination.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Do we not recognise that often a parent reporting directly to the school of their child can cause discomfort? It's not appropriate.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'd like every parent, including myself as a parent in the system, to feel comfortable enough to report it to the school, but if they're not—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: What avenue is available to a parent in a situation where they are not comfortable reporting this breach in their child's school directly to the principal? What else is available in terms of the code of conduct and parents?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, I respect that. I find it comes into play very seldom but, if needed, they can refer it to the Director, Educational Leadership, which oversees the school. They might refer it to the Deputy Secretary, Deb Summerhayes.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: How would parents know that this is available?

MURAT DIZDAR: That's part of our complaints procedures.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Where do parents find that?

MURAT DIZDAR: They publicly sit on our website facing the entire New South Wales community.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: So there is an avenue there for parents to report?

MURAT DIZDAR: Definitely, yes. I find it seldom comes into play. I find that parents often report to the school, which is a great way because you can get all sorts of things reported and sorted out at the school level. It doesn't require further intervention. When it requires further intervention, it's made clear.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Can you not recognise instances where, in your local school community, you're not comfortable reporting to the local school as a concerned parent?

MURAT DIZDAR: I want parents to feel comfortable—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: You don't recognise circumstances that could be in place?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order: Ms Merton is asking questions and starting another question before Mr Dizdar is able to start an answer to the first question. She could keep her questions to one at a time and allow the witness to answer the questions as they're asked.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Sorry, thank you. I'll provide time. Thanks, Mr Dizdar.

MURAT DIZDAR: There are 1.6 million parents, carers and guardians whose entrust us with their children in public education. Largely, I find that they are comfortable approaching the school. But if they're not, because there can be particular circumstances—I appreciate that, Ms Merton—it's very clear in our complaints procedures, publicly facing on our website, who they can report that to.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Could that information be made available to the Committee? How do parents navigate this? What communication is available to them and how do they know where to go?

MURAT DIZDAR: We're happy to send you the link. It is on our website.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Mr Dizdar, in terms of breaches of the code or whatever the terminology may be on this, how many breaches have been reported in the last 12 months?

MURAT DIZDAR: I think the terminology "alleged breaches" is more factual and appropriate—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Sure, let's use that.

MURAT DIZDAR: —because we have to respect that the individual has a right of response to that. Sorry, how many—say that again.

CORRECTED

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: How many alleged breaches have been reported in the last 12 months relevant to the code of conduct?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'd have to take that on notice. I'm not sure if we have the totality of that data.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Could you share with the Committee a recent—where there has been a reported alleged breach of the code?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to take it on notice. We're a very large system: 95,000 teachers, 800,000 students, 1.6 million parents. So there can be things that are referred.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: So just to let parents know, in the instance of an alleged breach being reported—and we've gone down the department reporting line on this, which you acknowledge is available.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: What is the process around it?

MURAT DIZDAR: There's an allegation that's put forward and then PES receives that allegation and goes about their independent work of the school and will, in my experience, interview relevant people if needed, including the family that made the referral, and interview the teacher in the scenario you gave and the school principal and any other parties that might come out of that interview process that they need to speak to. Then, once they've got all the material and information around them, they assess that information and then make a finding.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Sorry, I just missed the acronym as to who drives this. The PES?

MURAT DIZDAR: The Professional and Ethical Standards directorate.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Directorate?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Who is responsible for that? Is there one individual or—

MURAT DIZDAR: We've got an executive director that oversees that division and a deputy secretary that oversees that area.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: So they are pretty much overseeing and managing the code of conduct?

MURAT DIZDAR: All of us are managing and enacting the code of conduct. It's incumbent on the entire workforce. But, if there are allegations of potential breaches, we work with PES around that.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: In terms of the number or examples of alleged breaches in the last 12 months, that's not available to us?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't have that here but I'm happy to take it on notice for you.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Is there a register or a table or records kept within the department or from PES as to reported breaches?

MURAT DIZDAR: We make all of our required reporting, including to the Ombudsman and the Independent Commission Against Corruption. I sign off on all of those reports. So then we go back and get the data that you're after to see what we've got.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Mr Dizdar, if I could just take you to the recent incident at Illawong Public School involving alleged reports of inappropriate sex education content. How were the parents of affected students informed about the incident and were they consulted during the investigation?

MURAT DIZDAR: I have to be careful with what I cover here, Ms Merton, because it's part of an investigation. We've communicated to the school community that the principal has been directed to undertake other duties in the department outside of any school whilst there is a thorough investigation into the matter. My understanding is that parents in stage 3, year 6, in particular, had given permission—were asked to give permission for their children to undertake sex education by an outside provider in line with the syllabus. I think that occurred to good effect. There was a follow-up of that, which has been a cause for concern and reported concern. That's being investigated. And we've been communicating with the year 6 parents. I can tell you, Ms Merton, each of them have received, on at least one occasion, an individual phone call from the relieving principal to talk to them about the matter and to talk to them about the support that's available to their child.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order: I raise this point before you start your questioning. In the previous session, I'm not entirely clear about the phrase that was used, but there was an apparent imputation

CORRECTED

that the secretary was ignorant and racist. I'm sure that wasn't your intention, Ms Boyd, so I might just give you the opportunity to withdraw or clarify that you weren't actually suggesting that the secretary himself is ignorant or racist.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr D'Adam, for that. Yes, I certainly was not suggesting that the secretary was ignorant or racist, and I will leave it there. Turning to something different, early childhood education and care and the regulatory authority for the ECEC sector—how many staff sit in that department?

MURAT DIZDAR: Just bear with me, Chair, and I'll give you the exact number. I know I've got it in front of me, but I want to go to the right spot. Close to 450 full-time staff.

The CHAIR: So 450 full-time staff?

MURAT DIZDAR: Close to.

The CHAIR: Do you have any details as to how they are geographically broken down? Have they got different offices in different places or are they all centrally located?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'd have to take that part on notice—where they're located.

The CHAIR: If you could tell me how many of them are actively going out and doing site visits and how many are back office functions or any other details you can give me around that, that would be very useful.

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure.

The CHAIR: It's been reported that the Australian Skills Quality Authority, the ASQA, has closed three colleges recently and intends to cancel 17,000 qualifications issued by those institutions, including qualifications in early childhood education. Those colleges are Luvium, Gills College and the International Institute of Education and Training. Do you know how many early childhood workers in New South Wales will be impacted by that cancellation of qualifications?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. Luvium is the one that we've been working with our Federal counterparts. It cuts across other States as well. We've been working with the Office of the Children's Guardian. We've been working and communicating with the sector here in New South Wales. We've been at that one for a couple of weeks now, Ms Boyd, and I am pleased to report that, at this stage, it has not impacted on the viability or operations of any of the services in New South Wales, because it was quite an alarming initial position that we've had to work through. We're only in the early stages of doing the same work with the next two providers that the Commonwealth has put on notice.

The CHAIR: Has there been any thought given to providing some sort of training for those students who have had their qualifications cancelled in order to get them back into the workforce?

MURAT DIZDAR: It's certainly been a consideration in the discussions we've had around Luvium. We've had to be very careful and work on an individual basis because of possible claims of, in laymen's terms, cash for credentials. If someone has knowingly partaken in that, it might be questionable whether we should then be giving them support to get a credential because of how they've gone about obtaining it in the first place.

The CHAIR: But genuine students?

MURAT DIZDAR: For genuine students, I certainly think there's a case for how we might support them. The only way to get to each individual has been to check on the Working with Children Check, then liaise with the sector, communicate with the sector, encourage contact so we can support. What I can tell you today is that, coming in, I know that there has been no service that has been materially impacted by way of not being able to operate. The numbers became quite small of who we were trying to pin down and liaise with at an individual level. There was a first number bandied about—because Luvium was across qualifications and across different States—of about 7,000 or thereabouts, Ms Boyd. But the numbers were much, much smaller when it came to early childhood in New South Wales.

The CHAIR: Did you find a concentration in any particular service of students with these qualifications?

MURAT DIZDAR: Not that I'm aware of.

The CHAIR: Could I perhaps ask for that on notice, just if there are any details around numbers of students who were working within ECEC services?

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure.

The CHAIR: I don't need the details of the service, but if it's possible to tell me what the numbers are and if they clustered in a particular service.

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm more than happy to. I just want to put a disclaimer that, on the grounds that I'm allowed to through the Commonwealth et cetera, I just want to check that and not breach anything there.

The CHAIR: Understood.

MURAT DIZDAR: But if I can, definitely.

The CHAIR: I asked some questions on notice in relation to the numbers of show cause notices and other notices that were issued to ECEC services in New South Wales. It appeared that there was a disproportionately large number of show cause notices and cancellations of for-profit ECEC providers as opposed to not-for-profit ECEC providers. Do you know if the regulatory authority has been doing anything additional to ensure that those profit-driven centres are not cutting corners and putting children at risk?

MURAT DIZDAR: I want to commend the regulatory authority for the way they enact their role. It's been quite an eye-opener for me in the 20 months as secretary. I've actually gone and done three field visits with the regulatory authority so I can get a strong hold on what takes place in a visit and have a firm understanding of how they embed and enact the national Commonwealth standards. Their visitation rates are almost like beyond 90 per cent of the entire sector in a year. They are always in a continuous improvement operation as well. But I'd have to go back and see specifically if the data we've given you has led to any difference in action.

The CHAIR: Yes, that would be useful. I think there is a number of very concerning reports that have come out recently about children being harmed and neglected and abused in New South Wales early childhood and education services. I guess what we are particularly concerned about is whether there is any risk analysis being applied to those for-profit centres, where corners are more likely to be cut. Is that something that the regulatory authority has been looking at?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. Let me see if there's any specific action that has been any different. But I know you know, Chair, that we're also enacting the *Review of Child Safety Arrangements* that came out of Operation Tenterfield, which has been the subject of the Education Ministers Meeting, and we're working with every jurisdiction in the country around that.

The CHAIR: I think it has been reported as being a little similar to the risks that are inherent in the aged-care sector as well, that when you have big profit takers coming into the market that there is more risk to our most vulnerable people. I'm just interested if there has been some sort of risk matrix or some analysis done by the regulatory authority that is particularly looking at those private operators.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me find that detail out. The really comforting part, in my view, around show cause is exactly that—that means the risk rating of that site for us has now increased. It means our line of sight to that site is stronger and it means you've got to demonstrate the improvement to address the show cause. That's the part that I take a lot of heart out of, the fact that we saturate what the visitation looks like—well over 90 per cent. But I think it's a good, specific question. If the data has shown that there are higher rates of show cause in one particular service provision arm of the sector, then let me go back and see if there has been any discernible difference in action we take.

The CHAIR: In terms of the regulatory authority, obviously they are subject to that national framework.

MURAT DIZDAR: Correct.

The CHAIR: At what point does the department get involved? At what point do you get involved in terms of ensuring that the regulatory authority is doing its job properly?

MURAT DIZDAR: As secretary, I've got ultimate oversight of that, and I work with my deputy secretary colleague. The regulatory arm sits in our operations area. We have an early childhood division, but when I came in I removed the regulatory authority from there and put it into the operations arm of the organisation. I wanted it at arm's length from the actual early childhood sector. I want it strongly to be—the regulator needs to be at arm's length, without any perception which can come into play when you sit in the same division. So we've made that adjustment. Remember, they're regulating close to 6,000 services in this State, with the full diversity and spread of for-profit, not-for-profit, community, preschool etcetera. I know that they, like all their counterparts, are at the table to enact the national review recommendations that are coming out of Tenterfield. I know as secretary, with our education Minister, we've been part of those discussions at EMM.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Mr Dizdar, I want to go back to the mobile phone ban. I think we were saying 1,000 high schools or 1,000 school principals have been surveyed. According to the "Digital devices in NSW schools – policy and procedures", high school students are now required to leave their phones either in lockable pouches, off and away in bags, in lockers or handed into school staff at the beginning of the day and

CORRECTED

stored in either the classroom or front office. Have you got a breakdown of how many schools are taking which option? For example, how many schools have a mobile phone locker or pouch?

MURAT DIZDAR: Ashfield Boys was the fantastic example that was—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: That's the only example I can see at the moment that has that. Are there other schools that have the mobile phone lockers or pouches? Obviously that was something you put in the media. We saw that article, I think, in May 2024. But how many other schools have that?

MURAT DIZDAR: There is a number out there. There's also the Yondr pouches that they use, which are lockable pouches.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But let's be realistic, Mr Dizdar. How many schools actually have these lockers? Who paid for that for Ashfield Boys? Was that something the department paid for? Did they do it or the P&C?

MURAT DIZDAR: It would have been school funded. Dwayne Hopwood's an outstanding principal and he can—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm not questioning that. But who paid for that? Did the P&C contribute to that?

MURAT DIZDAR: It was either the school or P&C. It wasn't departmentally installed.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But if it's one of your policies that you're suggesting that schools take up this mobile phone locker, presumably wouldn't the Minister and the department want to pay for that as well? Why should parents be paying for it?

MURAT DIZDAR: What we did, Ms Mihailuk, when we consulted with the Secondary Principals' Council and our principals, we said, "They are the options that you need to undertake. We don't want to dictate one option. We want you to find the option that works best for your school community. And if you need our assistance—for example, this is the option you choose"—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: If they could get financial assistance from you? Was that one of the options?

MURAT DIZDAR: We said, "If you want this option but you don't have the means to do that option, you can work with us."

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How many schools have taken up the option of asking the department for funding for these particular mobile phone lockers?

MURAT DIZDAR: We had very little, if any, because they do what works for them on their site and make it work on their site.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So for the vast majority of high schools, what option are they taking up with mobile phones?

MURAT DIZDAR: Like I said, we don't centrally keep the data. But there is a whole range of options when I've moved about—and Ms Summerhayes might want to add to it—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Sorry, a ban was announced and there's no central data, keeping up to date on how the ban is progressing?

MURAT DIZDAR: No, I was talking about how they enact the ban, whether it's lockers or Yondr pouches or put in the office. We haven't been collecting that data.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Why not? Wouldn't you want to see that there's consistency from one school to another?

MURAT DIZDAR: The data that we've been really interested in and we should be really fixated on—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Is just the principal surveys.

MURAT DIZDAR: —is the impact of putting into place a mobile phone ban. It has had overwhelming and resounding positive feedback from parents and from schools.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm sure parents and teachers and schools want to know what the end result is—how consistently it's being applied across schools, particularly if you've got schoolchildren at different schools and there are different policies in place. Presumably having a mobile phone locker is far better than telling the child just to keep it in their bag. How many schools give the option of just storing it away in their bags?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Not necessarily.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Because that's one of your policies. One of the options is just to store it away in a bag. How does that go for a year 9 kid?

MURAT DIZDAR: Not necessarily. The worst thing you could do in a situation like this is to dictate one solution and think that one solution will work everywhere. That's not what we've done.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you're banning phones. You are dictating already by banning a phone. That's a pretty big statement.

MURAT DIZDAR: We don't hide behind that. It's been a really well-received move out there, in schools. But what we didn't dictate is the solution you'd adopt.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Eventually, Mr Dizdar, parents are going to wake up to the fact that, in New South Wales, it's pretty inconsistent from one school to another. I'm delighted for Ashfield Boys that they've got mobile phone lockers that I understand are kept in the roll call rooms so that they can actually see them. That's the difference between a normal locker and a mobile phone locker: that you can see your mobile. The kids feel some comfort, and understandably so, that they can see their phone after they have dropped it off there in the morning. But how many have to hand it in, for example, to the office staff at the front office, where it is not kept in a locker? That would cause a lot of anxiety, wouldn't it?

MURAT DIZDAR: There has been no inconsistency in the feedback we've had. The feedback is resoundingly positive.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But the feedback is only from the principals who have decided the policy for their particular individual school. Who decides, ultimately? The principal for each school. Is that correct? Not the P&C.

MURAT DIZDAR: Not the principal. The principal does that in conjunction with the students and parents of that school.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So you're saying the principal has a discussion with 1,000 students and multiply that by the number of parents, and they work out what the best policy is for their school. Are you sure the parents at each school are involved?

MURAT DIZDAR: In some cases they might, but that's a bit impractical. I think what they do is—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But don't you want to keep that data? I don't understand why the department, given you've issued such a significant ban, wouldn't want to make sure that it's effective beyond a principals survey. You need to know that there's a consistent approach across schools, and that the parents are comfortable and that students are comfortable.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me just finish the former question you had, which was how they might consult. By far and largely what occurs is they consult with the student leadership team that every school has as well as the P&C, because I acknowledge—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Okay, so it's not students now; it's the student leadership team.

MURAT DIZDAR: That's drawn from students. I think it can be impractical if you try to consult with 1,000 students, so that's how they make the best decisions. The data that I'm keen on is to see if it's working—if principals and staff and community believe it's working. That's why I'm looking at the Department of Customer Service data as well as our principals survey.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But customer service data is—you've actually got to see the results. It's again why I asked you earlier about the supposedly improved learning outcomes. There has to be a tangible result there that you can link to this ban.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, and I know you will concur with me that learning outcomes are based on so many things that go into a child. If I was to link mobile phone ban to learning outcomes—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you put it in your survey, so you're saying that it is linked to the mobile phone.

MURAT DIZDAR: —that would be a massive simplification.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you put it in the survey, so you're prepared to say in the survey that there has been an 81 per cent improved learning outcome as a result of this mobile phone ban.

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Because people are reporting that there's less distraction in classrooms, and that the teacher can get on with teaching.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But would that be dependent on the policy that's taken up. If kids can see their mobile phone is safely kept in an open-window locker and that reduces their anxiety, what about for those who have to hand it in at the office?

MURAT DIZDAR: My daughter is at a fantastic government school where the policy is that it's in your bag and away. She's very happy in that school community, and I commend that school community. They wrote to us as parents and said, "This is what we're thinking of adopting. Please let us know if you have any alternative views." I certainly wrote back and said, "That's great."

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm not sure that happened at every school. Mr Dizdar, are you suggesting that, at every school, the parents were written to, or just the one that your daughter's at?

MURAT DIZDAR: Every school would have consulted with their students and their parents in a variety of ways.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How?

MURAT DIZDAR: In some cases, like Dwayne Hopwood, it was very thorough right across the school. In others, it would have been the leadership team and the P&C. At the end of the day, we made a decision around banning mobile phones in high schools and everywhere had to adopt that. There is no inconsistency in adopting.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I think everyone has accepted that, Mr Dizdar. What I think is an issue—and will be an issue in the future, too—is the consistency in how that's being applied. If you can only tell me that Ashfield Boys is the only school at this stage that has the window locker—

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to get you other examples.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: —which is probably the best option where the kids can see their phone. It's in their roll call room and that reduces their anxiety and worry about what's happened to their phone throughout the day, or the likelihood that they will use their phone. If it's kept in a bag, let's be honest, they're likely to get it at recess or lunch. Do you keep track of breaches of policy?

MURAT DIZDAR: Schools do that as part of their welfare and discipline policy.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Who does that? The principals keep track of that?

MURAT DIZDAR: The school leadership team would take care of that. We're getting feedback that there's less follow-up required around mobile phones because of the ban: less suspensions, less detentions and less parental contact. I give credit to the students of the State, who've also responded to the ban.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Prior to this ban, Mr Dizdar, wasn't it already generally a policy that students keep their phones away, or was it school by school?

MURAT DIZDAR: No, that wasn't the case. It was banned in primary schools, and it was left to school by school in high schools.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But there were some schools that were quite good about that. They essentially told their kids to keep their phones away.

MURAT DIZDAR: There were, but that's where there was inconsistency, because it was left to high school per high school, whereas this policy said it's banned in all high schools.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But there's a big difference between a phone being kept in a locker and just telling the year 9 or 10 student, "Keep it in your bag." Isn't there a likelihood that they'll get to the phone that way or not?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't think so. The premise is that there's a ban. I find, once you communicate what the rules are, most students fall in line. We gave a range of options for schools to adopt. Like I said, my daughter is in year 10 at a fantastic government high school. Their policy is in your bag and away. When I speak to the school principal, they've had very little follow-up required.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Dizdar, there was a pre-election commitment to establish the Screen Use and Addiction Research Fund. I asked Ms Read about that in previous hearings. Again, I appreciate that she's not here. Can you tell me how much has been allocated out of that \$2.5 million fund and how many successful applicants there have been so far?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Do you mind, Ms Mitchell, if I take that on notice? I think we've finished the process and are about to or have communicated it, so I want to take it on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate you taking it on notice. So there has been a process, people have been able to apply and it's going to be announced shortly or what is—it's been a couple of years, so I am wondering where it's up to.

MURAT DIZDAR: We may have already informed the providers that have been successful in their application, so I don't want to get it wrong, and I don't actually have the details in front of me.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could provide that on notice, that would be great. In relation to the department's annual report, there was some media commentary that new targets are being finalised and that they'll be available next year, but that they'll be separate from the annual report. Can you outline what those schools targets will be and where parents will be able to find them if they won't be in the department's annual report anymore?

MURAT DIZDAR: What the system targets will be or the school targets?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The system targets.

MURAT DIZDAR: That annual report was a financial year annual report for the first time. That's why they're not appearing there. We're completing the school targets by the end of term 1. It's off the back of a break in NAPLAN, with every State in the same position. We've now got two years worth of NAPLAN.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Will it only be NAPLAN targets, or will there be attendance targets and post-HSC targets? All of that has been available in reports for a number of years.

MURAT DIZDAR: And all of it will be available again.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Why was that not available this time in the most recent iteration?

MURAT DIZDAR: Because they don't exist.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: HSC post-school destination data and attendance data doesn't exist anymore?

MURAT DIZDAR: No, because we're going school by school and building school-by-school targets off the back of a United Nations report that looked into how we went about targets before.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The principals are setting their own and working out what measures they use. That's correct, isn't it?

MURAT DIZDAR: No.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That's been reported—that some might use NAPLAN and some might use other assessments. Are you setting statewide departmental targets for every school?

MURAT DIZDAR: We're setting statewide school targets first, which will be completed by the end of term 1. Off the back of that, we'll be finalising our statewide system targets.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When will they be publicly available?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: The time has expired.

MURAT DIZDAR: They'll be available in the next financial report—annual report, sorry.

The CHAIR: To come back to the early childhood questions, and the moving of the regulator out of child care into general operations, was that done because there was a concern about regulatory capture? Was there something that sparked that move?

MURAT DIZDAR: No, I had no concern. But, because I was realigning what divisions were looking like, I felt it was a good juncture to move it.

The CHAIR: Is that the case in other States and Territories? Do you know? Have they got a separate—

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm not sure. They sit within the organisation, and they sit within various divisions. I felt like—I always like an arms-length operation, and not in the division. But I didn't have any material concern in front of me.

The CHAIR: No reviews or documents or any advice that led to that?

MURAT DIZDAR: No. I just lifted the whole unit and shifted it where it was.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Before I pass to my colleague, you mentioned before 11 pieces of correspondence in relation to the Middle East conflict and schools. Could you provide those on notice—just what the 11 are?

MURAT DIZDAR: That's what we've issued to our schools since October 2023.

The CHAIR: Are you able to table copies or provide copies?

MURAT DIZDAR: Of each of the correspondence?

The CHAIR: Yes.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. They exist out there.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Just back on the locker issue—you gave the commitment here earlier, or you certainly stated, that if a school needs that support from the department they can reach out to the department in relation to these types of mobile phone lockers. I would love to advertise that. I think schools should seek your assistance—and the Minister and the department's assistance—financially.

MURAT DIZDAR: What we advertised—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can I remind you of the comment you made?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can I also ask, Mr Dizdar, what is the cost? Do you know what the cost of these lockers are? You can take it on notice.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm very happy with your support. What we did advertise, when we went with the one position across the State, is we said to our principals, "Here's the range of options. If you make a particular choice around an option that works for your school community, and you find you cannot implement it, then please reach out and we'll support you." We have had no-one in that position.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: As far as you know.

MURAT DIZDAR: As far as I know.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How much do they cost? Do you know what it cost Ashfield Boys?

MURAT DIZDAR: I couldn't give you a cost, because it depends on the school size.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you take on notice what it cost Ashfield Boys to put through these lockers?

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: They're the best option, aren't they?

MURAT DIZDAR: The best option, in my view, is what works best for the school community. The school community decides.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: And to reduce anxiety for kids.

MURAT DIZDAR: My daughter's school, which I tabled, is a prime example where the option is "in your bag and away". The school community is happy with that option.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: There are no questions from the Government.

The CHAIR: This means we get a little bit of an early mark on our morning tea. We will resume at 11.15 a.m.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Thank you. I will hand over to the Opposition.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I might come to you, Ms Summerhayes. I want to talk about small schools and the closure of them. Can you very briefly outline for me the procedure that leads to a school being put into recess?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Certainly. Good morning, Mr Barrett. You would be aware that we have a number of small schools across New South Wales that serve diverse communities. When we look at the viability of those schools, particularly in terms of parental need, what is available in the local community and

CORRECTED

whether there is an advantage to be going to bigger schools or not, there are times when we go to community consultation around the viability of a school moving forward.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: What triggers that?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: It can be a reduction in student enrolment. It can be changes to a particular geography or town in terms of employment and housing. There are lots of different reasons why we would look at small schools.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: But practically? Does someone look at the enrolments or something? How does that come into fruition?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Each year we go through a process of looking at our small schools and where they are sitting in their local community. Depending on the sorts of things I've mentioned to you, we might go out to consultation with the community about the viability of that school moving forward.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Is there someone, or some area, whose job is to look at the different schools and which ones might be coming up for that?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: It sits in Public Schools initially. I might have a local director, local principal, local community or a P&C make a recommendation or ask a question. Sometimes when we are building other schools in other areas that might be close by, or sometimes when transport arrangements change, we will get communication from people on the ground about having a look at a school's viability.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: At what point along that chain do you start consulting or engaging with the local community, parents and potential parents?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: When we look into a school—where it's sitting and some of the issues that have been raised—we will always go out to consultation before any decision is made because, obviously, all of the stakeholders in that community will have a view on the viability of the school.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: How long has this procedure been in place? Has it been the same procedure for the last 10 years, or has it been updated recently?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: As long as I am aware, Mr Barrett, we've had a similar way of working. I've only been in this role for 12 months. I've known it as a director and an executive director. As a deputy secretary, this is a model I'm really familiar with. It's something that I've seen happen over my years in Education. I am not aware there has been a shift.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Can you tell me how many schools have been put into recess this year?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Yes. I'll just check so I can give you accurate numbers.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I am going to follow up and ask you to say for the last five years as well.

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I can let you know the schools that closed in 2023. We had five of them. There are two that have been closed this year already. There are some schools that are in consultation moving forwards towards the end of this year and early next year. I'm really happy to give you those precise numbers, if that's what you would like, on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When you say "closed", do you mean put into recess or actually closed?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: No. Actually closed were the numbers I just gave you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: What about put into recess?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Let me just do a quick count.

MURAT DIZDAR: I can help there. There's currently 19 schools in recess.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: How long have they been in recess for?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Some since 2017.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: What I'm trying to work out is, say in 2023 and so far in 2024, how many have been put into recess for the first time?

MURAT DIZDAR: In 2023, it looks like there were four schools that were put into recess.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And this year?

MURAT DIZDAR: In 2024? I don't have any figure in front of me, so we'll check.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You'll take that on notice?

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll check.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: To your point just then, Ms Summerhayes, about further consultation happening for recess, specifically, in 2025, how many are on that list to be consulted for closure or recess in 2025?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: On which list, sorry, Ms Mitchell?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You just said that there's also a number of schools that that process is happening for towards the end of this year and early next year. I just want to know how many schools are on that list, and which schools are they.

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I'll provide that on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is there a list that you have—to know which schools are being looked at to go into recess?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Would you be able to provide a copy of that list to the Committee?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Yes.

MURAT DIZDAR: Can I just add to that something that might help the Committee? Those 19 schools that are on recess at the moment are out of a footprint of 2,216. Some of them date back to 2017. Sometimes schools can come out of recess and reopen.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes. I'm very aware of that.

MURAT DIZDAR: Sometimes schools can then, from recess, be closed. We only do that if there's zero enrolments for consecutive years.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I know that. I didn't ask about that. What I would like is the list of new schools that are intended to be put into recess either from the end of this year or early next year. That exists and that can be provided.

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I can give you the list of schools we are consulting on, if you'd like that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, that would be great.

MURAT DIZDAR: This might help the Committee as well. There is no central list of schools we have our eyes on to put into recess.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But there are some that are being consulted on. That's what I'm trying to get to.

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Currently, yes.

MURAT DIZDAR: We can tell you the ones under consultation.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just on that, there are a couple of specifics that I wanted to raise. Avoca Public School, just out of Moss Vale—is that one that is slated to be put into recess next year?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: It is.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is it likely that that will not be operational for the start of the school year next year?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I'm not sure yet, Ms Mitchell. We are just finishing the consultation on Avoca.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When were parents first informed of that consultation or that consideration of recess?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I'd need to take that on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: What is the normal time frame you would give parents?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I'm not sure there is a normal time frame.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: My understanding is that it's recent, sort of within this term, that parents have been made aware that that school might not be operational next year. That is not a lot of time for families to

CORRECTED

get their head around in terms of any changes. When will that decision be made about that school next year and whether it will be operating day one, term 1?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let's come back to you with where we are up to in the consultation. It is week eight in the term, so I imagine we're moving quickly.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: To that point, I guess parents are wanting to know what will happen next year for their children. In a similar vein, the consultation around Bribbaree Public School—my understanding is there is a consultation session this afternoon for those families, but, again, it has only been in very recent days and weeks that that was ever slated with those families. I guess my overall question is why are people finding out so late that their children's school might not be operating next year?

MURAT DIZDAR: I might be able to add to that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great.

MURAT DIZDAR: Anticipated enrolments for the following school year are due in mid-term 3 for each year, and the actual enrolments come out about week 5, term 1. Normally what happens is you are in the middle of term 3, you put in what numbers you are anticipating and then off the back of that you will get into territory around viability. As you have dropping enrolments or no enrolments coming through or no kindergarten or no year 7, there will be a natural point where there is discussion at the leadership level of the principal and the DEL to maybe look at these procedures to look at the best education provisions. It is not unusual that late term 3, early term 4 a process would start.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I accept that. What we are talking about, though, is late term 4. We are already in week 8. My understanding is, through conversations with some of the local community members and parents, that this has all come about in the last week or two. You're a parent; I'm a parent. If you're told midway through term 4 that your child's school might not be open day one, term 1 next year, it is not a lot of time for them to make decisions. That is the feedback we've had.

MURAT DIZDAR: I really respect that. I totally understand that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So when will there be certainty? Again, there are two examples, being Avoca and down at Bribbaree. When will those final decisions be made so parents have certainty about what's happening?

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll have to take the process fully and let's go check where we're up to on the ground with that. We won't be rushing any process. If it means we have to make a recommendation that we're operating, that's what we'll normally do, but we'll have to consult with the community and get the views. I am not even sure of the size of those schools. Let me go back and see. We make sure we speak to all the parents that are at the school and the prospective parents. You are not talking about a lot of parents because often these schools are very small in size.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but they still should be respected as parents regardless of if they're at a small school.

MURAT DIZDAR: But that's what I mean by speaking with each of those current enrolments. You might have four students but we would want to talk to all those parents as well as any prospective parents. We will make sure we go check where we are up to, and we are doing that process thoroughly.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: There are two months until school starts again pretty much and these kids still don't know where they are going to school next year. When do you think should be the cut-off time that they get that certainty?

MURAT DIZDAR: The earliest possible, in my view—but I have to tell you, having worked in the organisation for 27 years, we have had situations where we have come back for day one and had to say to a school community, "There are no enrolments. No-one has turned up, and we will have to put a recess in until we can see what the state of play is." Even across that summer break, you might have two or three kids enrolled in a school who then move over that summer break and you come back and there are no enrolments. But, in answer, generally, we want to give parents as much notice as possible. We understand that you'd want certainty about the school year.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: You talk about those 19 schools that are currently in recess, and you mentioned that some of them reopen. How many schools have gone into recess and then reopened in the past five years?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: We can go back and check on that. I know one or two off the top of my head that have opened, but let me go get you the names and the accurate number of those. That is why we stay in recess for a period of time, because school communities can regather by way of population and size, before we make a move to close. It goes to show that one of ours currently in recess has been that way since 2017, a good seven years, and we haven't closed it.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I wanted to just ask about Rankin's Springs and their numbers in terms of student enrolments. Is it one of the schools that's being consulted on for closure, or not at this point?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: No. I think we have about 18 students who have identified as being there next year, Ms Mitchell, and I am really happy to tell you that we have now recruited a substantive principal who will begin in 2025 as well.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, I did see that.

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I know the community is really happy about that. I thought you might ask me about Rankin's Springs today, so I made sure I had that information for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate that. For Ivanhoe, my understanding is—and I appreciate there's a transport element here as well—that as of next year there won't be a bus service available for students to go into Ivanhoe Central School. Do you know if that is correct?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I just know that there have been conversations around transport for Ivanhoe. I know the Director, Educational Leadership has been working with local transport and the principal. I'm happy to come back on where those conversations are up to.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: My understanding from some of the communities is there used to be three bus routes, this year there is one, and then apparently next year there won't be any, which is obviously very challenging—large distances, isolated community.

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: Yes, indeed.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If there is anything on notice you could provide for that, that would be great. Probably to Mr Dizdar, I want to move on now to suspension data. Is there any updated data you can provide the Committee in terms of the number of suspensions so far this year?

MURAT DIZDAR: There might be, and Mr Graham might have it.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Happy for Mr Graham—

MURAT DIZDAR: Can I just fix something on the record that I said earlier that related to suspensions?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes.

MURAT DIZDAR: I said that suspensions had dropped, and I meant that suspensions had dropped for mobile phones.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, not overall.

MURAT DIZDAR: Not overall, because overall our suspensions have gone up.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, that is what I am interested to know about.

MURAT DIZDAR: It is great for me to correct that on the record that it was for mobile phones.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That's fine.

MURAT DIZDAR: Mr Graham might have the data.

MARTIN GRAHAM: The latest published data I have is the 2023 data, which was 60,000 suspensions across the system.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: There is an article from 20 November in *The Daily Telegraph* where there are several quotes from the Deputy Premier, and it is saying that preliminary data shows that there have already been 40,861 kids told to stay at home from school in the first six months in 2024. Where does that data come from?

MARTIN GRAHAM: That would come from the department.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can you verify that figure is correct?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I understand that figure is correct, but I don't have that breakdown in front of me.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You just gave me almost 60,000 from 2023, the full year.

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's right.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But what you can see so far is for the first six months of this year that number is up to 40,861, so suspensions are up quite significantly.

MURAT DIZDAR: It's a higher number than the same six-month period the year previously.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes.

MARTIN GRAHAM: But it doesn't always play out that you're able to forecast the end of year figure from that particular juncture.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When will you have the end of year data?

MARTIN GRAHAM: That will be published next year, so we go up to the end of the year.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: When, roughly?

MARTIN GRAHAM: It is normally published in the first half of the year.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The Deputy Premier has said, "We certainly don't mind seeing suspension rates rise." Has it been relayed to you as a department that you should actively be targeting higher suspension rates in schools?

MURAT DIZDAR: One of the election commitments that this Government had for education was that we would go back and revisit the student welfare wellbeing—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I am aware of that. But is the outcome to then look at higher suspension numbers? Is that what you are working towards achieving?

MURAT DIZDAR: No. To deliver on that election commitment, I was asked, as secretary, to make sure we consulted with all the relevant partners and that we restored back into that policy, to meet the commitment, that there would be settled, orderly, conducive learning environments across the school. It was the view of stakeholders when we were working with them, such as the federation, PPA and SPC, that there needed to be greater clarity around what could lead to a suspension, the categories of suspension—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Sure. So—

MURAT DIZDAR: Sorry, let me finish, because it's an important question.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But I'm asking specifically about the numbers, with respect. We already know that the data is indicating that in that first six months it's higher. My question is should we expect to see, because of the policy changes that you've mentioned, higher suspension rates? The Deputy Premier has said she'd like to see suspension rates rise. She's on the record.

MURAT DIZDAR: It wasn't a target or anything that we had to meet.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In terms of that data, how many of those students have been suspended for bullying or bullying-related incidents?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm not sure if we've got the categories in front of us.

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's preliminary data. We don't have the breakdown of those categories for that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: There's no way to tell, of the preliminary data, how many of those children have been suspended for bullying? You don't have a record of that?

MARTIN GRAHAM: Not that I have here today.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Would you have that on notice?

MARTIN GRAHAM: We can have a look and see what data we have.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let's have a look at what we've got.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Will that be available in the data that comes out in the first half of next year—a bullying breakdown?

MARTIN GRAHAM: We do have a breakdown in our published data.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could take on notice how many of those 40,861 have been suspended specifically for bullying, that would be great. Is there still a higher representation of Aboriginal children and children with disability in suspension data?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't have it in front of me. But, remember, this is preliminary for two terms, so we make sure that's available. We're very transparent in our reporting around suspensions, as you would know.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Sure. My concern is what's being presented in the public is that all of these children have been suspended and it's in line with some media commentary around—the heading is, "Tougher rules ban bullies from schools." But what you're saying today is you don't have a breakdown of how many have been for bullying. We don't know which young people are being suspended. We're not sure if that will be consistent across the year. Is it a bit preliminary using that data in media saying that tougher rules are banning bullies from school? Because that is what's being presented.

MURAT DIZDAR: As a department, we provided that data to the Minister's office for the first half of the year. It is factual that that first half of the year data is higher than a similar comparison the year before.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Did the Minister's office ask for a breakdown of how many of those students had been suspended specifically for bullying?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'd have to go back and see what data was requested and we provided, but that's data that we provided as a department.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's possible, from those numbers, that there hasn't been an increase, for instance, in young people being suspended for bullying, because you can't tell me—because it's preliminary data—what the breakdown is?

MURAT DIZDAR: I can only speak to what we provided and what's factual. For the two terms for this year, terms 1 and 2, the preliminary data says that that's higher on suspensions—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But you don't know for what categories?

MURAT DIZDAR: We don't have that all available in front of us. We can get that if needed. We do publish—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but that's going to be sometime in the last—my point is you've got the Government in November saying these tougher rules are banning bullies from school. But as I hear it today, there is no data you can provide to the Committee that backs up that claim.

MURAT DIZDAR: We don't have it in front of us.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It does exist, though?

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll see what we've got.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But if you've provided it to the Minister's office for media, surely it must exist and, therefore, you can provide it to the Committee. How many students in the first six months of this year were suspended for bullying?

MURAT DIZDAR: I stand by that data we provided.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But can you provide it to us? I want bullying, specifically. Can that be provided to us? If it was able to be provided for a media article, surely you can provide it for this Committee.

MURAT DIZDAR: I said I'm happy to do so, and I said that what's factual is that for the first six months—the two terms—of this year, compared to the two terms last year, suspensions have been higher.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but suspensions can be for a range of reasons, as you know, Mr Dizdar.

MURAT DIZDAR: They can.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm interested in bullying, specifically, and whether there has been an increase.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let's go back and get that for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great. We've only got 50 seconds left. If a student is suspended for bullying, is the alleged victim and their family also informed that the student has been suspended for that purpose?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: My expectation around suspension is that both any perpetrator as well as any victim are communicated with by the school, and any relevant outcomes are indicated. That's what happens in any suspension. I wouldn't curtail that just for bullying. If an individual is suspended and there is a victim and perpetrator, or victims and perpetrators, we expect transparent communication.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: What's the threshold of any reports to the police in relation to any bullying allegations or suspension procedures.

MURAT DIZDAR: We're pretty clear around anything that's of a criminal nature. We have seconded police that are with us in our incident reporting hotline. If a school is unsure, they would contact the incident reporting hotline. They have to for a suspension. They would indicate what happened and then they would get advice from the incident hotline, which may mean indicating to them that they need to contact the police because they may not have done so, or they may be indicating that they've already done so. That's how we support schools in making police referrals.

The CHAIR: I'm interested in some questions around PES. Is the procedure for handling allegations of misconduct against teachers and principals the same regardless of the type of allegation—for example, something administrative versus something involving children in particular? Is there a difference in the way that those allegations are handled?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, Chair, there can be. We'd ring PES for advice and PES might say, "Based on what we've got in front of us, we expect this to be locally handled, not handled by PES." They might make that decision, in which case, if it was a principal, they might indicate that the director of educational leadership or someone in Ms Summerhayes' area is to handle that matter. I'm not trying to be coy here; it's a complex space. The decision about whether they will manage the matter or whether it will be locally managed depends on the nature and extent of the allegations.

The CHAIR: If it is managed by PES, is it the same procedure regardless of the type of allegation?

MURAT DIZDAR: If PES manage it, they have two arms of management. One's for performance and one's for conduct. If it's about the individual's—in this case, a principal's—performance, there are certain procedures that apply. If it's about conduct, then they go about their work with the allegations.

The CHAIR: If we're in the conduct category, presumably, you could have conduct involving children versus conduct that is more administrative, such as administrative errors.

MURAT DIZDAR: I understand you.

The CHAIR: Is the process for both of those categories of allegation the same within PES?

MURAT DIZDAR: If it's child-related conduct—claims of sexual abuse, for example—there is a risk-management approach that is applied on whether or not that individual can be in the workplace while the investigation is assessed. In child protection matters, normally the outcome is for them to be stood away from duty. With conduct that you said was more of an administrative ground—for example, it might be financial or in relation to policy or procedure—it can be the case that they make an assessment that the person can stay in their role while they are investigating, because it is not impacting on children.

The CHAIR: Do you have some data that maybe you could provide on notice in relation to how many teachers and principals who have alleged misconduct claims against them have received pay or are on leave with pay for conduct matters that involve children versus those that are more of an administrative—

MURAT DIZDAR: We should have that data, so I am happy to come back to you on those who have been stood away from duty, whether it is child related or not child related. I'm happy to come back to you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. How many legal settlements with secondary or primary principals have been made out of court since the Tedeschi report, in the period 2019 to 2024?

MURAT DIZDAR: Chair, we might need a bit more specific—when you say "legal settlement", are you saying their performance or conduct has been put into question and there has been a PES process and the outcome of that PES process was a legal outcome?

The CHAIR: Yes, a legal settlement.

MURAT DIZDAR: I've understood the question. Let me get that on notice for you.

The CHAIR: Do those settlement sums come out of the department's budget or is it an icare issue?

MURAT DIZDAR: Normally if there is a legal matter at hand, it would have our government insurer icare involved. We pay a premium like every agency would into that.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Could you come back to me on notice with how many settlements and also what the cost of those settlements have been over the last five years?

MURAT DIZDAR: Definitely, with what's available—definitely I'll come back.

The CHAIR: Can you also tell me if non-disclosure agreements are being signed by principals and teachers in that five years since the Tedeschi report, again, in relation to these sort of settlement claims?

MURAT DIZDAR: My general understanding of these as well—I'll come back on notice with the data—is that that's at the request of the individual. By far and wide in these matters, it's at the request of the individual. Let me come back to you with that data if it exists.

The CHAIR: Can you also come back to me with how much the department has paid in the last five years because of costs awarded against the department after a civil claim from a teacher or a principal because of the PES process? So they've gone through the PES process and then they've claimed against you for damages. How much has been spent in the last five years?

MURAT DIZDAR: Again, I just want to make sure I understand it so our people can get the right information. These are PES matters—teachers, principals—and as a result of the matter there has been a civil claim come forward and how much has the department paid for that civil claim?

The CHAIR: Yes. I understand there was a Department of Education document from June 2021 called *Paving the Way Forward to Manage Underperformance Effectively*. There is a graph in there that basically demonstrates that, of 791 case closures of PES cases during that period, there were 180 principals and teachers left the profession as the reason that the cases were closed. About a quarter had left before the actual settlement or closure of their case through PES. Is that statistic basically proportionate to what you would expect of the profession over that period anyway, or do you view that as being a product of the PES process?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't have the document in front of me, but I would say this. We're 95,000 teachers. We're 2,216 principals. So I think proportionality is really important. Again, I don't have the document. You're referring to resignations. That's an individual's decision. When you're going through a matter and you're going through allegations or you may have findings that are given to you, then you may make a decision as an individual around that. You might be facing, for example, in a matter disciplinary action. That disciplinary action might be, in its extreme, dismissal or, at other extremes, pecuniary, and you might decide in your submission that you are prepared to resign given that possibility of outcome. Because what happens in these matters and may not be well understood, Ms Boyd, is that the individual gets a chance to answer to those allegations. All the material evidence is assessed. When there is a finding put forward, it's a proposed finding with a period for further submission. And in that period, in my experience, some people make a decision to resign from the organisation as opposed to possibly facing what may be stronger disciplinary actions.

The CHAIR: I hear what you're saying. I wonder if there's data that shows, of the people that were going through a PES process and then resigned, how many of them, for example, then launched a civil claim against the department or how many of them put some other kind of complaint in, just so we can see the implication—the worry here is that the PES process has driven people to leave, whereas I understand from what you're saying there could be very valid reasons as to why a person would leave after having seen the allegations against them or whatever. Is there any data that you keep that we can—

MURAT DIZDAR: If that data exists, I'm happy to provide it to you as Chair of the Committee. I want to go back and see if that exists. I certainly know that we've got case data. Whether it goes to the extent that you're covering—because you're saying, "How many there has led to a civil claim and then what were the payments to that claim?" If that data exists, I'm happy to hand it over.

The CHAIR: Are you able to tell me how many principals in New South Wales public schools were on formal principal improvement programs for each of the years in the last five years? Is that something you keep data of?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, quite a small number. There are 2,216 principals. A formal performance and development program, a formal improvement program—I'm happy to go back and get the number, but it would be quite a small number and that's not surprising to me. We're talking about one of the most educated and skilled workforces—all tertiary qualified. To become a principal in the system, you've been an exemplary teacher, you've demonstrated your capacity coming through at head teacher, AP, DP level. Generally they're really high performing, which is fantastic for the public education system. You'll find it's very small numbers, but I'm happy to get you the exact number.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Mr Dizdar, a couple of issues. I wanted to ask—Dr Jennifer Buckingham. Did you hire her this year into a particular position?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm delighted that Dr Buckingham has joined our organisation.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: In what capacity?

MURAT DIZDAR: She is our executive director in CESE.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Sorry, where?

MURAT DIZDAR: The Centre of Education Statistics and Evaluation.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: She came from MultiLit, is that right?

MURAT DIZDAR: Dr Buckingham has had a well-noted career in the public domain.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm looking at her LinkedIn page. She's been a long-term director of strategy with MultiLit. Is that right?

MURAT DIZDAR: That's what I understood.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Does she still have shares in MultiLit?

MURAT DIZDAR: She removed all of her professional obligations out of MultiLit. She is no longer associated with it.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So she no longer has shares? Because she set up MultiLit, didn't she?

MURAT DIZDAR: She declared that when she came in.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But she's removed her shares as far as you know?

MURAT DIZDAR: As far as I know, she's removed all her involvement with MultiLit.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'll come back to that. I want to follow up a couple of questions from my supplementary questions that I put to you and the Minister last time. You might recall I asked you specifically about legal issue bulletin 55.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Transgender students, kids. When you go online—I think from memory the response you provided me was that the document was currently being reviewed and an updated bulletin would be available in 2025. It says the last time it was issued was in 2014, with some minor amendments in 2022. Why is it being reviewed? Is this to reflect that there have been two pieces of legislation passed by the Minns Labor Government—the conversion practices ban and the equality legislation Act, i.e., the self-ID changing sex legislation? Is that why there is a review of that bulletin?

MURAT DIZDAR: We have a continuous cycle of review of all of our legal issues bulletins so it's part of that cycle. And I just want to say this—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: It said in there you made some changes in August 2022. Prior to that you hadn't made any changes since 2014. It's not a document that's always under review, because for a very long period there was no review. It was always publicly available. How long has this review been taking place for this particular bulletin?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll see if any of our people have got any—do you have any information to this review, Mr Martin? But there is a regular cycle of review, where we look at our legal issues—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Do you know how regular? Because from 2014 to 2022—

MURAT DIZDAR: It's normally a five-year cycle.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: —there was no review of that document.

MURAT DIZDAR: I take what you're saying. Normally there is—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Well, it's on your department website. I can read it out for you. It says there that from 2014 the next time there was a change was 2022. So it's clear as day on your department site there. How long has this document been under review for now?

MURAT DIZDAR: I want to go back, if our people don't have the detail. Do you have any detail, Mr Graham?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I don't have any further detail, but I understand it is under review.

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Let's come back to you.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Because you've said, in my question to you about the legal issues bulletin—

MURAT DIZDAR: I think we said early '25, did we?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You said that it would be available. I asked you that question on 27 August. The document is still under review. When did that review start for the bulletin? Can you take that on notice if you don't know?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me get you all those details, yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I assume the reason it's under review is because the Minns Labor Government has recently moved two specific bits of legislation, the conversion practices ban and the equality legislation Act, which is specifically about self-ID and changing sex and so forth. I'm assuming that's the reason why there's a delay in this review, is that right?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, plus we'll be getting the views of our schools and our schools communities. I also want to say this on record to our transgender students: We see you, we embrace you and we welcome you as part of the public education system.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Okay.

MURAT DIZDAR: And I want to get it right for you in supporting you.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm not making any comments in a disparaging manner in relation to that. You don't need to make any additional statements; you can at the beginning of these sessions, usually. It's more about, as you embrace transgender kids, you might want to make sure there's a legal issues bulletin available for them that they can peruse. At this point in time, it's locked away and there's no access to any bulletin in relation to this issue at the moment. When do you expect that to be made available in '25?

MURAT DIZDAR: I think you read out that we said early '25. Let me go back and see that we're on track for that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can we get any kind of date in '25, or is it just '25?

MURAT DIZDAR: I think my understanding was term 1, '25. Let's make sure we get that right.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: All right, we'll come back to that. I am trying to think of any other supplementary questions that we might have had. I might also ask you—and I appreciate this is a very new issue—about the social media ban that was passed federally. I'm sure you're well on top of that issue. There was a process there where for 24 hours they allowed the public—and, presumably, departments and others—to make submissions. Did the NSW Department of Education make a submission to that inquiry that was held federally by the Senate?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me go back and check. It's not ringing a bell. We might have contributed if there was a Government submission.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you also check for me whether you were invited? You're the largest education department in Australia. I'd be interested to know whether you or the department were invited to make a submission to the inquiry that was held by the Senate.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, I'm happy to check. I do want to thank the Premier for involving us and inviting us to the Social Media Summit and for us being a key cog in education. I did attend the Social Media Summit. It was an important discussion for our children and our parent community here in New South Wales.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: When was that held?

MURAT DIZDAR: It was, I'm going to say, earlier in term 3. Not that long ago. It was a two-day summit; I attended the one in New South Wales.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm glad you brought that to my attention, actually. I don't remember that being announced publicly, but I'm happy to ask some questions about it. Did you discuss the issue of banning social media at this particular summit? Was there a discussion about the concerns about social media?

MURAT DIZDAR: It was a summit that was co-led by New South Wales and South Australian Premiers and it had a range—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: They're very good friends, those two.

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: It was led by the two Premiers. There was a range of international experts that spoke about the impact of social media and mobile phones on young people. There was a number of workshops and discussions. There was the whole range of stakeholders—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Were you invited to make a presentation, Mr Dizdar, or just to attend?

MURAT DIZDAR: I was proud to be invited, alongside some of my colleagues in education, to be part of the discussions that took place. I know that the Deputy Premier attended as well, as the Minister for Education and Early Learning.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Are you familiar with the Federal Senate inquiry into the social media ban? Did you follow any of that last week?

MURAT DIZDAR: Only what's been in the press.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: One of the issues raised was around algorithms and the fact that young people are often redirected to certain sites and how dangerous that could be. Was that something that perhaps was also raised at this Social Media Summit, the way that algorithms operate to redirect people, as they search certain sites, into further sites that could be fairly dangerous? Is that an issue that is of concern to the department?

MURAT DIZDAR: I definitely recall some of the international experts talking about the addictive nature and how young people, when they're on particular websites' apps, the apps are able to read into those things that are of interest to the young person.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Does the Department of Education use any of those apps? Were you able to work out whether there are apps that do this that the department also relies upon, or that teaching staff rely upon?

MURAT DIZDAR: It's been well publicised what's been considered in the national domain around those apps. My apps relate to more educative—numeracy and literacy and things of that kind, which are not as exciting for young adolescents who are on, whether it's on Snapchat or—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: A lot of young people are on Instagram. That's obviously now going to be banned, which will be really interesting for age groups like year 11, where half the kids are 16 and half the kids are 17. I don't know how schools manage that. A lot of sporting groups and peer groups within schools—like, for example, I'm sure you're aware that prefects have Instagram pages so that they can talk to each other. Is there an alternative that the Department of Education will provide? For example, prefects talk to each other amongst other schools—I'm sure you're aware of that—through an Instagram page they've set up in New South Wales. That's a positive form of social media where great young leaders talk to each other from one public school to another. I'm sure some of your principals or teachers would be aware of it. Is there an alternative the department will provide for these young people to communicate?

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll respect the expert advice in this space and enact that expert advice. When I represented Burwood United in the under-9s way back, there were no apps and they still conversed with me and my family. I'm sure there will be mechanisms where we can converse with young people.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can I just get some clarification on my last round of questions—this probably goes to you, Mr Graham—on some of the data that was in this article in *The Daily Telegraph*. The 59,814, they say it's students—this is from last year's data—but that's total number of suspensions, isn't it?

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's right.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And students was 33,000. That's what's reported.

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's right.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Or 33,900.

MARTIN GRAHAM: It is 34, yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So with the 40,861, which I appreciate is preliminary and you're taking that on notice, is that number of suspensions or number of students suspended?

MARTIN GRAHAM: My understanding is that that was the number of suspensions. But, I must say, I don't have in front of me the information we provided to the Minister.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could provide that on notice, that would be great. I wanted to turn quickly to the Student Wellbeing Innovation Fund. Are there any further rounds of that funding intended to be made available at this point?

CORRECTED

MARTIN GRAHAM: I understand at the moment we don't have any further rounds of that funding.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: For some of the organisations that did receive money—I wanted to ask specifically about Gotcha4Life. I think they got \$160,000. Have there been any conversations about continuing the work that they do in any public schools in New South Wales?

MURAT DIZDAR: We have—Mr Graham will get the right terminology—an approved list of providers in the wellbeing space. They might be on there, I'm not sure. We could check.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Graham, do you know if they're on that list?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I'm not sure if they're on the list. I think they might be on our wellbeing provider list, but schools would then purchase directly from them.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Have you had any conversations with other agencies—I'm thinking, specifically, mental health or through Health—about any specific support packages for Gotcha4Life for the next school year for public schools?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I'm not aware of them, but that doesn't mean that they're not taking place. We can check to see if that's happening.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could take that on notice, that would be fantastic. I want to move now to Mr Martin—don't worry, we weren't going to let you sit there all morning. HSC Music and Drama syllabuses—I appreciate you were before the joint committee last week in relation to some of the concerns that are coming, certainly, strongly to us from the profession about what's within those draft syllabuses. Are there any updates you can provide us in terms of going back to the drawing board, starting again and further consultation? What's happening?

PAUL MARTIN: Thus far, the syllabuses have been out since 24 October—this is the drafts—and that consultation period finishes on 20 December. I think that I made an announcement—or at least a decision that was presented here last Monday at the upper House inquiry and then also at a forum of drama teachers on Monday evening—that, given the level of concern around the nature of the external assessment of the group performance, it would be useful for us to make a decision in relation to consultation around the external assessment of that group performance to be reinstated.

One of the reasons I did that was because some of the other changes proposed were being ignored because of the level of activity around group performance. Some of it was not absolutely accurate. There was never a decision to move away from group performance. It would be silly not to have group performance as a major piece of assessment in drama, but the suggestion in the consultation paper was that that group performance be assessed by their teacher at school because we believe that it was at least worth discussing whether that was an appropriate form of assessment, given that the teachers know the processes through which the students have gone in order to reach the group assessment stage.

The level of unhappiness around the moving of the external assessment was, to some degree, gratifying in that the level of faith that schools have in that external assessment by NESA markers reiterates the confidence they have with the NESA assessment process. But it also meant that, rather than hold onto that particular issue while this consultation period was occurring, it would be better to move away from that decisively so that other changes, and other suggested changes, could be assessed with, I suppose, a more open mind.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate the consultation is still ongoing for another couple of weeks, but those who are providing feedback on the current draft have been told that that external assessment will still occur from NESA now, so they should not worry about that when they put in their feedback on other parts of the syllabus. Is that the messaging?

PAUL MARTIN: That's my understanding. It certainly was heavily reported in the media. I'd have to take on notice what information we've provided to drama teachers in relation to that. A lot of the consultation responses that we're receiving are, in whole or in part, around that external assessment. I think that's ongoing. We'll deal with every single consultation piece when they come in and when they're finalised, and look through them very closely.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Moving to the draft music changes, some of the concern that's coming through—again, from music teachers who I've spoken to. But also, as you would have seen, a lot of artists or musicians are saying that they have concerns about things like not having as many performance opportunities, longer written exams and not having composition anymore. What is the status of that particular consultation? Will some of those issues that have been fairly well documented in the media be looked at as well?

CORRECTED

PAUL MARTIN: I think all of those issues will be closely looked at. Again, there is still some misinformation, perhaps—I wouldn't go so far as to say that—in relation to which would be assessed externally and which would be assessed internally. The arguments have never been about not assessing performance in music but about who is best to assess it or who is best placed. That issue will be, of course, canvassed very closely when the consultation drafts are all concluded. The other aspects—the place of musicology, numbers of options, the relationship of the aural exams to sit-down examinations—all of them are up for consultation and all of them will be assessed really closely once we get to the end of the consultation period.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Does that include the composition elective as well?

PAUL MARTIN: Yes, of course. All of it will be looked at.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Were the draft syllabuses signed off by the Minister before they were released for consultation?

PAUL MARTIN: Draft syllabuses are never signed off by the Minister. The syllabuses are signed off ultimately by the Minister. There is a separation between the work of NESAs, the delegated responsibilities of NESAs, the NESAs board and its subsidiary committees, and the Minister of the day. So it won't be until the syllabus is finalised that it goes to the Minister.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Was the Minister or her office, though, briefed on the draft syllabuses and their content?

PAUL MARTIN: I don't think there were any formal briefings in relation to any of the 50 syllabuses going forward. I'd have to double-check that because my staff conduct briefings. But my understanding is that all of the draft syllabuses—50 have so far gone through and there are another 61 to go—have proceeded from NESAs through our curriculum assessment committee and gone out from there. It's not until they're close to finalisation and actually signed off that the Minister gets the final copy.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could take on notice—presumably the Minister's office know that this is about to be released on this day or there's some communication between NESAs and the Minister's office in terms of when things are coming out.

PAUL MARTIN: There are a range of matters in relation to syllabuses, both prior to consultation and in the midst of consultation, that we have conversations with the Minister's office about. Given the amount of publicity around this issue, I have been in conversation with the Minister's officers in relation to dance, drama and music. But in relation to all the other syllabuses, I would have to place on the record what actual conversations have occurred. I would say that it's never been the case that there has been interference in my knowledge—not interference—even control or attempts to change syllabuses going back for the last, what, 24 years. It's clearly established in the Act: the distance between the Minister of the day and NESAs in relation to syllabuses.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I have a question back on small school closures. I've been told that Tirranna Public School have been told this morning that they will be closing or going into recess next year, and that Avoca Public School will be told the same thing on Wednesday. Are you able to clarify whether that is correct, Ms Summerhayes?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I know Tirranna and Avoca have been consulting this week, Ms Mitchell. I'm happy to follow up on that information you've received.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Mr Graham, SLSOs or teacher aides are there to provide assistance to kids who need that additional support.

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's one of their roles, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: They're allocated to a student?

MARTIN GRAHAM: No, they're employed by a school. In some cases they will exclusively work with one student, but they may work with a number of students or with a teacher in the classroom.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: How is it decided whether they're there for one student or—

MARTIN GRAHAM: It would depend on the school organisation. It would depend on the level of funding, so the level of need of student. SLSOs might be at a School for Specific Purposes, with kids with very high needs. You might have one teacher and you might have three or four other adults, who will often be SLSOs, so it will depend.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: There can be an SLSO who is attached to an individual student?

CORRECTED

MARTIN GRAHAM: They will be employed by the school, so they're not attached to an individual student, but they may work exclusively with one student.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: It is the school that determines that?

MARTIN GRAHAM: That's right.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: If that is determined, how is that funded?

MARTIN GRAHAM: It might be funded through a student's individual funding, through the Integration Funding Support scheme, but the schools themselves now receive what's called the low level adjustment for disability funding. They'll receive money for their students, and they will be able to employ an SLSO or a number of SLSOs from that funding, if that's what they need for the school.

MURAT DIZDAR: Mr Barrett, if it helps, there's a multitude of ways that an SLSO might be employed. Another bucket is the tutoring program. The school might decide for those kids who have got a gap in literacy and numeracy, that they want an SLSO to support the program. That might be another reason. In the high school I led, we ran a boys program for year 9 for the boys who were at risk. We were looking from school to pathway. We employed an SLSO to exclusively lead that work alongside a teacher who supervised them. There's a multitude of ways, including a student with disability or students with disability.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can you tell me how many schools currently have bottled water provided to them for their main water source?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'd be happy to go back and take it on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: As of December 2022, it was 31. I'm just wondering if there's any updated figures. Could you provide that on notice?

MURAT DIZDAR: Was that 2020?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: December 2022. I think there were 31, but I'm wondering if there's any more.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to get an update for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You might remember, Mr Dizdar, that there was a pilot that we did—I think it was back in 2021—with hydropanels and looking at opportunities for collection of water rather than relying on bottled water. There hasn't been any further work in that space as far as I know. Are any alternative methods or new technologies being investigated along those lines for those smaller, remote schools that don't have access to water?

MURAT DIZDAR: I do recall that work. Let me go back. There are a number of initiatives, particularly in that outer-school infrastructure, around sustainability stuff that we've been doing. Let me go and see.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: This was specifically for those remote schools that don't have access.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could provide any information about that on notice, that would be great. Also, is there any data around how regularly water tests are undertaken, particularly at regional and remote schools, in terms of water quality for the drinking water?

MURAT DIZDAR: I think it would be on a risk matrix. Let's go see what we've got. Those that might be at more risk of geographical factors would have a closer examination than those that are not.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm conscious of the time, so I'm going to race through a couple of quick ones if I can. With Bungendore High School, there was an announcement to change the location. How much additional funding has been allocated to that school? The original budget listed in the budget papers is \$71 million, but that was obviously with the old site. How much extra has been allocated for the new site and the new school?

MURAT DIZDAR: This is the Birchfield Drive site that we've acquired as the new site. Design and planning work are underway with an anticipated opening in early 2027. In terms of the land cost, let me take that on notice, because I don't have it in front of me.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you provide on notice how much the new site cost was? Also, what is the overall increase to the initial budget of \$70 million, given that, as I think the budget papers said, \$16.9 million had been spent until the end of the last financial year. You've obviously got less than \$70 million left in the kitty. I'm keen to know what the new funding allocation will be. Are there also any time frames for when plans for the new school site will go on public exhibition for the community?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: I think we've got work underway now. It's only been very recently that we secured the site. Given that we have secured the site, I think we've got design work that is underway. As soon as that's available, we will go through the steps in the process where there's public viewing, a call for submissions, et cetera.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can you take on notice when you expect that to be?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to take that on notice, yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Another new school is Medowie High School. I understand there's been some community consultation in the last few weeks. Is there any update in terms of whether that school will start with year 7 students only?

MURAT DIZDAR: We're a way away from opening there. Do you know, Ms Summerhayes?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: No.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let's come back.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you are taking that on notice, can you also indicate how many enrolments you expect there to be for Medowie, when construction will begin and also when a principal will be appointed?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. I can tell you the principal part, if you like?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's normally about a year out.

MURAT DIZDAR: Normally we go about a year out for the principal. I'll go back and find out how big the school is going to be.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: And the catchment intake area, as best as you can, as well.

MURAT DIZDAR: We probably won't have that nailed down, but I'll see what we've got available, and then with what year groups we'll start with.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: With preschool capital funding, there is currently the Building Early Learning Places Program that's out. I think it's through the early childhood education and care fund. Is that correct?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me get the details for you. Mr Barakat will be all across that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take it on notice? My advice is that services have been told that this grant is part of a test-and-trial program, and that beyond that there are no guarantees for future capital works grants for community preschools. I would like some clarity on that.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll get the detail. It's not unusual for us to want to test and make sure that there's an evidence base that it works before we—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It is unusual for there not to be a capital works grant available for community preschool. That has been in place for some time. I am just curious to know whether that will continue for community preschools separate to the 100 department preschools. I'm talking about specific community preschools that run independently. We've had some concerns raised—also from areas that are recovering from natural disasters—that the funding opportunities are not there. We'd like to know where that's all up to.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me come back to you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great, thank you. The issue around the number of non-government schools—this is still in the early childhood space. There was an election commitment that there would be, I think, \$60 million for 50 early childhood services on non-government school sites to support families who choose to send their children to non-government schools. Is there any update as to where they will be and when they will be built? My understanding is it was an election commitment for this term of government. We're nearly halfway through, and it has been fairly quiet.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me go get the detail. I must admit, I've been fixated on the 100 public preschools and what is under my purview to deliver, but that's an election commitment. We have to deliver on it. It's still there. Let me get the update for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Martin, I might come back to you in the one minute and 20 seconds I have left. In terms of students learning about financial literacy—things like superannuation, taxation et cetera—there is still, I think, a program running in government schools where schools can elect to be part of the Financial

CORRECTED

Literacy Challenge. I'm assuming that still exists? Where specifically in the curriculum do students learn about those areas of general financial literacy?

PAUL MARTIN: I think that there are elements of the K-6 HSIE syllabus, but I will take that on notice and have some specific details for you. It is certainly in commerce and probably in other parts of the year 7-10 syllabuses. Of course, there is economics as an elective subject.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take it on notice and provide a breakdown of the specifics and what gets taught in what year groups? Are there any changes to that with any of the new syllabuses that are rolling out as well? Is there more or less of that content?

PAUL MARTIN: I will. Absolutely, of course. There would also be applications in maths that relate to things like percentages and being able to calculate things that would have application in terms of financial literacy. I'll get that list for you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is there any data on the Financial Literacy Challenge and how many schools are taking part in that?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I don't have it.

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll go back and see.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Mr Dizdar, I'll go back to a couple of questions we were discussing. We left that discussion about the positives around Instagram and school students using it as a way of communicating with other students. Obviously, students don't really use WhatsApp, which is what the parents rely on. Can you let me know what alternative the Department of Education will provide to those schools and students?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes. What we'll be considering and examining?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I imagine you are going to get a briefing from the Federal department or Federal Minister in relation to this. Has there been any kind of discussion about when you'll be briefed as a department about this ban?

MURAT DIZDAR: I imagine we'll all be briefed. Particularly for Education Ministers Meeting. I imagine we will be briefed there.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: There has been no correspondence to date? I don't expect there to be, but there has been nothing from the Federal communications Minister or department at all? Are you going to come back to me on whether you were invited as a department, given how large your department is, to make a submission?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, we took that on notice. We were heavily involved in the Social Media Summit here.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: That's in New South Wales? Were you speaking at it, Mr Dizdar?

MURAT DIZDAR: Myself and several—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Was anyone from the department? If you were heavily involved in the Social Media Summit, were you or a member of the department invited to be a speaker at the Premier's Social Media Summit?

MURAT DIZDAR: It was great to be involved, because there were international experts—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Hang on, was anyone from the department? If you were heavily involved, were you invited to be a speaker?

MURAT DIZDAR: We were not a keynote speaker, no.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You were not speakers. Right. Nobody from the department was invited to be a speaker at the—the Premier of New South Wales did not ask anyone from the New South Wales Department of Education to make a presentation or a keynote speech at this summit?

MURAT DIZDAR: I think, in fairness, there were international experts—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Who were they? Do you know of anyone offhand?

MURAT DIZDAR: We can get you the agenda, I'm sure.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you were heavily involved. Do you remember a speaker in particular, Mr Dizdar?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Sometimes it is beneficial not to be a keynote speaker and just to participate and tap into the expertise.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Do you remember any speakers? How long were you there for, Mr Dizdar?

MURAT DIZDAR: I was there for about half of the day, and some of my people were there for the entire day.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Do you remember any of the speakers while you were there, Mr Dizdar?

MURAT DIZDAR: I can recall the topics covered.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Nobody comes to mind? A particular speaker doesn't come to mind? This amazing Social Media Summit you were heavily involved in, as you just indicated earlier—and you can't tell me a particular speaker?

MURAT DIZDAR: I can't remember the name, but I said to you that—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Right. It must have been amazing.

MURAT DIZDAR: It was quite fruitful to hear the international expertise.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You don't remember who they were. Can you name anyone? I imagine most of them were Australian speakers, weren't they? They couldn't have sourced everybody from overseas.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to go back to the agenda.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Thanks for that bit of info about the Social Media Summit.

MURAT DIZDAR: Can I fix up one other thing for you that you asked, Ms Mihailuk? You asked about Jennifer Buckingham. I can confirm—I have had it checked—that she has no financial or professional interests in MultiLit.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Just a couple of quick things I want to wrap up and information I'd like to get back. Just on that legal issues bulletin that I raised earlier, if you can come back to me on the date that you expect that. You said term 1 of 2025.

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, I'm expecting term 1.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'd also like to know who undertook that legal issues bulletin review within the department, which section of the department, or if you are relying on any external parties to help with preparing that bulletin?

MURAT DIZDAR: It will be led by our legal directorate, but I'll get advice to you.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: If you can let me know. I'd like to know if any external parties' advice or assistance was, is or will be relied upon in preparing and finalising that bulletin, please. And if you do undertake external support or assistance with that bulletin, I'd like to know what the cost of that will be.

MURAT DIZDAR: If we have engaged anyone, I'll let you know—and the costs. I should also let you know that at the summit the Deputy Premier presented and spoke.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm glad you remembered that now. That's your boss.

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't have the agenda in front of me.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Were you there? Were you in attendance for her speech?

MURAT DIZDAR: I was.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you couldn't remember her speech earlier.

The CHAIR: Can I ask you some questions about the Smart and Skilled program?

MURAT DIZDAR: You can.

The CHAIR: Can you tell me what the priority groups of learners are for the Smart and Skilled program?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll make sure I get you all the correct details, but there are our equity groupings, there are our learners with disability, Aboriginal learners and learners that are rural and remote. But let me get you all the accurate categories. There are loadings that are applied to those learners. I'll come back on notice, Chair.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Did Try a Trade sit under the Smart and Skilled program?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me check that. Is there something specific you want me to check in relation to it?

The CHAIR: I want to know if under that Smart and Skilled program there was funding for VET service provision in Youth Justice centres?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me check for that.

The CHAIR: If you could come back then on what current skills and trades programs are running in the Youth Justice centres and how much the Department of Education is funding them for.

MURAT DIZDAR: Definitely. I'm happy to do that, because I've been to a number and there are trade training centre type operations in some of these Youth Justice centres so that students can come out with qualifications and skills to enhance employability. I'll come back to you with what's in play at each of our Youth Justice centres.

The CHAIR: Thank you, that would be really useful. If you could also tell me what the evaluation of that Try a Trade program has been like, how it has been assessed and what the results have been, that would be very useful.

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure.

The CHAIR: If I could turn to you, Mr Martin, in relation to the announcement yesterday, I think it was, in relation to the review of HSC disability provisions. Obviously, we covered those issues a lot in our PC3 inquiry into children with disability in schools. I'm pleased to see that there has been some movement on that. I saw in eTendering that a tender has been given to Urbis Ltd for \$712,000 to do that review.

PAUL MARTIN: Yes, that's correct.

The CHAIR: Can you tell us what that \$712,000 will cover exactly?

PAUL MARTIN: The tender is in relation to making sure that all of the various disability groups are spoken to and that we have a comprehensive report about the current strengths of the program, and obviously any suggested changes, so all the peak disability groups, the Aboriginal Education Consultative Group, the disability groups cross-sectorally—the three sectors—principals, activists in the space, potentially former students who have been engaged with or had disability provisions provided to them. They will then, after they have conducted those direct consultation processes, produce a report for us.

The CHAIR: That sounds quite promising then in terms of the consultation process. We are looking at this being delivered in a year, I think it was—maybe September 2025?

PAUL MARTIN: Yes, next year. We will do it as early as we can, but we want to give proper and due consideration to the various groups, and we will get that information back and the report back and recommendations as soon as we can.

The CHAIR: And then we're looking at 2026 HSC.

PAUL MARTIN: That's right.

The CHAIR: I have a couple of other random ones. The Auditor-General released a report into internal controls and governance, and one of the issues identified was the governance of gifts and benefits. Are you able to provide a copy of the department's gifts and benefits register—this is something I've been asking a few different departments—and also any information that you hold in relation to lobbyists and lobbyist meetings?

PAUL MARTIN: Sure.

The CHAIR: There is another eTendering record for Accenture being awarded a contract to do business process automation for almost \$273,000. Can you tell me what that business process automation project is, and are we expecting jobs to be cut as a result?

MURAT DIZDAR: Is this in the Department of Education or NESA?

The CHAIR: Yes.

MURAT DIZDAR: Department of Education?

The CHAIR: Yes.

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me go back and get details for you, but it has nothing to do with the structures that I've been doing. I have brought no-one in to work on the structures. We have been working ourselves as deputy secretaries and secretary on the structure.

The CHAIR: Last year the department engaged MKG Consulting to deliver a procurement operations manual. Has that been delivered?

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me go back and check with procurement.

The CHAIR: Back to you again, Mr Martin. In relation to that project with the review, are you able to make the terms of reference for that review available to the Committee?

PAUL MARTIN: Whatever was involved in the tender process, we can of course provide.

The CHAIR: Will a version of the report be made public when it comes back, do you know?

PAUL MARTIN: I can't answer that question at the moment, but I'll take that on notice as well.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Mr Dizdar, this question is probably for you. The now Premier and also the education Minister in February 2023 made a commitment that they would look to offer the IB at public schools in New South Wales. Can you update the Committee where that work is up to? Or Mr Graham—whoever is the best placed.

MARTIN GRAHAM: Yes. We are looking currently at how we will operationalise that. We hope to provide schools with advice on that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We're nearly halfway through the term of this Government. The now Minister said at the time that there would be an opportunity for an expression of interest for individual public schools. Is there a time frame on when that will happen?

MARTIN GRAHAM: We're currently working on how the commitment is going to be met within public schools.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Has the Minister given you any direction in terms of a time frame of when she would like to see the IB offered in all public schools?

MURAT DIZDAR: All the election commitments are virtually day one, term 1 2027 for delivery.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So day one, term 1 2027, all public schools will offer the IB in New South Wales.

MURAT DIZDAR: No—that we'd have worked through and met that election commitment. There is quite a bit of work to do.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate that, but the election commitment is that schools will be given the option of running the IB. We're virtually at the end of the second school year of the not so new Government. It is going to take time to implement that in schools. Will students in 2027 be able to do the IB in public schools?

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll need to do that work and present it to Government. We've got 78 education election commitments to deliver, and we're at work on all of them.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate that, but at the moment there's no expression of interest. If you've got a public school that wants to offer the IB still working through the logistics of that—and I appreciate it's a large logistical undertaking, but we're halfway through and there's not even a process yet.

MURAT DIZDAR: I've led a school in my career overseas that offered the IB, so I know what it takes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Fabulous, Mr Dizdar. But the commitment last year in February 2023 was that it would be available, and it has been radio silence for all but two years.

MURAT DIZDAR: We're running hard on all 78 commitments. We'll go back to the Government with our advice on this one.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: On this specific one, when would you anticipate on giving the Government advice about the implementation of running the IB?

MURAT DIZDAR: I don't want to nail myself to a time frame. We'll work on it. I'm happy to come back to the Committee. We come back in March. We should be closer on some of the work around it.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'll ask again for complete clarity: In 2027 will public schools in New South Wales be offering the IB?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll need to meet the election commitment. That's the expectation.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So that's a yes? They will be?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll need to meet that election commitment.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So is it a yes?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll need to do the work and present to Government how we would meet that election commitment.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: How many of the 78 election commitments that you're talking about have been delivered so far?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll get you the exact number on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you. And which ones have been met already?

MURAT DIZDAR: Sure, we should have that. The temp to perm one is an example.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but work had started on that, to be fair, prior to the election.

MURAT DIZDAR: But I'm happy to take it on notice and come back to you with which ones we've met.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great, thank you.

MURAT DIZDAR: Can I also let you know about Medowie? I've got advice on that. Would you like to know that?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, please.

MURAT DIZDAR: We'll be recommending year 7 as a kick-off and we've got to deliver that for day one, term 1, 2027.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I appreciate you said the principal would be about 12 months out. When would you anticipate catchment areas?

MURAT DIZDAR: I think we'll be looking to recruit the principal in term 4, 2025 for a 2026 start and give the principal a one-year runway. It would be very remiss if we tried to nail down the enrolment catchment right now, even though there will be work underway.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But would that be something that you would think the principal would do once appointed? Is it usually within that 12-month period?

MURAT DIZDAR: We'd normally want to do some heavy lifting and take that to the principal so we can start taking enrolments, ideally, in the first half of that school year.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Going back to another election commitment—one of your 78—prior to the last election, again, the Minister made some public commentary around a new co-ed high school in the eastern suburbs and said that that would be delivered. Where is that work up to?

MURAT DIZDAR: Are you referring to the Randwick consultation?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: No, I'm talking about prior to the election. The Minister is on the record—and I can pull up the article—saying that a Labor Government would provide a co-ed school in the eastern suburbs.

MURAT DIZDAR: I want to go back and check the wording. My understanding was that we'd look at co-ed provision. We've undertaken the Randwick consultation and the Randwick merger is commencing next year. We're up in year 7 enrolments, which is fantastic. It will be a growing school. I want to make sure I can get the accurate wording, unless you've got the wording in front of you.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I do. In November 2022 in a *Sky News* interview, now Minister Prue Car said:

We're certainly not going to be closing any single-sex schools or anything like that.

...

It's something that we have said we're going to do in the first term of the government—is find a way to build a co-ed high school in the eastern suburbs ...

CORRECTED

I'm asking about that commitment, on the record in November 2022, that they would build a co-ed high school in the eastern suburbs.

MURAT DIZDAR: Let me check the exact wording in the Government commitments, not what's reported in Sky News.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's a direct quote from the Minister on *Sky News*, so it's from her mouth. It has not been made up by a journalist, and it was reported again in *The Sydney Morning Herald*.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm not trying to not answer the question. I'll come back and give it to you on notice. But, pleasingly, we are underway with what the co-ed provision looks like at Randwick.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But that's a restructure of two existing schools, not a new co-ed high school being built.

MURAT DIZDAR: I would add it is quite successful, given what parents are indicating by way of enrolment for next year.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You might be aware, Mr Dizdar, that the Federal member in that area, Allegra Spender, has been doing work with an architect around a proposal at the Edgecliff Centre for a public-private high school. Have you been involved in those consultations? Has the Deputy Premier met with that Federal member about a proposal to build a co-ed high school at the Edgecliff Centre?

MURAT DIZDAR: I've only read about it in what was reported in the newspaper. I can't answer for whether she has met with the Deputy Premier or not. I'm not sure.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take that on notice as to whether there have been any conversations with the Federal member, Allegra Spender, and the Government?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Point of order—

MURAT DIZDAR: Is that best put to the Deputy Premier?

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: That's a question to be directed to the Minister.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But he can take it on notice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's a question to the Minister about her diary. If you want to put it on notice, put it on notice to the Minister.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: With respect, the secretary could take it on notice. I would assume if the Minister was meeting with an MP about a school infrastructure project, there would be departmental advice.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: It's a question to be directed to the Minister.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Okay, I'll rephrase it. Has the department provided any advice to the Deputy Premier about a potential public/private school proposal to be built at the Edgecliff Centre?

MURAT DIZDAR: Not that I'm aware of.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Has School Infrastructure had any consultations with that Federal member, Allegra Spender, about a proposed school.

MURAT DIZDAR: Not that I'm aware of, but I'm happy to check that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you. In terms of school air conditioning, can you confirm that the Cooler Classrooms Program has finished and it's not ongoing and open for funding applications from schools?

MURAT DIZDAR: That's my understanding. There was a bit of remnant work left over, but the program is complete.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Is there currently a mechanism for schools to apply for funding specifically for the purposes of having those aircon, heating and air ventilation units installed in their schools, like they were able to do under Cooler Classrooms?

MURAT DIZDAR: They can, through the work with their asset service officers. There has been an improvement in the number of asset service officers. There's one asset service officer for every 10 schools.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But is there specific money for installation of those air conditioning systems for schools?

CORRECTED

MURAT DIZDAR: Working with the asset services officer in prioritising the needs of the school, they can make that the top priority.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But there used to be a separate \$500 million fund, as you'd be aware, which was Cooler Classrooms. Schools have always had their assets funds and they can apply for what they prioritise. That's not new. But there was a separate bucket of money under Cooler Classrooms specifically for aircon, heating and cooling, as you would know. Is that separate bucket of money available to schools anymore or not?

MURAT DIZDAR: That five-year program came to an end in 2023.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: There isn't anything new to replace it in the form of a specific air conditioning program?

MURAT DIZDAR: We haven't replaced it with any other separate bucket. We've been doing it through our asset services officers and saying if it's a priority for the school, you can nominate that as a priority.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I wondered whether the Department of Education has been involved at all or been asked to participate in the drug summit. The Sydney one is this week and there have also been Griffith and Lismore meetings. Has there been any involvement from the department in that?

MURAT DIZDAR: We have, yes. Mr Graham might have details.

MARTIN GRAHAM: Yes, Laura Milkins, the executive director of inclusion and wellbeing, is attending that summit.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Has the department been asked to provide any insight or is it more attending and gathering feedback.

MARTIN GRAHAM: I'm not sure about any background work that took place. I can get back to you on that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could take that on notice, that would be great. I have one quick one and then I'll hand back over to my colleague. We don't have a lot of time left. Actually, I have two quick ones. Googong High School—is there a start date yet for the construction of that project?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll find out and come back to you, if that's okay.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That's fine.

MURAT DIZDAR: We do update all our projects on our website for the school community, so let me go back.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you. For Jindabyne Education Campus, is there a completion date for the high school and the primary school there?

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to come back, if that's okay, Ms Mitchell?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That's okay. When you're taking that on notice, could you also provide whether there have been any changes to those plans in light of the Government's decision to effectively abandon the Snowy Mountains Special Activation Precinct? You'd remember a lot of that was linked within the new school and there was community infrastructure work that was happening around that as well. My understanding is that the SAP part of it has been put on hold, and I'm wondering if there will be an impact then on the school delivery there.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to come back. We're committed to building the primary and high school. Are you asking about the specifics of where that funding—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just whether there has been any impact in terms of those projects. But from the educational perspective, you're saying no.

MARTIN GRAHAM:

MURAT DIZDAR: No. We've still got the funding to build both schools.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Did you want to add anything, Ms Summerhayes, or not?

DEBORAH SUMMERHAYES: I was just going to add, Ms Mitchell, that the schools are preparing to make the move for day one, term 1 next year at the end of this year.

CORRECTED

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: I will pick up the issue of bullying in schools. Mr Dizdar, I'm happy to start with you or be directed. I preface this by recognising the level of community and parent concern on this issue in the current environment. Mr Dizdar, how do New South Wales schools address reports of alleged bullying in the relevant school environment?

MURAT DIZDAR: We've had a longstanding zero-tolerance view for bullying in public schools in New South Wales. Again, I've got to give credit to schools. They do a remarkable job in stamping out bullying and leading with respectful and safe structures in their schools. Schools aren't cut adrift from society. They can be impacted heavily with what happens in society and it's concerning that there is a growing prevalence of this in society. You're following all the debate and discussion, where there has been a national call for a review and examination of bullying by the Federal education Minister—a review on what works and what can be improved.

Here in New South Wales the Premier and Deputy Premier have come out and said they're looking for a stronger framework to apply across all of the sectors, both government and Catholic and independent schools. That'll be part of work in what's known as the schools advisory committee, where they are the three sector heads for public education, Catholic education and also for independent schools to work through with the Minister of the day and with our NESA colleague in Paul Martin, given that NESA is cross-sectoral. Mr Martin might want to make additional comments.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: In terms of the current arrangement today, what's in place?

MURAT DIZDAR: In my system it's zero tolerance.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: In terms of incidences of bullying, is there a process where they're recorded or reported to the Department of Education?

MURAT DIZDAR: We just covered earlier—if it's a suspension with a formal disciplinary action, there are categories for recording and then schools have mechanisms for recording what are entries of incidences in schools, as well as our incident reporting hotline at the centre. There is a multitude of—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: My question is specific to the bullying. I think we established it earlier, but the suspension—we didn't have knowledge if that was specific to bullying.

MURAT DIZDAR: Not quite, Ms Merton. We said we had the suspension figures but that we'd go back and see what the breakdown was in the categories.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: But in terms of individual incidents of specific bullying, is there a reporting process relevant to that?

MURAT DIZDAR: There is. There is at a school level. There is at a system level through the incident support hotline as well.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: In terms of resources to the school for anti-bullying education materials, what is available today to equip and empower schools to want to be taking a greater interest in this?

MURAT DIZDAR: Mr Graham might add more to this but, in the area of cyberbullying, we've got a world-renowned Cybermarvel online safety awareness program. We also partner with the eSafety Commissioner. We've got the behaviour code in place. For bullying in general, Mr Graham might have the range of resources not only through the curriculum but additional ones that we make available.

MARTIN GRAHAM: We provide a range of resources. We're also strong leaders in the Bullying No Way national approach as well. We provide funding and support for that. All those materials are available not just to our students and schools but to schools across Australia. We're very much part of a national support effort as well.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Mr Graham, schools report that relationships with local schools and local police are effective in educating kids and equipping them. Is there some arrangement by the department to assist in this, or is it up to the individual school?

MARTIN GRAHAM: We have materials available, but often schools have—because they'll use, for those police in schools program, local police who are local to that area and the police very much operate a local command area. That's done through Ms Summerhayes, the schools' areas and the local area command.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just quickly back to the IB, Mr Graham, has there been any work done on what the costings would be to run the IB at an individual high school?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I don't have any costing for an individual high school for how much it would cost to run the IB.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Have you done any work for costings across the system to offer the IB?

MARTIN GRAHAM: I've been in this role for 12 months so I'm not sure about the costings that might've been done to run the IB.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take on notice whether any work has been done and any figures that you have around the costings to run the IB?

MURAT DIZDAR: We're happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you have any updated data in terms of teacher vacancy numbers, Mr Dizdar, as of today or more recently than term 3?

MURAT DIZDAR: I only have that term 3, week two data. Please let me come back on notice. We'll do it quickly.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So you cannot get it to us today? It's not in front of you?

MURAT DIZDAR: That's all I've got in front of me.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Really? You can't give us anything more recent than term 3 data?

MURAT DIZDAR: Yes, I've got a one delay in the term data I've got, but I'm happy to come straight back to the Committee.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: With respect, it's about a term-and-a-half delay. It's early term 3 and we're now nearly at the end of term 4. I just find it bizarre you couldn't give it to me today. You knew you were coming here. So that data is not available?

MURAT DIZDAR: I would really like to help, but that's all I've got in front of me. Unfortunately, Mr Ruming is ill and wasn't able to join us. Maybe he had the data, but that's all I've got in front of me.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We'll see.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm not sure—can I just place on record that's what I've got. Again, I don't want the Committee to think I'm withholding any information. That's what I've got.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I think you could've got it.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'm happy to come back.

PAUL MARTIN: Just a correction, Chair—the terms of reference for the disability review are public and on the NESAs website and there will be a public report in relation to the disability review that you questioned earlier. I also indicated that the consultation on dance, drama and music was 24 October. In fact, it was the 28th.

The CHAIR: Does the Government have any questions?

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: Unless there are any issues to which the panel wants to offer some clarifications?

MURAT DIZDAR: Chair, can I just correct one reference? Earlier I said that there was a United Nations report into the work we'd done around targets. I meant to say the OECD. I got the United Nations mixed up with the OECD. The record should say OECD.

The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM: We have no other questions.

The CHAIR: In that case, that brings us to the end of our session. Thank you very much for attending. We do appreciate it. To the extent there were questions taken on notice or any supplementary questions, the Committee secretariat will be in touch.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.