

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - REGIONAL NSW

Wednesday 20 August 2025

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

LANDS AND PROPERTY, MULTICULTURALISM, SPORT, JOBS AND TOURISM

CORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:15.

MEMBERS

The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Chair)

Dr Amanda Cohn

The Hon. Greg Donnelly

The Hon. Scott Farlow

The Hon. Wes Fang

Ms Sue Higginson

The Hon. Emma Hurst (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. Mark Latham

The Hon. Cameron Murphy

The Hon. Peter Primrose

The Hon. John Ruddick

PRESENT

The Hon. Stephen Kamper, *Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

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

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

The CHAIR: Welcome to the first hearing of the Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Regional NSW inquiry into budget estimates 2025-2026. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands on which we are meeting today. I pay 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. My name is Mark Banasiak. I am the Chair of the Committee. I welcome Minister Kamper and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, Sport, and Jobs and Tourism.

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, so 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. I also note this is a rare occasion where we have a few community members in the gallery. I remind those in the gallery that they have to be silent and cannot engage in any applauding or jeering when questions are asked or answers are given.

I welcome our witnesses. Minister, you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament, but given that it is our first estimates hearing, all other witnesses need to be officially sworn in. As Mr Berry is appearing today via videoconference, I ask Committee members to clearly identify who their question is directed to and, Mr Berry, I ask you to please mute your microphone when you're not speaking and turn it back on when you are ready to speak.

Ms KIERSTEN FISHBURN, Secretary, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, affirmed and examined

Ms MELANIE HAWYES, Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, affirmed and examined

Mr LEON WALKER, Deputy Secretary, Property, Workplace and Development, Property and Development NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr DAVID RAPER, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr STEWART McLACHLAN, Chief Executive Officer, Value NSW, sworn and examined

Mr TOM GELLIBRAND, Chief Executive, Infrastructure NSW, sworn and examined

Mr JOSEPH LA POSTA, Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW, sworn and examined

Mr ADAM BERRY, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Office of Sport, before the Committee via videoconference, affirmed and examined

Ms KERRIE MATHER, Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW, sworn and examined

Ms ELIZABETH MILDWATER, Secretary, Department of Creative Industries, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport, affirmed and examined

Ms KAREN JONES, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, affirmed and examined

Mr MICHAEL TIDBALL, Secretary, Department of Communities and Justice, sworn and examined

The CHAIR: Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. We are joined by the Minister for the morning session from 9.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. In the afternoon we'll hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During these sessions there will be questions from Opposition and crossbench members only, and then 15 minutes will be allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. We will begin with questions from the crossbench.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Good morning, Minister. I want to start by asking about the Bowdens lead, zinc and silver mine. The Federal member for Calare, Andrew Gee, MP, said to media this week, "The New South Wales Government Ministers should go to Mudgee and engage with community concerns about the proposed mine due to lead contamination risks decimating the thriving tourism industry there, such as the wine industry." As the Minister responsible for Tourism, will you commit to go to Mudgee and meet with the community to hear about their concerns?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Most definitely. If there are grave concerns that the community has that it's going to impact the wine community, I will commit to do that, yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Great. I understand that you have family members who grew up in Broken Hill, so you would know better than most people about the impacts of lead contamination. Earlier this month you said in a media release that "agritourism is key to futureproofing our regional visitor economies". Are you comfortable with the reputational damage to Mudgee the Bowdens mine represents? What are you going to do about the real threat to tourism and the wine industry in that particular region?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I need to get across the issue a little bit more. As I said, I'll go and visit to see what the major concerns are. Agribusiness is an extremely valuable part of our visitor economy. I was up in and around the North Coast earlier this month and saw some outstanding agri-operations, agribusinesses. It's interesting that, when you look at the visitor expenditure overall, 40-odd per cent is within the regions. Agribusiness makes up a fair chunk of that, so it is an important issue to address. If there are going to be impacts on agribusinesses, I'll take that on board.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Just to confirm, there's a commitment from you to work with the community to ensure that there isn't any reputational damage to Mudgee given the concerns around the Bowdens mine?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have to deal with the relevant Minister in relation to that as well. My concern is how it could potentially impact on tourism and the wine industry. I'll take it from there.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Have you received any briefings around concerns in the tourism industry that are associated with these mines?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't believe I have received any briefings.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Several peak industry bodies in the Mudgee region have called for a lead exploration and lead mining exclusion zone, including the Mudgee Wine Association. They have warned that lead contamination could prevent their 56 member wineries from keeping their doors open in the region. Given the sentiment that you have expressed around the importance of these tourism industries, do you support the creation of an exclusion zone to safeguard the future of this important tourism region?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I need to get across the issue and see firsthand what impact it would have and understand it at a greater level. I undertake to do that.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: So this is the first time you have heard about these concerns, today?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Myself, yes. I might pass you on to Karen to see what impact has come through—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I will ask Ms Jones a question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'd like my office—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I have some questions for Ms Jones, and I'll ask them now. I just wanted to clarify that one question, because I don't think Ms Jones can answer it: Is today the first time that you, Minister, are hearing about these concerns?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There may have been—yes, definitely the first time I've had such a solid conversation in relation to it. As I said, I've made an undertaking to investigate and look into it.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Ms Jones, given your agency's focus on tourism as a priority and wellness tourism as an emerging opportunity, what is your plan to help the Mudgee region to navigate the threats posed by the Bowdens mine?

KAREN JONES: Thank you for your question. I think from Destination NSW's point of view we do actually look at the visitor economy from a number of aspects. You've already mentioned agritourism, for instance. There's also nature-based tourism, and wellness, like you've already mentioned, as well. All of those are really key pillars for us in terms of the visitor economy, including in regional New South Wales. Where there are potentially conflicting land uses, like you're talking about with the mining industry, then of course we will work with the relevant agency to ensure that the tourism concerns are known and are heard and are taken into consideration when considering those matters. But obviously today you're talking on behalf of some of the residents and some of the tourism operators up there. As the Minister has already said, we are more than happy to meet with those people to talk through those issues.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Ms Jones, I'm wondering what representations you have made to the Minister on the lead contamination risk posed by the proposed Bowdens lead mine to the Mudgee regions visitor economy? Have those discussions happened?

KAREN JONES: I will take that on notice. I'm not aware of any direct representations. Certainly no direct representations have been made to myself on that matter. But, again, I'm more than happy to engage with the local community to work through those issues on our behalf.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Has there been any modelling undertaken to determine the impact of lead contamination from lead exploration or lead mining to the Mudgee regions visitor economy that you're aware of?

KAREN JONES: Not that I'm aware of. But, again, I'm more than happy to take up that point with my colleagues who might be considering or assessing that mining proposal to ensure that the visitor economy is taken into account.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you very much for that. Minister, you will recall recent amendments that passed to the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act which removed legal barriers to animal and human remains being buried or interred together. I thank you for your support on getting that amendment through, and I thank your office as well. Is it your position that the intent of those amendments was to ensure that animal and human families could be buried together and that we want to make sure that, for example, if somebody has the ashes of a beloved companion animal and they plan to be buried with that animal, they should be able to ensure that that wish is available to them?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's why I supported the amendment at the time. Something that was discussed was to make it clear. I think the position that you held at the time was that it wasn't necessarily clear, and obviously the intent is now clearly in writing, absolutely.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The reason why I've asked that is that I recently sent you some correspondence—and I'm not sure if you've had a chance to see it—that highlights that at least one council is still refusing to allow animal burials, despite those law changes. Have you taken any action in response to that council or to make clear the intent around that legislation?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not sure. Maybe Mel might be best to give you a run down on what we have received and what action has been taken.

MELANIE HAWYES: The amendments remove restrictions to that practice, but operators are able to develop their own policy settings around it for a range of very practical reasons. I haven't seen the representations that you've mentioned, but I'm happy to have a look. We do have David who is the regulator here, who could speak to that. The regulatory entity is working with the operators now, since the amendments have been brought in, to determine how they might bring these changes into effect and set their policy around the new legislation. It's still being operationalised at the moment.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, do you have concerns that some people who may want to be buried with their companion animals—obviously the situation is that somebody may be thinking that when they are deceased, they will be able to be buried with their animals and then, after they are deceased, those family members can't actually fulfil the wishes for that person. Do you have concerns that this is still an ongoing issue, given that there's at least one council that is trying to prevent people from being able to fulfil that wish?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I would have a concern where there's a situation that councils are prohibiting that or a council cemetery is prohibiting that. It would be the role of the regulator to actually enforce that. I do have concerns if the intent of the legislation isn't being adhered to by cemetery operations.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I will make sure you get another copy of that letter as well, in case that has gone missing.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Thank you, Minister and witnesses. Minister, do you believe in and abide by the practice in the Westminster system of not misleading the Parliament? Do you believe that not misleading the Parliament is an important ministerial responsibility?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Of course I believe in not misleading the Parliament.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why, then, in answer to my question on notice—an answer to the Parliament on 24 July regarding the safety and quality of the surface at Allianz Stadium—did you say that the playing surface continues to be assessed as safe to play by the sporting codes that hire the venue? Why did you give that answer to the Parliament if you believe in telling the Parliament the truth?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That was the belief that I had at the time, that the sporting code was safe. In terms of the situation where you've had the drainage problem—and it has been an issue—it hasn't been good enough. I've acknowledged that, and we have embarked on a program and a review.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But you stand by that answer, that the playing surface continues to be assessed as safe to play by the sporting codes that hire the venue? Do you stand by that answer as accurate?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Was that signed off by the sports code?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It was your answer to me on notice to Parliament.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm trying to establish why I made that answer at the time.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, are you or your advisers aware of an email from Peter Filopoulos, the chief of corporate affairs for Football Australia, on 26 March this year after the Socceroos match against Indonesia at Allianz, where the representative writing to the group general manager of Venues NSW, Stephen Saunders, said that the surface slipperiness compromised both team safety and playing conditions? Also, multiple slips occurred in non-contact situations, raising real questions about safety and traction. Why have you told the Parliament there have been no complaints about safety to play by the sporting codes, when Football Australia made that complaint very clearly, as recently as March?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From my understanding, it was signed off by the sports codes as safe to play.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you answer my question? Are you aware of the complaint by Football Australia in late March this year about the game at Allianz with the Socceroos where they have complained very openly? I'll quote, "Surface slipperiness compromised both team safety and playing conditions. Multiple slips occurred in non-contact situations, raising real questions about safety and traction." Are you aware of that complaint by Football Australia to Venues NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I am aware of that complaint.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You are? So why did you tell the Parliament the opposite?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In wet weather conditions you will always have slippery conditions, Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why do you think that game was in wet weather conditions?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Aren't you referring to—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, they are referring to the playing surface, not that it rained that day. The playing surface is inherently unsafe because of the problem with the silted product that was laid initially and repeated time after time. Why do you think that the Soccerroos-Indonesia—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's your assumption that it's the silted product.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, Minister, you said this to the Parliament.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're just creating—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, you're creating—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My Latham, you have your own assumption as to why there have been problems with the surface.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why have you assumed that this game was played in rain?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm assuming that's what you're referring to.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It's not true. They are complaining about the inability in one instance to water the pitch pre-match. There was no rain. They said the inability to water the pitch pre-match, due to slipperiness, compromised both team safety and playing conditions. Why have you told the Parliament there were no complaints about the safety of the surface when you also say you were aware, in March, of this complaint from Football Australia? Why have you misled the Parliament willingly?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't willingly misled the Parliament.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You said you were aware of this complaint, but you're telling the Parliament that the surface was safe to play.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Kerrie, could you—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can someone rescue the hapless Minister?

KERRIE MATHER: Thank you, Minister, and thank you for the question. The sports independently verify the turf or field of play before they go on to play. In that instance, Football Australia actually did certify the field as safe to play. They actually won that game 5-0.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, 5-1, and then they were insulted by your official telling them, "You won 5-1. What are you complaining about?" Some of their players could have done a knee to put them out for a year. The arrogance of Venues NSW was objected to by Football Australia and you, unfortunately, have repeated it today. But, Minister, why have you misled the Parliament?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't misled the Parliament. They signed off. The sports codes had signed off that it was safe to play on.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But after the match. You can say something's safe in theory before the match, but this is after the match. This is an official complaint by Football Australia that, on two accounts, the ground wasn't safe to play. Doesn't that count for anything? Or do you just deal in hypothetical theories about the surface when you've got an official complaint by Football Australia, and you tell the Parliament that it was safe to play? Can you answer the question?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said, they were signed off by the sports codes that it was safe to play on. That's why I've made that statement.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, your evidence to the Parliament at this estimates is that you were aware of the official complaint by Football Australia about the quality of the surface in the Soccerroos versus Indonesia game. You were working on the assumption that it was raining when it wasn't, and then you still told the Parliament a few months later that there had been no complaints and the ground had been assessed as safe to

play by the sporting codes when you were aware of an official complaint by Football Australia. Minister, under the Westminster principle, why haven't you resigned for lying to the Parliament?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Give us a break, Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why haven't you resigned for lying brazenly to the Parliament?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're clutching at little words at different times.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: They're little words that you gave to the Parliament.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But at the end of the day, the sporting codes had signed off that it was safe to play on the pitch. I stand by that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, are you aware of the testing of the ground in terms of the infiltration rate that's required for a quality ground under Venues NSW? Do you know the standard for an elite playing facility that's safe and acceptable to the sporting codes, what the infiltration rate might be?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. I've got that information on hand.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: And what is it?

KERRIE MATHER: Three hundred to 600 mls an hour.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Three hundred to 600 mls an hour.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Okay. With that expertise, Minister, are you aware of the Labosport report—an independent report provided to Football Australia and also made available to Venues NSW on 21 January this year—that clearly outlines that from the opening of Allianz Stadium in 2022 to the complete collapse of the surface in May 2023, the infiltration rate never exceeded 200?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am aware of that now, yes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: When did you first become aware?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't recall.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Ms Mather, when did you first become aware, as the head of Venues NSW, that this ground in its first 18 months of operation never went close to an acceptable elite level infiltration rate, that is, the drainage rate for the safety of the players?

KERRIE MATHER: Through the recent investigations that were conducted after the State of Origin women's game, when we had a significant amount of water pooling as a result of what was a significant downpour at that match.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But can you answer my question? Were you aware of this Labosport report in January this year clearly highlighting that this ground was never, ever at a drainage level at elite capacity and acceptability for the safety of the players?

KERRIE MATHER: We became aware through the investigations that the standard of field drainage that was best in class for an elite sporting field should have been between 300 and 600.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, but are you aware of the Labosport report in January this year, the Labosport report independently, that it never got over 200 up to May 2023?

KERRIE MATHER: I was not aware of the details of that report.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why not?

KERRIE MATHER: Because it came out as part of the investigation that was conducted by STRI.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: So you only became aware after the State of Origin women's game, which was a complete debacle, earlier this year. You're not aware of these reports? No-one in your organisation drew to your attention, "Labosport has told us that this ground was completely hopeless in terms of drainage capacity" up to 24 May 2023, when the infiltration rate reduced to zero? It had no drainage in May 2023

KERRIE MATHER: These reports all came to light as a result of the thorough investigation that was conducted following that game.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, what are you going to do about Venues NSW, which seemingly has been blind to reality about this ground and the debacle at Allianz Stadium—now likely to be funded by the

taxpayer—when it was clear from the very beginning that there was a huge failing in the surface of that ground? What are you going to do about Venues NSW and its incompetence?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's our position and the position of Venues that, following that investigative work, it was established that there was a problem with the sand layer under the turf and in relation to the level of clay, which was around 9 per cent and should have been 2 per cent.

KERRIE MATHER: Exactly.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You're blaming sand and clay. Do you know the product came from Evergreen?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That was contaminated at the time of construction. Obviously, there were two serious dumps of rain, which really highlighted that problem. I think it was the State of Origin game.

KERRIE MATHER: Yes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There was one there where I remember Tedesco was, like, swimming to score a try. That's why we embarked on this investigation and brought in experts to address the issue. We're comfortable that we know what the problem is now. We know how to address it. As the Premier stated, it's still under the warranty period, so we'll be pursuing that work. There's a program to get that work done now.

KERRIE MATHER: Yes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's unfortunate, but that was an inherited situation. It took a unique dumping of rainwater in a very short period of time to highlight the problem.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Thanks, Chair. We'll come back to it.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, welcome. Usually I'm sent in to soften you up a bit, but I think Mr Latham might have already helped with that. I congratulate you on your new portfolio, Jobs and Tourism. How's it going?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's going great.

The Hon. WES FANG: How did you enjoy your winter break?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Could you ask me something in relation to the budget?

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you enjoy your winter break? Did you use it to, I don't know, maybe have a look around New South Wales at some of the tourism parts, for which you are now the new Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I had a short break. I spent it with my family and my grandchildren, if that's okay. I took a few weeks leave.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you go around New South Wales and use your new position as the tourism Minister to have a look at some of the tourism aspects during the winter break?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have travelled somewhat, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: During the winter break?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not during my holiday period, but yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, what do you think is a reasonable price for a regional flight, say, to Tamworth?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I really couldn't give you an answer to that.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't indicate to me what you think a reasonable price is for a regional flight to a regional centre of New South Wales.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I haven't got that off the top of my head.

The Hon. WES FANG: This is one of those "How much is a dozen eggs?" questions, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, not really.

The Hon. WES FANG: What do you think is an appropriate price for somebody to pay for a regional flight to a regional centre in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know what a reasonable price is. It's not a quiz show here.

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't have an opinion on this? You are the tourism Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know what it is. Every region has different distances and different demand, which creates different price ranges. I can't give you that answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you don't have a problem—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: —with the price for regional flights at the moment? There's the note you've been passed; you can read it.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's a matter for the airlines, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Please talk about it for ages, if you like. We can talk about the same thing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what do you think it would cost to fly to Tamworth, for instance?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've got no idea. I'm not across it.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's because you don't pay for them. Is that right?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I have generally done most of my travel by vehicle.

The Hon. WES FANG: What if I said to you \$800 was recently the price of a flight between Sydney and Tamworth? Would you think that's acceptable?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's return?

The Hon. WES FANG: No, that's one way.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think that's quite excessive.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you think that might be having an impact on the ability for regional areas to promote tourism?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Definitely, if the cost of a flight is \$800 for that particular one, but that's one example. I don't know in terms of every other regional destination.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you think that's reasonable?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't think it's reasonable.

The Hon. WES FANG: How are you going to grow regional tourism when transport is so unaffordable—a hope and a prayer?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm just really not sure where you're trying to get to with this type of questioning, Wes. I mean, how am I going change the transport network overnight and subsidise every single trip? I'm trying to work out where you're trying to get to.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, let me help you, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We've got—

The Hon. WES FANG: When was the last time you met with Qantas and discussed the price of regional ticketing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I met with Qantas. I can't recall whether we discussed what the actual regional ticketing value was.

The Hon. WES FANG: When you met with Qantas you didn't think to discuss the price of regional flights?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Just because you may think that that's something you'd ask, it doesn't mean it's something that I'd ask. We spoke about their—

The Hon. WES FANG: It's not necessarily me, Minister. It's the people of rural and regional New South Wales.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's about services. It's about having greater connections and a greater amount of flights.

The Hon. WES FANG: So those are important things to you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, absolutely.

The Hon. WES FANG: And you discussed those with Qantas when you met with them?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't recall the exact conversations of the meeting with Qantas, Wes.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I can't.

The Hon. WES FANG: Let me ask, then, when was the last time you met with Rex?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was more a general conversation.

The Hon. WES FANG: A general conversation. Okay, that's all right. When was the last time you met with Rex?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know if I've met with Rex.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're the regional tourism Minister—as well as tourism Minister—and you haven't met with Regional Express?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have been the Minister for five, six months now, or maybe less.

The Hon. WES FANG: And you didn't that that was—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm getting across it and meeting with as many stakeholders and operators as possible.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you haven't visited with Rex since you've been appointed as the tourism Minister. Why not?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't met with them. There hasn't been a meeting request and I haven't gotten around to doing that.

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't think to be proactive in these things? There are plenty of notes being handed to you; you might want to read them. Why do you think QantasLink prioritises metro routes over regional route, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Demand.

The Hon. WES FANG: Demand? Okay. Do you think that, as the tourism Minister, you might have a role in discussing the need for more diverse routes—as you succinctly put it in an answer to me previously—in part of those meetings with Qantas?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Could you ask that question again? I'm just trying to figure out—I don't know what you—

The Hon. WES FANG: You told me that you think that we need more diverse routes, and that you spoke to Qantas about that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is the fact that Qantas haven't widened their routes and are focusing more on metro destinations out of regional New South Wales—you've had no impact there, have you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: For the short period of time—how do you define impact?

The Hon. WES FANG: A short period of time? You've been in job for almost six months, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're working with—we've got the Take Off Fund that we're looking to encourage. That is for flights, whether it's from Newcastle airport—

The Hon. WES FANG: Speaking of that, Minister, when Western Sydney airport opens, can you guarantee regional flights will stay at Mascot and not be diverted out to Western Sydney airport?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't guarantee these things. The airlines will make their—

The Hon. WES FANG: You haven't spoken to the airlines about this?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The airlines will make their decisions on that.

The Hon. WES FANG: You haven't spoken to the airlines? You're not going to advocate for regional commuters?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely I will.

The Hon. WES FANG: How about the cost?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The airlines are going to establish what the cost is, and the demand will determine that as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's how we get \$800 flights to Tamworth, Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, do you see your role as the tourism Minister as just about New South Wales or about intrastate tourism as well?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I see it as intrastate and New South Wales.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, one of your—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said earlier, there's a very large percentage of visitor expenditure spent in our regions, so it's important to continue to encourage, focus and assist in whichever way we can to attract people.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Since becoming the tourism Minister, can you outline some of the regional tourism businesses you've visited?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've visited a number of them; I can't remember them all off the top of my head.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Any particular highlights that you had?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've been out on the road. I'll get back to you with a list of those things, if you like.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. You'll take that on notice then. But nothing comes to mind? No trip to the Big—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not going to name one and not another. I was out there at Tropical Fruit World. That was really interesting; I enjoyed that experience. I spent 1½ to two hours there touring the whole operation.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That was as part of the recent Community Cabinet, was it, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Over 100-odd employees were there. It was a very interesting business and there is definitely growth in that space.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: One of your other new portfolios is as the jobs Minister. We've had the recent unemployment figures. What's the unemployment rate in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Is it about 4 per cent now? Around 4 per cent.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It'd be good if it was—4.4 per cent—but you're close.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I thought the—

LEON WALKER: It was 4 per cent in July.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was 4 per cent in July. Seasonally adjusted, it was 4 per cent in July, as I understand.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what was the unemployment rate when your Government came to power?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe it was much higher. Was it closer to 5 per cent? Or was it—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It was 3.3 per cent.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Was that the case?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, 3.3 per cent, back in March of 2023. Minister, how many jobs have been lost in New South Wales in the past two months?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's been growth in jobs in the past two months.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You say there's been growth in jobs? You dispute that there hasn't been 45,000 jobs lost in New South Wales in the last two months?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're adding an average of over 6,700 job per month, compared to 5,400 per month under the former Government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Over what period is that, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Anyway—

The Hon. WES FANG: You've confused him.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's where we are. I'm telling you—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We know in the last estimates you thought jobs in Parramatta were crazy, so you're the perfect person for this role. Minister, what about in terms of some of the regional unemployment rates?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Jobs in Parramatta were crazy, sorry?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We had a discussion about the Parramatta North precinct.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That was in relation to the floor space and the vacancies in Parramatta. It's so far off the way you characterise it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, talking about Parramatta, what's the employment rate for that region, do you know, in terms of—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I haven't got that off the top of my head.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are these things you look at, in terms of being the jobs Minister? Are you going through in a forensic—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I come across these things every now and then, but I haven't got it off the top of my head.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, are you targeting any regions in particular?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: These are things you can google. If you want to google it, you can just google it, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I understand, Minister. There's also ChatGPT now and AI—there are a lot of things—but you're the Minister—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, but if you really want specific detail—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —so I would hope that these are some things that you might be across, that you might have coming across your desk—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's not stuff I retain in my head. There's so much, with my vast responsibilities, my portfolio mix—there's a lot of information and a lot of detail.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It is eclectic, Minister. There is no doubt about that; it's eclectic. Minister, in terms of some of these figures, though, if I were to say to you that the unemployment rate in the Parramatta region was 5.6 per cent, would that be something of concern? As the jobs Minister, would you be looking at what opportunities there would be to work with businesses in that area or to provide some incentives?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, there would be, and one very important one is the workers compensation reform that we've been trying to get through. That's impacting a lot on employers and employers' willingness to employ people because of the unsurety that's associated with the current risk. It's also the fact that escalating premium rates—if we do nothing—and also the cost of claims loadings are really affecting a lot of the employers. They're horrified. That's one issue that's a particular concern to employers, and it's probably stifling employment. They're thinking twice about putting someone on.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, would payroll tax be another area that you think could be potentially impacting employment in New South Wales as well?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, payroll tax historically is a burden for employers; I appreciate that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To that point, Minister, why hasn't your Government changed the indexation rates with payroll tax since you've come to office?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We haven't increased any payroll tax rates; we've kept them pretty much where they've been for a long time.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But in that time you haven't increased the threshold at all, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, it was for very much—the first time ever there was a payroll tax threshold increase was under a Labor government in the past, so your track record in terms of payroll—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, that's a good history lesson, Minister—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, it goes back to Kristina Keneally.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —but we're talking about your Government. These budget estimates are about you as Minister, not about your forebears.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You can discuss that with the Minister for Finance. You can discuss that with the appropriate Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As the jobs Minister, though, is this something are advocating on?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I'd love there to be no payroll tax; we'd all love that. Of course, it's something that I would—but unfortunately it's a very big part—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But have you advocated on this, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —of our State revenue stream. It's an important part. We're doing the best we can to not increase taxes across the board and try to make it easier for businesses to employ people. Unfortunately we get some obstacles—we get them in this House. We get blocks in the upper House which make it really difficult. It is unfortunate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: One of the areas in New South Wales where I would think there has been some jobs growth has been in your office, because we've seen your office expenses have increased by 32.34 per cent when it comes to your staff salary expenses. Why is that the case?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'd like to compare an office that has the responsibilities that my portfolio mix has and compare it to what some of the office costs were of the previous Government, if you compared apples for apples.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Year on year, your employee expenses have increased by 32.34 per cent.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We were running fairly lean early on, and there have been some greater responsibilities—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're starting to boost up now, hey?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Obviously, we've got to do our job well. That requires staff and it requires the level that we're currently sitting at.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With that 32.34 per cent increase in your expenses for your employees in your office, how many more staff have you hired?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't give you an exact number, if it's 1½ or two or what it is.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was that as a result of your new portfolio of Jobs and Tourism?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That would have required additional need.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of your employee expenses, were the new staff brought in before your change of portfolio allocations or were they brought in after that point in time?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From what I understand, it was after. Don't hold me to that. I'd rather take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You'll take that on notice. Thank you. Did any staff members receive pay increases as well, as part of that increase in employee expenses?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I assume there have been pay increases in accordance with—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that a determination that you make or is that a determination your chief of staff makes?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Generally the chief of staff manages that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of your growth in employee expenses, it's one of the largest in the Government. Do you think that your office does more work than any of the others in government to warrant that increase in expenditure?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not sure if it's one of the largest in the Government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: At 32.34 per cent, I can assure you it is.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In terms of growth, coming from a pretty low base, though. It's coming from a pretty low base.

The Hon. WES FANG: So many things in that office are like that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: One would argue that, you know.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, are you diligent in managing conflicts of interest?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe so.

The Hon. WES FANG: Not only for you but your office as well?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe so.

The Hon. WES FANG: In October 2024 *The Daily Telegraph* reported concerns about potential conflicts of interest in relation to your chief of staff's position as a senior staffer in your office but also as the Mayor of Bayside Council. Has your chief of staff ever disclosed a conflict of interest regarding Multicultural NSW activities or programs and his role as the mayor?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Details of all my office staff are all made available to the Cabinet Office on a regular basis. My staff, as officers, all provide personal interest declarations as part of their conditions of employment. They're required to manage actual and perceived conflicts of interest on an ongoing basis, and I believe they do.

The Hon. WES FANG: We expect that from all ministerial officers. The question I asked, though, was: Has your chief of staff ever disclosed a conflict of interest regarding Multicultural NSW activities and programs and his role as a mayor? Has there been a declaration?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: This is not one of those things you should be unsure of, Minister. You should either be clear that there has a declaration or you say no.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Wherever there are any conflicts, he removes himself from—

The Hon. WES FANG: So he has declared conflicts of interest? He has declared them to you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, he has declared.

The Hon. WES FANG: Because he removes himself. That's what you just said.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, he removes himself from anything where there's a conflict with his mayoral duties and his duties at Bayside.

The Hon. WES FANG: So he has made declarations to you in that case then, because he does remove himself. Is that correct?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Can I assist?

The Hon. WES FANG: I'll come to you, Mr La Posta, in a second. I'm asking the Minister at this stage. Minister, has the chief of staff made disclosures about this? Given that you've now said that he removes himself from those discussions, I can assume that that is yes. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We manage conflict and—

The Hon. WES FANG: So he has made conflict of interest disclosures to you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: He has, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: How much Multicultural NSW funding has Bayside Council received since the 2023 State election?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I couldn't tell you that off the top of my head.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you want to take it on notice?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take it on notice, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Excellent. Thank you. How do you manage conflicts of interest in your office? How are they managed? How are they noted? How are they recorded?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They are reported by virtue of the fact that anything that's of conflict, anything to do with Bayside Council or any conflict, there's another officer, the deputy chief of staff, who actually manages it.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you record it, you make declarations, you do the appropriate things and there's a file where you have these things. Can you provide, on notice, examples of those declarations of conflicts of interest?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, we do it by practice.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's great, Minister, but what we want to know is—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We do it by practice.

The Hon. WES FANG: You know, under the State Records Act, you need to record the appropriate actions of your office. Can you just provide them? Can you provide, on notice, those declarations?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's the responsibility of the relevant officer to manage that conflict.

The Hon. WES FANG: I've asked you, on notice, can you provide examples of this?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's very well managed within our office. Anything that has a hint of conflict, we—

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, that's not an answer to the question I asked.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It is an answer to the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you take it on notice and can you provide examples of those declarations of conflict of interest from your chief of staff and provide them to us as a Committee?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. He has taken it on notice. Minister, how many parcels of Crown land across New South Wales are currently underutilised or locked up without purpose?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I wouldn't be able to give you that number.

The CHAIR: Why not? I'm joking. Is there someone here that can help you? How many parcels of Crown land across New South Wales are currently underutilised or locked up without a clear purpose?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think that depends on what you mean by "underutilised", because there are multiple uses of Crown land, including for passive open space, so it's a bit difficult to answer a question as open as that. It depends what you consider to be utilised or underutilised.

The CHAIR: Okay, what about not being utilised at all?

MELANIE HAWYES: It's very rare that something is completely unutilised. Most of Crown land is actually under pastoral lease in the western parts of the State, and in the east it's a very diverse multi-use portfolio. Reserve purposes are as broad as commercial use—commercial marinas—or we have things like beaches and estuaries. Would they be underutilised?

The CHAIR: Are you able to provide a breakdown in terms of what's being used for commercial leases versus recreational?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can provide statistics on what is under a commercial lease, but that is a very slim view about what is utilised in the Crown land portfolio because, as I say, it covers things like open space and beaches, which people would have very different views about what utilisation really means.

The CHAIR: Are you able to provide a breakdown of the varied uses and their percentages?

MELANIE HAWYES: At a macro level but, because it's so huge it wouldn't be—

The CHAIR: I'm happy for that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Absolutely, and I can provide you with data on what is under commercial lease.

The CHAIR: Thank you. Minister, how many government-owned properties in regional New South Wales are currently vacant or underutilised?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Again, it's not a number that I'd have in my head. If there are, it'd be a moving feast. I don't know.

The CHAIR: Are you able to take it on notice?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice, yes.

The CHAIR: Is there a public register of these government-owned properties and whether they are being utilised or can be utilised? Is that available somewhere for the public?

MELANIE HAWYES: It's more of a question for my colleague, Leon.

LEON WALKER: No, there's no register. You have to ask each land-owning agency. They manage their own portfolios.

The CHAIR: So there's no central—

LEON WALKER: There's a central government property register, but it doesn't contain that level of detail.

The CHAIR: Minister, can I go to some questions around the Regional Academies of Sport? They've obviously made representations to many people regarding concerns about their funding. What's the exact dollar change that has been approved for the Regional Academies of Sport in 2025-2026 in the forward estimates, compared to the previous year?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There hasn't been a dollar change in terms of the regular funding. I think what you've got is the Regional Academies of Sport have received annual operation funding from the NSW Office of Sport since 1987. The operational funding to the Regional Academies of Sport and their work has been consistent since 2023. In 2025-26, funding to the Academies of Sport totalled \$3.745 billion.

The CHAIR: Sorry, Mr Kamper. Did you say billion or million?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Million, I said. Sorry. There was COVID funding of about \$1.4 million, which I was able to actually—it was really one-off funding which I was able to fund for one more year. But they knew that at the time, that it was only there for that term. But we've returned back to the original funding.

The CHAIR: They were made aware when they received that funding that it was—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, they were made aware, and at the time I was able to fund an extra year of, let's call it, the additional one-off funding.

The CHAIR: That was \$1.4 million? So that would have taken the total funding pool up to, what, five-point-something million?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The CHAIR: Was that funding tied when you gave it to them? Was it tied to a specific purpose or program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was pretty much an extension of the previous one-off funding, post-COVID funding.

The CHAIR: What was that previous COVID funding for? What was that tied to? Was it designed to facilitate a particular program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was partnership program funding of \$1.4 million, which was only there for that last year. I actually was able to extend it by another year.

The CHAIR: I appreciate you were able to extend it, but I am trying to get to what was it actually for. Was it soccer balls, was it for—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was pretty much a post-COVID, it was to—

The CHAIR: What, a Christmas bonus or like—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was additional support post-COVID.

The CHAIR: Okay, but what was it supposed to be used for? What were they buying with that \$1.4 million?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass on to Adam in relation to exactly what they were actually purchasing.

The CHAIR: Mr Berry.

ADAM BERRY: Thank you, Mr Banasiak. There was a little bit of a complicated funding arrangement where they had project funding by three project streams: project A, project B, project C. Project A, as the Minister mentioned, is the baseline core funding that has been consistent and remains consistent at \$2.54 million. This year, there is actually \$3.745 available. As the Minister said, there's that enhanced short-term uplift that he's been able to make available. But it is the surge ones, for want of a better description, from the post-COVID era that are no longer there now. I actually don't know what they were called or what the specific outcomes related to that funding were—it was some years now—but the baseline for their basic services remains.

The CHAIR: They have informed me that 1.4, Minister, was to essentially prepare the most elite athletes they have for the Brisbane games, and that that funding shortfall now means that those elite athletes are at risk of not being able to be adequately prepared for the Brisbane games in 2028. Were you aware of that concern? Sorry, Mr Berry, I am directing it to the Minister.

ADAM BERRY: Through the Minister, if that's appropriate, Mr Banasiak, the actual purpose of the academy network is fundamentally the development of those pre-elite athletes to provide a pathway like what you described there. Developing athletes for a range of Olympic sports in 2028 and 2032 is actually one of their main purposes and their main reasons for being; they would say that themselves. That's certainly what we hope they continue to do with the base level funding. It's certainly fair to say that they would have liked the additional funding at the enhanced level to continue, but that simply wasn't possible in the funds available to us.

The CHAIR: Minister, have they made representations to you that they won't be able to fulfil a lot of their commitments to those elite athletes for Brisbane 2028 with this funding cut?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They were actually asking for more; this is the whole thing. But, unfortunately, the funds aren't there. They are not available to actually—

The CHAIR: Where have they gone?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The baseline funding there to perform the task of supporting regional athletes and—

The CHAIR: Where has the \$1.4 million gone? What's been prioritised?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Nothing's been prioritised. It wasn't ever part of our future budget. We've just gone back to the baseline funding that they ordinarily received as regional communities. We haven't changed that. We haven't reduced that. It was to, I think as we said earlier, it was an enhancement of funding.

ADAM BERRY: Mr Banasiak, I could also add that one thing that has changed in favour of the network is that funding used to be on an annual cycle only, and that was a fair degree of uncertainty. What we've been able to do is make that a two-year funding commitment now for the base level funding. That was never previously—that was only ever an annual cycle. To the Minister's point, the additional funding was never built into the ongoing forward estimates with Treasury. It always needed to be identified every year, so at least now the academies, on that baseline funding, have certainty about it two years ahead. We hope to stay in that way going forward so they've more certainty than the annual funding cycle.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Good morning, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Good morning, Ms Higginson.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Labor went to the 2023 election pledging that any development on public land would be subject to an affordable housing quota. At what point did the Government policy in relation to this change?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think the general position is that, on government land, there'll be 30 per cent social and affordable housing across the whole of government. Are you referring to the property audit process?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I am. Basically, a review of government sales by *The Guardian* that was published this morning found that most of the vacant land being sold by your Government is going to private sector developers, with no firm requirements for social or affordable housing a part of the terms of sale. These are all properties identified through the audit process. Apparently, Homes NSW has brought just three of the 55 sites and the rest have gone to private developers. What's happening, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From what I understand, I think there have only been nine that have actually sold. All of the property that is identified through the property audit system is offered to Homes NSW.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Yes, that is correct, in the first instance.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In the first instance.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: And then Landcom in the second instance.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Then, if they find it's of need or suitable, they'll acquire it through the process.

LEON WALKER: There's a number of sites that aren't suitable for social housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: But they're suitable for private developers.

LEON WALKER: Yes, they're suitable for housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Where does all the money go to? Does the money then go to Homes NSW for the sale of those lands or does it then go to the holder of the land originally?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Consolidated funds.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Consolidated funds.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is there a commitment that that money will then go to social, affordable and public housing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Social housing. Homes has its own budget and it's at a record—

LEON WALKER: That's right. The Government has made a \$5.4 billion commitment to social housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So who identifies the quantum or the percentage of the funds generated through the land audit process that we understood, and New South Wales understood, was mainly for public, affordable and social housing?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That would be a question for Treasury and the Treasurer.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Do you get any say in that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The role of Property is to deliver land that's suitable for housing and to deliver on the housing agenda.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, how is this consistent—

LEON WALKER: The secretary is correct. The proceeds go—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Excuse me, I am just asking the Minister. How is this consistent with the person—whoever your spokesperson was—that said to *The Guardian*, "Any proceeds from surplus government sites developed into housing by the private sector will be directed into the construction of new public housing"? Is that not your understanding?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't believe *The Guardian* article is really accurate.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Sorry, so you're saying your spokesperson—it says, "A spokesperson for the Minister for Lands and Property Steve Kamper said ...". Did that person not tell the truth, or are you saying that you have a different view?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Or are you saying Anne Davies got it wrong?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes. Who has got this wrong: you, your spokesperson, or *The Guardian*?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can I get a copy?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You don't read *The Guardian*?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: It literally says:

A spokesperson for the Minister for Lands and Property Steve Kamper—

that's you—

said ... "Any proceeds from surplus government sites developed into housing by the private sector will be directed back into the construction of new public housing."

Is that not true?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's correct if it's going back to—public housing has got a budget of \$5-odd billion.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: No, but I'm just asking where the money goes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, but you've got to try and define—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Ms Fishburn has said it goes into general revenue.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I asked you what percentage do you understand, do you have any say— apparently, no, it's Treasury. But you're the one that's overseeing the land audit, the biggest stocktake sale in New South Wales for private developers—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The land audit's a process of providing—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: —for housing and we're in a housing crisis.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's a list of property that it's suitable to deliver housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: No, we're moving from the land now.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Okay, we've moved from that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You are selling our public land to private developers for private development. Where is the money going, when you've got somebody saying it's going to public housing? Is that not true?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's going back to Treasury, who obviously funds Homes NSW that provides the housing. So, I don't understand—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes, I asked you to what percentage. This is saying all of it. You're saying you don't know. You're the one selling the land. This is you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Basically acting in the capacity of an agent, really.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Are you concerned?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I'm not concerned at all because—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Because you're just selling the land.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm very satisfied that our agenda, in terms of social housing, is being delivered through a record commitment of \$5-odd billion and that's going to be—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So should we divorce—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You should ask these questions through—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, should we divorce the idea that the land audit and the stocktake sale of important public land in New South Wales is not attached to the dollar-for-dollar delivery of public housing in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The dollars that are delivered from the sale of those assets goes towards the \$6.6 billion that's been put into social housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And the rest?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I would like to think we could realise \$6 billion in land sales, but we're nowhere near that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're not going to get—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You're telling me now all of it will go to that \$6 billion commitment?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well \$6.6 billion has been committed towards social housing. We won't recover enough from—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Sorry, so now I feel like you are actually telling the Committee that all of the money will be going to public housing from the sale of those properties. Is that right?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I'm not saying that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Because that would be consistent.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not saying that. I'm saying that it goes there indirectly because it goes into Treasury, and it goes into the commitment.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So, all of it will go there? That's your commitment in your evidence to this inquiry?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Every cent goes there—to public housing.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, no, no. I'm saying it goes it to Treasury. I think Ms Fishburn just—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm running out of time. I'll come back to you, Ms Fishburn, later. Thank you. Can I just ask you, did you meet with the Shooters Party's Robert Borsak to discuss his shooting on public land recreation hunting bill?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe so, yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Did you talk to the Premier about that bill, or about the idea of public land and shooting on public—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I don't think I had a—I'm not sure. I can't remember. I've had conversations every day.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: The Premier is in the other budget estimates now talking with Robert Borsak—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, it's a bill that's—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: —talking up the big bill, about how exciting it is, and how great it's going to be. Did he talk to you about that, the Premier? About how we're going to have shooting on public lands. "This is a thing. I'm doing this. We're doing this together, me and Robert." Did he talk to you about that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's been discussions about it. I'm not sure if I've had direct conversations with the Premier. It's been—you know, within other forums.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Did you tell the Department of Crown Lands in the preparation of that bill some lands have been nominated for—did you instruct the department to go and find those lands?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From what I understand there was land that was already identified. I'd ask—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: No, I can come back. I do appreciate it. Please don't think I'm being rude.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't remember how it all—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You don't remember, but you think you might have talked about it with the department and said, "Let's do this."

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If there was a situation where—yes, what land would be—

MELANIE HAWYES: Hypothetically what land might be suitable.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

MELANIE HAWYES: That kind of a discussion.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And you had that discussion with your execs and said—

MELANIE HAWYES: I did not have a discussion like that with the Minister myself, no.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, did you direct anybody? Do you recall?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I probably had a discussion in my office, maybe with my chief of staff about it.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I just want to turn in the last minute to the development of the Coffs Jetty Foreshore. Are you aware that the traditional custodians, the cultural authority holders, are vehemently against the proposal of developing that very important public and culturally significant lands into private housing development?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's been consultation throughout the whole process with the custodians.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Are you aware that they are vehemently opposed?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've had conflicting feedback in relation to that. I think probably Leon would be more familiar with that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, have you met with any of the custodians yourself?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I haven't.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Would you be willing to? There's some incredible First Nations leaders that would love to meet with you, talk to you on their Country about the importance of that land. Would you do that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, absolutely.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, we already know that golf has been in your sights for some time. You, of course, are chopping up Moore Park Golf Course. You're turning over Carnarvon golf course to a cemetery. What's the next golf course in your sights?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No decision has been made yet to turn over anything. I mean, the Carnarvon golf course has got ten years left—a ten-year lease. We've made it very clear the great concern we have in terms of the lack of burial space in Sydney. There's been about 30 years of inaction here. The problem is there's got to be some tough decisions made to try and provide burial space to service our community. All the relevant people in the community, faith groups, or whoever, who require space in and around Sydney. We've got chronic shortages at Rookwood. We've got certain groups that will run out of space within the next two to three years, and we can't just sit around and do nothing. What we're doing is we're exploring a number of options. We have made a decision—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I might pull you up there, Minister. You say you're exploring a number of options. What are the other options apart from Carnarvon golf course?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not at liberty to say that at this stage.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Can you give us a hint at least, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: One in particular, we're looking at the Carnarvon site. It is a Crown land site. We're going through a consultation process and we'll work through that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, are you saying that no decision has been made, but you're—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: MMP has conducted an assessment of over a thousand sites, to try and address our chronic issue.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What were those thousand sites? What was the range of where you were investigating for those thousand sites?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Wherever there is particular need geographically.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What was that geographic region, Minister? What was the geographic region you were investigating?

MELANIE HAWYES: There's a couple of things. MMP has published its search criteria, and they are available on its website. They look at—as you'd expect—things like topography, suitability of the soils, those sorts of criteria. They've also looked at the radius of transport requirements around the area. Something like 60 per cent of burials have been completed in 10 kilometres of Rookwood. So location, and the ease of access for people to visit their loved ones, is another factor. But all the search criteria are public and they've run their own assessment of sites based on those criteria, if you want to look at those.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was a radius just drawn around Rookwood as to relevant sites?

MELANIE HAWYES: That's one of the criteria they've used, because it makes sense. The bulk of the demand is within a 10-kilometre radius of Rookwood.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So it was a 10-kilometre radius of Rookwood that was looked at, was it?

MELANIE HAWYES: From my understanding, but it's on their website what they've looked at. There's a range of features, including topography, soil type—those sorts of considerations.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I'll declare a long conflict of interest in this: I was formerly a member of Strathfield Golf Club. Strathfield golf course completely abuts Rookwood Cemetery. Was that investigated as a potential site?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It may have been considered. I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what about Hudson Park? It was formerly a golf course and, again, abuts Rookwood Cemetery. I think a railway line was put through it, but it is not used as a golf course anymore. Was that investigated as a site?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What about the Rosnay golf course, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said, there are a thousand sites that have been looked at across the State.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It doesn't seem like there were a thousand sites across the State. It seems, from what Ms Hawyres has said, that there were a thousand sites within 10 kilometres of Rookwood.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, but in terms of approving—

MELANIE HAWYES: No, I said that's one of the criteria for their consideration. It wasn't the sole one. They also looked at a range of other options, but that's really a matter for MMP. They've indicated they've done an analysis, and this is the site they want to consult on.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With all due respect, Ms Hawyres, this is a matter for this Minister. He is the Minister responsible, and that is why we're asking him the questions.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely, and it's a matter where, finally, I'm looking to address the chronic issue that we have. The fact of the matter remains that no-one wanted to touch it in the past. No-one wanted to touch anything to do with cemeteries, basically. It all got too hard. If you look at anything done by the previous Government, it was supporting certain actions to maybe even privatise our Crown cemeteries operations. We've done so much work—so much reform—in terms of getting our cemeteries in place. Now it's time to actually address the chronic shortage of burial space.

People want to bury their loved ones. They need to know that they have space. Community groups, faith groups—they're so anxious that they're not going to have a place to bury their people. It's time we address it, and sometimes it's making some tough decisions or it's going down tougher paths. I'm not going to shy away from doing that, Mr Farlow. Because of the lack of action from previous governments, we find ourselves in this position. I've taken it on board to address this issue because I don't want to finish my period as a Minister and not have addressed this issue.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, your member for Auburn has described it as short-sighted, lazy, a betrayal of public trust and a stitch-up. Is it a stitch-up, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not commenting on that. That's her opinion and she's entitled to her opinion.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, you say that there are all these other options you're investigating. Why has only one option gone out for consultation with the public?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll pass you on to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You're the Minister. The buck stops with you.

The Hon. WES FANG: You said you were going to fix it. We're asking you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is chronic need around the existing Rookwood site. It's essentially a cemetery precinct, and there are benefits—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's a cemetery precinct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, essentially.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I know Rookwood Necropolis is the largest cemetery in the Southern Hemisphere, but—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're talking about probably the largest cemetery in the Southern Hemisphere, and it's been—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Rookwood is the largest cemetery, but a cemetery precinct? I have not heard Auburn and Lidcombe described as a cemetery precinct.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There are obvious benefits in terms of expanding the operations close to the existing precinct. The fact of the matter remains it's government land; it's Crown land. It's there.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, is that the key criteria for you—that you already own the land?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, it's about futureproofing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, across the road is the old University of Sydney Cumberland campus. That's not used at the moment. Is that a site that you've investigated? That literally is across from Rookwood Cemetery. It would be an expansion of the cemetery.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Consideration and discussion have probably occurred, but it's all about the size.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you ruled that out, though? Minister, apart from Carnarvon, what is still on the table? What are you still considering?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Could you speak to that?

MELANIE HAWYES: They have looked at other areas, including other golf courses. I think they've looked at 23 golf courses, industrial land, private land and other types of land and homed in on this site as a preferred site for a range of reasons. It meets all their search criteria.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So this is the one site which is still actively on the table.

MELANIE HAWYES: This is the site that they're consulting with the community on, based on—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So this is the one site.

MELANIE HAWYES: That they are consulting on.

The Hon. WES FANG: Does that mean that if it's unsuitable and the community consultation rules it out, you've got no backup? Is that effectively what you're saying now, given that it's the only one on the table? Shouldn't you have a plan B, Minister, or are you a "no plan B" Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, what I'm doing is about planning and futureproofing.

The Hon. WES FANG: What's your plan B, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The problem is that the previous regime did nothing other than interfere.

The Hon. WES FANG: What is your plan B, Minister? What are you going to do if Carnarvon gets ruled out?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's plenty in the pipeline that we're looking at. This is part of it.

The Hon. WES FANG: You've got nothing on the table, Minister—nothing!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You've got no idea what you're talking about.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order—

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order. I was waiting for it.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: According to paragraph (19) of the procedural fairness resolution, all witnesses should be treated with courtesy at all times. If a question is asked, it can't then be answered by the person asking the question. Please allow the Minister to actually answer the question before we go on to another stream of consciousness from the member.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. I also note that shouting back and forward isn't parliamentary, and it's also not good for Hansard. Question and answer, question and answer—can we try to keep it to that?

The Hon. WES FANG: When are we going to get the answers, though?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I apologise, Chair.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, after you've finished with the golfers at Carnarvon, are the footballers and cricketers at Coleman Park next?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not. I totally ruled it out; it's been ruled out. No-one is reviewing—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're going to build a cemetery at Carnarvon and you're not going to move next door to Coleman Park.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, that's fake news.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're going to take 70,000 burial plots at Carnarvon, but you're not going to move on to Coleman Park.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not. We've been clear; we've clearly ruled that out.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Why have you got a preference, then, for the cricketers and footballers at Coleman Park rather than the golfers at Carnarvon?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Carnarvon site has been identified as a suitable site. As I said earlier, it is Crown land, and it will adequately suffice. It'll take us into the next century.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what's the future for the 1,750 golfers at Carnarvon golf course? What's your plan?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said, the Carnarvon golf course has still got 10 years left on the lease, so the future is—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are you hoping they'll all just move on by the end of that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let's see where we get to after the consultation process. Let's take it from there.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: On that point of the 10-year lease, Minister, are you ruling out doing anything with this site until that lease expires in 10 years time?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is a 10-year lease and no-one is throwing anyone—no-one is cancelling the lease.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you'll let that 10-year lease run to its conclusion, will you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. I mean, that's for MMP to work through, in the event of.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Well, is it "absolutely" or is it "for MMP to work through"?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We haven't made a decision yet. We're going through a consultation process, and we'll do that after—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: "Absolutely," and "We haven't made a decision yet," and "consultation".

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You can play with words, but we've said it. We've been very clear.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'm just trying to get answers, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We've been very clear with the process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's as clear as mud.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We'll continue on with the process and then a decision will be made thereafter.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, with respect to some other comments that your friend and colleague the member for Auburn has made, she was on ABC Radio yesterday and said:

... we were promised, when they were doing land audits, that MPs would be told before any of their lands would be considered.

Minister, is that a promise that you made? That was a quote from the member for Auburn on ABC Radio yesterday.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't comment on what the member for Auburn is—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But I'm asking you, Minister. Is that a promise made to your MPs? Was that a promise made to Government MPs?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not familiar with any promise at the time we've identified. It's not part of the land audit process, no.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, have you consulted with Government MPs as part of the land audit process before publishing items as part of the land audit?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't believe I have. We've identified sites. Once those sites have been identified, it becomes—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As part of that identification process, you haven't consulted with MPs at all as to the suitability of those sites within their electorates?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, I might pass you on to Leon to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, Minister, this is a question for you. Let's be fair.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're talking about process here. We're here because we need to listen to bureaucrats too. That's what budget estimates is about.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, we know how this works. There are processes that government bureaucrats have control of, and there are processes that you as the Minister have control of. This is a process that you as a Minister have control of, as to whether you take a list and say to a local member, "What do you reckon about this?"

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Part of the land audit process is to evaluate land that has not been utilised by particular agencies. It's been brought forward, evaluated and identified as land that can contribute to providing housing.

LEON WALKER: It does go through a formal approval process for the Government to approve that it should be declared surplus and divested.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That is fine. I'm asking about the informal processes. Minister, are you taking any informal processes or soundings from your Government MPs with respect to the suitability of sites?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You haven't done that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I will return somewhat to the questioning of Ms Sue Higginson with respect to the proceeds of sales. We've already found out that they've gone into consolidated revenue. If I can—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I just add one clarification there?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: The exception would be if the landowning agency has permission to retain those funds, in which case they would be using it for their own purposes. But generally it's in consolidated funds.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to that, what are those circumstances where that agency would be able to retain those funds?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That would be a question for Treasury to evaluate. We don't make that decision.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, this is effectively asset recycling, isn't it? You're selling surplus land which the Government doesn't need to then pay for community infrastructure in the form of social housing or whatever else it may be within government. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Essentially, what we're doing is delivering on the housing agenda and providing additional land that could be utilised to deliver on housing. That's essentially what we're doing, and it—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's asset recycling, Minister, isn't it? You're selling one asset and investing into another.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There is a clear policy direction there, and that's to deliver that outcome.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Asset recycling was something that formerly, when you were in opposition, you characterised as privatisation, didn't you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Call it what you like.

LEON WALKER: I think it is important to call out that, as was stated earlier, Homes NSW and Landcom get the first opportunity to acquire those sites. It's only where those sites aren't required by those two delivery agencies that it's then made available.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So far, as part of the land audit, in the majority of cases they're not required by those two delivery agencies. I will ask the question with respect to that as well. Minister, what's the process in terms of either Homes NSW or Landcom if they are to take control of those sites? Are they paying consideration for those sites to either Property and Development NSW or to the agency responsible for that land?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. You might want to—

LEON WALKER: Yes, they are.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They are, yes. It's market—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: They are? So they're paying consideration? And how is that consideration determined?

LEON WALKER: It's a market value assessment in accordance with Treasury policy.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So it's a market valuation. Is that conducted by the Valuer General or do you have an independent process in terms of determining that?

LEON WALKER: Value NSW plays a role in determining the market value of the site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So Value NSW makes an evaluation of that site, and then those agencies, either Landcom or Homes NSW, then pay consideration for that site. Is that paid to Property and Development NSW, or is that paid to the agency that is responsible for that land?

LEON WALKER: It goes to the landowning agency.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So far, how much has been paid as a result of those valuations by both Homes NSW and by Landcom with respect to the sites that they've had transferred to them?

LEON WALKER: Can we take that on notice and come back to you in the afternoon session?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, you can do that. Minister, with respect to the Government's policies when it comes to media releases, is it standard for the Government, when making announcements in electorates represented by a Government MP, that the member is included in media releases? It's not a trick question.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Fishburn indicated yes, so you might want to look to your right.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We generally try to have the local member.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Generally?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I've looked through your media releases for the past year, extensive as they are. Generally, I would say that policy is correct when it's applied to you, except on two occasions. Those two occasions are on the dates of 5 March 2025—"NSW Government enables delivery of new MS Plus centre"—and then a joint release that you had with the Minister for Homelessness, and Minister for Housing, on 24 July, "New housing and community facilities locked in for Lidcombe". Both of those releases relate to projects within the member for Auburn's electorate, and the member for Auburn does not appear on those press releases. Why is that the case?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Maybe she refused.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that the case? Did the member for Auburn refuse to be on a press release with you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know. I can't tell you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You can't tell me?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't tell you.

The Hon. WES FANG: Why might the member for Auburn refuse—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know. I can't remember it. You told me two dates, two releases. There are media releases all the time.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: These are the only two releases in that period that don't include a local MP when it's a local MP's project. Are you freezing out the member for Auburn?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not. No, I've got a fairly good relationship with the member for Auburn.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. I've known the member for Auburn for 30 years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So, Minister, the next time you're making an announcement with respect to the Auburn electorate will you include the member for Auburn on your media releases?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, hopefully.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Hopefully?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, hopefully. Hopefully that happens.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You sound optimistic, Minister, that you'll have the member for Auburn included?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't tell you why they weren't at the time. I don't know whether she refused. But anyway, I don't know where that's relevant to the budget.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, it's relevant to the operations of government.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're trying to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You seem to have a vent against the member for Auburn.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't. I adore the member for Auburn.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You adore her? Okay. It doesn't seem like it, through your actions.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, can I just quickly check, is Canarvon golf course on a flood plain? You don't know?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't answer that question. I don't know.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you unsure? You shook your head. So you don't think it's on a flood plain?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice. I don't know.

The Hon. WES FANG: You'll take it on notice?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Could I just ask quickly, Minister, is a flood plain a suitable site for a cemetery?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If it's been established that it's a suitable site, I dare say that all of those things have been considered in the process by Cemeteries.

The CHAIR: Minister, we only have a couple of minutes left before we go to the Government for questions. I might throw a question out there. Hopefully it closes the loop on the academies of sport issue. Minister, are you aware that the funding cuts will result in regional academies sacking their strength and conditioning coaches because they can't afford to employ them? Are you aware that those are the cuts they'll be making? As Minister for Sport, and Minister for Jobs and Tourism, are you happy with that outcome?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not aware of that. There's been suggestions that it's going to impact on them. The truth is, as I said to your earlier question, there was one-off funding which was continued. I have been sympathetic and provided an additional year's worth of that additional funding. But the fact of the matter remains, we've kept the funding levels at what they've always had.

The CHAIR: Why was it that the regional academies' pre-elite pathways were targeted and not the metro? Metro pathways have continued their funding levels and, in fact, grown. Why did you—

ADAM BERRY: Mr Banasiak, could I assist with elements of that question?

The CHAIR: Sure.

ADAM BERRY: I would point out that of the 11 regional academies of sport, a number of those regions are actually in Greater Sydney. Historically—

The CHAIR: Could you separate the per athlete funding for the metro academies versus the regional academies, perhaps on notice?

ADAM BERRY: Yes, I would have to do that on notice. I don't believe that we actually differentiate them. In terms of the changes that they may be contemplating, the first thing I'd say is that we haven't had any specific conversations with the academies around what roles, but we do know that the academies as a network are going through a process, driven by them, of amalgamations that are intended to try to save money and reduce duplication across the network so that they do free up funds for their core services. So there is that bit of work—again, being led by the academies, but that is happening. We've been very much led to believe by the academies that they will be able to get more efficient and save funds through their amalgamations.

The CHAIR: I will go to the Government for any questions before we break for morning tea.

The Hon. WES FANG: Lynda sent you those questions, right?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Minister, are there any matters that you'd like to provide any additional information on before we break?

The Hon. WES FANG: Why would he start now?

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, not at this stage, thank you.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back after that brief interlude. We will go back to questions from the crossbench, and we will start with Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, you mentioned at the end of your earlier comments, in my questioning, the role of sand and clay in the product at Allianz that has now generated a recognition that the whole thing needs to be ripped up and started again. What about the silt that the Premier mentioned on Sunday? How does that feature in the review report that you've read and now acted on?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Are you referring to the sand drainage layer below the turf which is contaminated?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, the silt that was in the turf. The Premier on Sunday mentioned silt was one of the problems. I'm asking—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's up to 9 per cent of clay and fine silt.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: How did the silt get into the turf that was laid at Allianz?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The advice I have is that it was contaminated from the time of construction.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Well, the stadium was constructed, but Evergreen won the tender to lay the turf and have had the turf contract ever since.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Does your report show, and are you aware, that in the lead-up to laying the turf at Allianz initially in 2022, there were three or four floods in the Hawkesbury around that time? The Nepean flooded right through from Camden to Hawkesbury, and the Evergreen Turf farm was under four or five metres of water.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am not aware of that, but the issue here isn't about the turf. It is about that layer—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sure, but if the turf farm is under four or five metres of water, any old idiot would know that a lot of silt would then be deposited into the turf product when the water abates. That's correct, isn't it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't comment. I am not a professional.

The Hon. WES FANG: Apparently, any old idiot doesn't know.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Does your review report show that Evergreen provided to Venues NSW at Allianz a silt-contaminated product as a result of that flooding?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not that I'm aware of. Let me pass it on to Kerrie to explain that.

KERRIE MATHER: That was a different problem. You're quite right that the turf that was grown at the farm for the installation as part of the stadium build was flood affected. That turf was actually replaced late last year. It was thought that that was the problem. The investigations that have actually just been completed as part of a comprehensive, independent peer review that has looked at every aspect of the drainage, build and installation, from the turf right through to the water pipes, have confirmed that the sand layer—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But, logically, if there's plenty of silt in the product and it gets into the drainage lines, it causes a huge drainage problem, doesn't it?

KERRIE MATHER: The sand layer is what has come out of the report as actually causing the problem, and the sand layer is causing the water not to be able to get through to the pipes layer.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sure, but if this was known when the Evergreen turf was delivered and laid at Allianz, who inspected it at that time, as due diligence at Venues NSW, to certify that the product was safe for future use?

KERRIE MATHER: The responsibility for the installation of the turf and the drainage build was actually with the builder.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Holland.

KERRIE MATHER: Yes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Venues NSW, all these groundsmen, Naofal, Lewis and all of these people you've got working for you, supposedly with expertise—no-one independently from Venues inspected the turf to say, "This is the right product"? Because, if they had inspected it, they would have seen the silt contamination and sent it back.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Are you referring back to 2022?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, that's before your time, but this is a problem that has been known for three years?

KERRIE MATHER: No, it hasn't been known for three years and, in fact, the stadium wasn't handed over until completion. This is not a function of the maintenance or operation of the stadium.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It was opened three years ago this month.

KERRIE MATHER: That's right, and the Labosport that you referred to before—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Ms Mather, at Venues NSW what testing have you done about the infiltration rate? There's a graph here from Labosport showing it was faulty from day one.

KERRIE MATHER: Labosport—the report that you referred to in January was a report that was commissioned by Football Australia, ahead of their international in January. They actually confirmed a drainage rate of 300 millilitres an hour. They referred to the 300 millilitres that you previously referred to, which was what it was before the turf was replaced. It showed an improvement, and at the lower end of the range of drainage. So there was nothing in there to say that there was anything fundamental per se. But what has happened is it has actually degraded over time. From that 300 millilitres drainage rate, as part of the Labosport that was conducted in January, by the time the investigation was conducted recently, it's draining at 40 millilitres an hour. So it has continued to degrade over time.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But what testing did you do from the day that the stadium was opened?

KERRIE MATHER: What has happened is it has degraded over time. As the drainage has become more challenged over time, the team has actually worked exhaustively—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: That's not answering my question. What testing did Venues NSW do, because the Labosport graph here shows it was never any good at the beginning of time. Don't worry about degraded.

KERRIE MATHER: In fact, Labosport's report to Football Australia said, "The improved surface layer drainage from late last year will significantly reduce the risk of weather interference—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But can you see the graph on page 4?

KERRIE MATHER: —and overall we consider Allianz is on track to produce a good surface for the Socceroos match in March."

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Ms Mather, can you see the graph on page 4, that for 18 months—

KERRIE MATHER: I haven't got the report in front of me.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you take that on notice?

KERRIE MATHER: I can.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: And can you provide any Venues NSW assessment of the infiltration rate from the opening of Allianz to present, on notice?

KERRIE MATHER: Yes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can we view the report that is now being acted on? Can you provide that to the Committee?

KERRIE MATHER: It's in draft stage.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It's at draft stage?

KERRIE MATHER: It's a draft. It's a draft with the findings.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: So you decided to rip it up based on a draft.

KERRIE MATHER: But the findings are clear.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, are you aware that when Venues NSW put out the turf contract for what we call Parramatta Stadium, which is Bankwest or CommBank sponsored, section 3400.1.2 of the site characteristics—this is what the turf provider had to comply with—stated, "The site must be well drained and unaffected by flooding." That was a tender spec for the building of Parramatta Stadium that was put out in about 2017—that if you provide turf to Venues NSW, it has to be from a site that's unaffected by flooding. Why was that taken out for the tender specs for Evergreen—which had been flooded three or four times in up to five metres of water, in horrendous flooding—in providing their turf full of silt to Allianz Stadium? Why was that specification removed?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Are you talking about back in 2022?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes. Why was it removed? Is that in your independent report?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not familiar with its removal or—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: That seems to be a key moment. An outfit which had been flooded three or four times in those floods in 2020 and 2021 was allowed to provide a silt-contaminated product, with the silt then leaking into the drainage lines and causing this horrendous problem. Why was it taken out, Ms Mather, in the tender spec for Allianz when it was in there for Parramatta Stadium?

KERRIE MATHER: I can comment on the project brief that was developed by Venues NSW and the requirements of that. It was a performance-related project brief which sets the standard of drainage that needs to be met, rather than focusing on the inputs per se.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You're not answering my question, Ms Mather. The question is very simple. Why was the tender specification that the site must be well drained and unaffected by flooding that applied to Parramatta Stadium turf supply removed for Evergreen, which was completely flooded, when it came to Allianz?

KERRIE MATHER: I can't comment on that because—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you take that on notice?

KERRIE MATHER: No, I can't take that on notice because it's not in my area of responsibility.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why?

KERRIE MATHER: Because the former SCG Trust was responsible for developing the project brief—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You must have all their records.

KERRIE MATHER: —and the tender specification was developed by Infrastructure NSW at the time.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You've consumed their records and their responsibilities in running all these grounds—not very well at Allianz.

KERRIE MATHER: I can speak to Infrastructure NSW and see if they can provide you with the information.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, can I take you to a document here from Andrew Denny, who is a long-time SCG procurement officer and is now the procurement project manager for Venues NSW—since November 2023—so he deals with hundreds of millions of dollars of procurement of public money at these supposedly elite venues. On 14 November this year he writes, "Hi turf team. We have two responses to the open tender process, including from Evergreen and HG Sports Turf. I'd like more than that, but at least it makes for less reading." Ms Mather, you find it amusing, apparently. But, Minister, is this the sort of clown we've got running major procurement for Venues NSW? He is happy that he only has two tenders in a competitive process. He would like more than that, but at least it makes for less reading for this lazy bludger? How can we have people like this

involved in the expenditure of huge amounts of money and with big responsibility for the safety of athletes at these sporting grounds, with this level of absurdity?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It sounds like it was said in humour or jest. It is always best if we have a more competitive field, absolutely.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: In that regard, why is it that the tender specifications are developed virtually so that Evergreen, this monopoly provider, gets all the work because you need to be within a certain distance of Sydney?

"Seven hours from harvest, due to these time constraints, cultivation of turf within or near Sydney is a mandatory requirement." Why are the tender specs rigged so that Evergreen gets it at Hawkesbury when, if you're at the Central Coast or the Illawarra and you're not near Sydney, you can't comply and we end up with only two applicants?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, I've had no information that the tender processes are rigged. I can't comment on that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Ms Mather?

KERRIE MATHER: We called an open tender and the scale of what we're seeking and having a ready-to-play product, there's probably a more limited market for that. We work with both of those providers.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But why do you need to be near Sydney?

KERRIE MATHER: It needs to be in Sydney because we're exporting live turf.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But that turf in winter lasts 18 hours. It could come up from Melbourne.

KERRIE MATHER: That needs to be high quality and ready to play, so having something that's from interstate won't meet the requirements. We need the prospective tenderer to be able to establish an appropriate facility where they can grow turf in reasonable proximity. Seven hours is still a distance from the stadiums.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, I want to get an update about whether any decision has been made regarding the lease of Wentworth Park, which is due to expire in 2027?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not at this stage, Ms Hurst, but the land at Wentworth Park, I've said on previous occasions, there's always better uses that could be applied to that land. We're working through that now. The Government's looking at a variety of options. I'm confident we will probably have a position before Christmas, but at this stage there's nothing further to report.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Since budget estimates in February this year, have you received any correspondence from the NSW Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association or Greyhound Racing NSW regarding the lease of Wentworth Park?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think whatever proposals or propositions they've made in the past is where it sits. I don't believe I've had any further meetings.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Or correspondence?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Or correspondence, yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Is it your understanding that the greyhound racing industry is still seeking the extension of the lease of Wentworth Park beyond 2027? Is that still their request, as far as you're aware?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's something that's been proposed. As I said, we're looking at every option at the moment.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Have you had any meetings with Minister Harris as the racing Minister about this decision, say, in the last six months?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There have been conversations, yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Can you tell me a bit more about those conversations?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At this stage, it's all part of the decision moving forward. You'd best ask Mr Harris in relation to that.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Have you been briefed on the recent Drake inquiry report into the New South Wales greyhound racing industry? I know in the last budget estimates you said that you would take the findings of that report into consideration in regards to your decision to extend the lease?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't been briefed at this stage, no. I'm not sure if it's in the hands of the Minister at the moment.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: So you haven't seen a copy?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I haven't seen a copy. Again, you're probably best talking to the relevant Minister in relation to that.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'd like to ask you about a meeting that you had on 20 June this year with Racing NSW. Can I ask what that meeting was about?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. It was in relation to the decision to reverse the Queanbeyan land management arrangement there.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Great. It was really about any decision relating to Racing NSW's new role as well as being Crown land manager.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was in relation to that and the appointment of an administrator.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: At the last budget estimates, we discussed concerns flagged by your department about the conflict of interest in Racing NSW acting as both Crown land manager for New South Wales and the regulator of the racing industry itself. I was advised that Racing NSW was developing policies to address how they will address that conflict of interest. Can you provide me an update on where that is up to?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do you have a copy of that conflict of interest policy?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You've not seen one?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The last time we spoke at budget estimates you said it was just being finalised, so what was the delay? Why is that still sitting there, if it hasn't been finalised?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's for Minister Harris to answer that question.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: This is about the conflict of interest document in regards to Racing NSW being both the Crown land manager of New South Wales as well as the racing industry.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From the Crown lands perspective, it's about the management and who's in the best position to manage it.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: So you're not concerned about the conflict of interest?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's something to be addressed by Minister Harris, so ask him.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The conflict of interest would be the racing Minister. You're not concerned about any conflict of interest for yourself within the fact that they're also the Crown land manager?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My greatest focus is to make sure that whoever is appointed as the Crown land manager is well capitalised and capable of maintaining and managing the site. That's very important. We've got tens of thousands of sites across the State.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: But I would have thought that any conflict of interest would be of interest to both portfolios. I'm assuming that if I spoke to Minister Harris, he would say that a conflict of interest with being a Crown land manager would also fall under your portfolio. I'm just wondering then, Minister, with that in mind, what measures are in place to ensure that Racing NSW, acting as the Crown land manager, doesn't give preferential or lenient treatment to itself also as the regulator?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Are there any measures in place?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At this stage, no. The Crown land focus, as the Minister, is to make sure that all these facilities are well maintained and kept. As far as I'm concerned, racing does a pretty good job of that and of providing the adequate expenditure or capital expenditure on those sites to keep them maintained and managed.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: But, Minister, what I'm asking about is the measures around the fact that Racing NSW is acting as both the Crown land manager and is itself the regulator.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You're saying that there are no measures in place and the conflict of interest policy that was in draft form in February is still sitting in draft form. That's what you're providing us today?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: At the last estimates, I believe you said that Racing NSW had been made Crown land manager of five racetracks. Has this expanded since February at all, or is it still five lots of Crown land that it's managing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's four now because it's reduced by one.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Are there any current applications to expand it from four?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not that I'm aware of.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, when did you first become aware of the Game and Feral Animal Legislation Amendment (Conservation Hunting) Bill 2025 that was introduced to the upper House?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At the time it was introduced, I suppose, or around the time it was introduced.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The meetings that you discussed with Ms Sue Higginson occurred after the bill itself was introduced, rather than prior?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't recall exactly when those conversations about—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Would you be able to take that on notice?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: At the inquiry into the bill last week, we were advised that Crown Lands gave advice on that bill. Was that before the bill was introduced or after?

MELANIE HAWYES: Like I said, we provide advice, as you'd expect, on any of these sorts of proposals. We provided advice to our Minister's office and to the lead department, DPIRD, so there'll be different times at which we provided advice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Was that before the bill was introduced into the upper House or after?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't give you the exact date, but I know that at the time of the discussions about the bill we provided advice in different ways to different parties.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Could you take on notice whether or not it was before the bill was introduced into the upper House or after?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, sure.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, the bill makes considerable changes to the Crown Land Management Act. I guess I'm just trying to understand what level of consultation you were involved with. I understand that you did meet with the member introducing the bill that you indicated earlier this morning. But I wonder what input that you or your department may have had in the earlier stages while the bill was still being developed.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My department's probably consulted with other agencies as well.

MELANIE HAWYES: DPIRD.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: DPIRD, yes. The extent of the consultation—we're consulting on many things every day of the week so I can't give you a timeline of when or what. I'm happy to give that to you on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The bill allocates 50,000 hectares of Crown land to be used for hunting. I wonder who came up with the list of land to be included in that bill. Is it your understanding that that was provided by the member introducing the bill, or was that something that came from you or your department?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My department identified the areas. I'll get Mel to give you the full run-down on that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Obviously I can't comment on how a bill was put together by the Shooters, Fishers and Farmers Party, but there have been, over many years, discussions around the use of public land for different purposes. This could have been a relevant consideration for their consideration of putting this bill together, but I would note that it is a list of land that could potentially be made available, subject to risk assessment. It's not in any way saying that all of that land would be made available for the use of hunting. It's "could be", based on certain criteria, including the size of the reserve. So it's hypothetical and subject to detailed risk assessment, as you'd expect.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, when you communicate with the Premier using the messaging app Signal, do you archive those communications or do you have the messages set to "disappearing"?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't think I communicate with the Premier through Signal.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you have Signal on your phone?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have Signal on my phone, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: And you don't communicate with the Premier through that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: You've never communicated with the Premier—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know. I don't believe I have, direct with the Premier. No, I don't believe so.

The Hon. WES FANG: When you use the app Signal, do you communicate with other Ministers?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There may be occasions where I have, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you archive those messages? Do you provide them to your office?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't have that deleting thing happening on mine.

The Hon. WES FANG: You've got no disappearing messages set on your phone?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't believe so, no.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, we talked about your ministerial staffing allocation previously and you said it was off a fairly low base. Would it surprise you now to learn that, in terms of staff expenses, you're number eight in the Government?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That wouldn't surprise me, no.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It doesn't surprise you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're above cluster Ministers and above, in fact, the planning Minister. You have a higher staffing expense allocation than the planning Minister. That doesn't surprise you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Given the exposure I've got in terms of the ministries that I hold, there's a broad level of activities there. It wouldn't surprise me, no.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, how many staff are in your office?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You can't recall? There's that many?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, mate, I can't recall. I don't have that number in my head.

The Hon. WES FANG: Surely you know how many staff you have in your office, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can sit here and do a count, and I'll think about everyone's names out loud.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How about you take it on notice, Minister, as to how many staff are in your office?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Minister. With respect to Allianz Stadium, when did you first become aware of the challenges at Allianz Stadium, personally?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Like anyone else, the challenges there were evident at the time when we had the first match where it was flooded. Which game was it?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Parramatta and the Roosters, a year ago.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was a Roosters game. Yes, that's when Tedesco—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Gutho said it's the worst ground he's ever played on.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Gutho?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: King Gutho, from Parramatta.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Clint Gutherson.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: He was playing for Parramatta then. That's right.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, only with the Dragons one year, mate.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I remember Tedesco was underwater. That was of great concern.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, you were watching that either at the game or you watched it on the TV, or you saw the report.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I was watching it on the telly, actually.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What did you do from that point? Did you initiate any actions?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, obviously I asked questions to investigate and to see why that all went wrong. There was a period there where Venues had been looking into what the problem was, and then obviously when this happened again, we had to get to the bottom of it. I was concerned that there could've been an even greater issue. Venues were asked to investigate. They've done that now and we've had professionals come through and go right through what the problem is. I'm pleased, in some respects, that it's that rather than some other structural-type irrigation issue; that was of greater concern. The ability to actually get it back on track and back in order is really important. I'm pleased that we've gotten to that, but up until we got an understanding of what the problem was, it was—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Throughout this year it's hardly been back on track, has it, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've been anxious about it, obviously, because it just wasn't good enough.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Been keeping you up at night. Now action is going to be taken, the Premier indicated, as part of that, that taxpayers would not be left to fund the repairs. Who's going to be funding the repairs?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're going to pursue a claim through icare. As the Premier said, it—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So an icare claim, as your insurer?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We've identified that the issue goes back to the initial phase of construction, so there's obviously a warranty situation there and icare will pursue that. That's how we're seeking to fund it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what is the expected cost of the rectification works?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't give you that answer at this stage.

KERRIE MATHER: It's in the order of \$5 million to \$6 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As part of this cost as well, are you making any associated provisions for teams like Sydney FC—their A-League men's and women's teams—in terms of any relocation costs that they may have during this period?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Those arrangements are managed by Venues. I'll have to let Kerrie give us a run-down on what's happening there.

KERRIE MATHER: We're working with Sydney FC on the fixtures yet to be announced and the as yet three or so games that might be played elsewhere. We'll be working with them. We've got a number of concerts that were already scheduled in December, so their season at Allianz will return to normal in January, so it'll be the small handful of games that might need to be relocated ahead of that. We're working with them to actually reduce the costs and impost to them. So there's a number of things that we can actually do on that front.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you found alternative venues for those games, at this stage?

KERRIE MATHER: Have we what? Can you clarify the question?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you found alternative venues for Sydney FC for those games?

KERRIE MATHER: They're looking at that, but I think they've decided on Leichhardt.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, with respect, where will the A-Leagues UNITE Round matches be relocated to?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not sure. Has that been—

KERRIE MATHER: That hasn't been determined, so we'll have to continue to work with them on that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It hasn't been determined yet.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will they be kept in New South Wales?

KERRIE MATHER: We're still working through that with them.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So there is a potential that that major UNITE Round for the A-League could go to another State?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think we should be able to accommodate within our venues in New South Wales.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But is one of the things that you're contemplating that effectively New South Wales will lose that round?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, that's not something I'm contemplating.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I know we've had discussions on this before—and we're staying with Allianz Stadium—but the Rabbitohs playing at Allianz Stadium. As I've declared before, I'm no fan of the Rabbitohs—I'm a Tigers fan—but it seems to me that the Rabbitohs' ancestral home is at Allianz. What's happening in terms of the Rabbitohs and returning to Allianz?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Rabbitohs signed an agreement with Venues to play, I think—is it nine matches?

KERRIE MATHER: That's right, until the end of 2030.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Until 2030 at Accor. With that in mind, there's a lot of commercial arrangements that are tied to these games being played at—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But Minister, it's clear the Rabbitohs want to go to Allianz. It's the same organisation they've signed a contract with; they've signed with Venues NSW. Are you saying that you're not for moving when it comes to the Rabbitohs being reunited with Allianz Stadium?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The truth is that the Rabbitohs moving doesn't come without cost implications to Venues NSW. We've spoken about that, we've made that clear to them and we've got a range of what it could cost. On that basis, I'm not willing just to actually drop a minimum of \$20 or \$25 million of revenue because they just want to cancel the contract. They went into a contract in good faith back in 2021 and, from what I understand, it was done on good terms for them.

KERRIE MATHER: Highly compensatory terms, actually.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As a Minister, though, for me to just turn around and say, "We'll accommodate that move and let them withdraw from that contractual obligation"—it's going to cost the State a minimum of \$20-odd million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that \$20-odd million a year or \$20-odd over the life—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's \$20 to \$70 million over the life of it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's \$20 to \$70 million?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, depending on a variety of factors.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's a huge variance.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely—it depends on how we can replace the content.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's \$20 to \$70 million?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's right. I think you've got to be somewhat responsible when you're making decisions like this in government. I love the Rabbitohs—don't get me wrong. I've got a very soft spot for the Rabbitohs and had a great connection with the Rabbitohs. It's just one of those decisions. As a Minister, you've got to make the right decision for the State asset base. The right thing to do here is to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is to keep them at Accor, hey?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —preserve its economic value.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You don't think there would be higher attendances if the Rabbitohs were to move to Allianz Stadium and perhaps an improvement in the content experience?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Apparently they've got a fairly large supporter base out in Western Sydney. They've said that themselves. I'm not going to speculate on all that, but that's part of the high and low calculations, depending on other outcomes that work in favour of Venues if contractual obligations change.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It seems like you're saying that the big challenge here is that you're stopping Souths from moving to Allianz because you just simply wouldn't be able to get content at Accor otherwise. Is that right?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not saying that.

KERRIE MATHER: Perhaps to clarify, the Rabbitohs were offered highly compensatory terms in 2021 to compensate them for the fact that the redevelopment of Accor didn't proceed, so they're on very attractive terms. But they're also part of an important ecosystem at Accor Stadium that ranges from the naming rights, sponsorships et cetera on the stadium, memberships and so on. What the Minister's actually saying is, if you actually take that content away and you don't replace it with something that those people perceive as equivalent value, then we're potentially exposed.

Having said that, they're a really important partner. There are three or more games a year that are not part of that contract, and we'd love to see them at Allianz. I think that's a great opportunity for us to actually see how the attendances would actually fare at Allianz and, from their perspective, in a riskless way. They have been playing at Accor Stadium for over 20 years now. They'll be celebrating their 20-year anniversary in March next year, so they have a really significant fan base that has actually been built up in greater Western Sydney.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, they won the comp there.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's right.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Talking about Accor Stadium and winning the comp, are you confident that we're going to retain the NRL grand final at Accor Stadium? It's one piece of content you'd want to hold onto, isn't it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're quite confident we'll do that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When will an announcement be made to that effect?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It will come in due course.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will you be looking at entering a long-term contract with the NRL to retain the NRL grand final?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We love the NRL grand final. New South Wales is the home of rugby league. This is where all the action is, and the fan base want it here. It's good for the NRL if it's here. We'll always look to keep the NRL grand final here.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You'll always look to, but will you always achieve it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let's wait and see.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: The Greeks will sort it out.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, the Greeks.

The Hon. WES FANG: I can assume you're still supportive of the concept of a sports hub in Dubbo?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Is this the one that your colleagues couldn't put together and couldn't get to—

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you still supportive of the concept of a sports hub in Dubbo?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many sports hubs are there in Dubbo that you're aware of?

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you going to build more than one?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Are you referring to the one that your colleagues promised and committed but couldn't get together in the end, and then failed—

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, that one, Minister—the one that your Government has taken away.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, they haven't taken it away.

The Hon. WES FANG: The sports hub that your Government has taken the funding for. Are you still supportive of that sports hub—yes or no?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The sports hub in Dubbo was a commitment—it was even there before the current member for Dubbo. It was committed by the previous Government.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, can I take from this—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: A funding agreement was then signed in 2019.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, are you supportive of it—yes or no?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let me answer the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, that's not an answer. You're reading a note. You're not actually answering the question.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Of course I'm going to read notes, just like you read your question out from a piece of paper. Same thing.

The CHAIR: Order! I'll hear the point of order. I don't think either of you could hear the point of order being taken over your yelling at each other.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: That's my point of order, particularly from the member asking the question and elevating the exchange. He knows that this works with a question followed by an answer, followed by another question, not starting some sort of exchange. I ask you to call him to order.

The CHAIR: I won't call him to order because, if I'm being fair and balanced, while he did provoke the exchange, the Minister did indulge in it as well and did respond. I will just reiterate what I said about Hansard being able to document what we say correctly. It can't happen if we're screaming and yelling and pointing fingers across the table at each other. Would you like to ask another question and we'll go from there.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, were you supportive of the idea of moving the location of the sports hub to the Dubbo Sports World site?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That whole decision for the sports club wasn't driven by my ministry. The decision was made at the time—

The Hon. WES FANG: No. As the sports Minister, though—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The original concept could not—yes, there was a component of it there that was—

The Hon. WES FANG: So you were supportive of it moving to the new site. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I really didn't hold a position on it.

The Hon. WES FANG: You are supportive or you're not supportive—I don't know. I can't tell.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But, at the end of the day, the funding was withdrawn because clearly they couldn't complete it within the envelope.

The Hon. WES FANG: Let me rephrase: When you met with—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: And then it was withdrawn because it wasn't going to go ahead, so it had obviously been repurposed by the Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: When you met with PCYC on 30 September last year, you indicated to them that you were supportive. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I may have had a positive conversation towards an alternate concept—

The Hon. WES FANG: So you're confirming that you did indicate—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I could have had a positive conversation. I don't know. I can't confirm something when—if the funding was withdrawn, how can I confirm another concept?

The Hon. WES FANG: Because this was before the funding was withdrawn, Minister. This was before the funding was withdrawn.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This was regional funding.

The Hon. WES FANG: That leads me to the next question: When the funding was withdrawn on 5 December, prior to that—and obviously you had met with PCYC on 30 September—did you indicate to the regional Minister that you were supportive of the PCYC proposal moving to the new site?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I said earlier we'd probably had some positive conversation about an alternate—

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you tell the Minister for regional—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But we've got to appreciate that the funding for that was terminated—

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, by the Minister for regional—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —because the original concept couldn't be achieved.

The Hon. WES FANG: Your Government has cancelled the sports hub for Dubbo. What I'm asking is, when you indicated to PCYC—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At the end of the day, it's—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I'm encouraged to take another point of order.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you tell the regional Minister that you told PCYC that you were supportive?

The CHAIR: Are you taking a point of order?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't recall the exact conversation.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't recall!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm usually positive about anything.

The CHAIR: Order! Minister, your colleague is taking a point of order.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It's a matter of the treatment of the witness and the way this is transpiring. He knows, as an experienced member, that there is a question followed by an answer and not some sort of barrage of noise. I simply remind the member, through you, Chair, that he knows how to proceed and he should proceed accordingly.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. I won't call you to order, but that's the last warning I will give you on the barrage.

The Hon. WES FANG: I apologise for the barrages.

The CHAIR: Next question.

The Hon. WES FANG: So should South Australia. Were you aware, prior to receiving correspondence dated 5 June from Minister Moriarty, that the department were withdrawing the allocation for the project?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't recall whether there was an intent to or not, whether I knew beforehand. Most likely I did. Can I say—

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, it's really concerning—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't recall. I can't remember, Wes. I can't remember every single conversation or meeting I had.

The Hon. WES FANG: The number of answers you provide to us when you say you can't recall is actually—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Because you're asking me random dates and times, and it's really hard to actually—

The Hon. WES FANG: This is a \$50 million project.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't go back in the last—

The Hon. WES FANG: This is a \$50 million project for the people of Dubbo, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's right.

The Hon. WES FANG: How is it you cannot remember the conversation you had around this?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's right, and that's why your previous—your regime—

The Hon. WES FANG: Your government has taken away \$50 million from Dubbo.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Your regime failed to deliver.

The Hon. WES FANG: Your government is taking it away, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That goes back—when does it go back to?

The Hon. WES FANG: Your government is taking it away, Minister.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Back to 2000 and you failed to deliver.

The CHAIR: Minister—

The Hon. WES FANG: Your government—

The CHAIR: —and Wes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You kept announcing it—

The Hon. WES FANG: Your government, Minister!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You kept announcing it, kept announcing it and couldn't deliver.

The CHAIR: Can I call the Minister to order as well?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm sorry, Mr Chair.

The CHAIR: That was just ridiculous.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It generally is between Wang and Mr—sorry!

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: There, it had to come.

The CHAIR: That was ridiculous from both of you. It was ridiculous.

The Hon. WES FANG: You are going to make a real—

The CHAIR: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: I mean, you're all—

The CHAIR: That exchange serves no-one. It doesn't serve the issue you are trying to prosecute and it doesn't serve us trying to get answers, either.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can't wait to get to the multicultural questions.

The CHAIR: I call Mr Fang to order for the first time. You were given plenty of warnings.

The Hon. WES FANG: Understood. Minister, reminding you that you are the Minister for Sport, did you receive the informal advice from the Office of Sport indicating that they were supportive of PCYC's proposal, in principle, about the change of site for the Dubbo sports hub prior to your government ripping away \$50 million of funding from Dubbo?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: You were aware?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I was aware of some concept—

The Hon. WES FANG: And you did nothing about it?

The CHAIR: That was your last question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I was aware that there was some concept outside of—

The Hon. WES FANG: But you did nothing about it?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. WES FANG: Fair enough.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm sorry, the funding came from—

The Hon. WES FANG: If you want to abandon the people of Dubbo—

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Speak to the Minister that was responsible.

The CHAIR: You don't get to run running commentary after the bell's gone. Minister, are you aware that Sydney is recognised as the martial arts capital of Australia, hosting probably the largest number of clubs, training halls and participants?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am now, Mr Banasiak.

The CHAIR: I am happy to educate. Are you aware that they don't actually have a designated venue that can host interstate and national competitions to that level of standard that's required?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't had that brought to my attention.

The CHAIR: Would you be open to supporting a feasibility study to assess what their requirements are in designating a martial arts venue for New South Wales that can host international competitions?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm happy to look at any—to have that conversation.

The CHAIR: Have you been familiarised with the proposal from Football Australia for securing our football future? Are you across that at all?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's the multi-billion dollar—broadly across that, yes.

The CHAIR: How is the New South Wales Government planning to support that proposal? Obviously there's a Federal component to it as well, but how is the New South Wales Government planning to support their plan?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: A lot of it is in and around grassroots sporting facilities. Whatever opportunity we find to actually support grassroots sporting facilities, we've been doing that. We've delivered \$30 million-odd to the Level the Playing Field initiative. A lot of that's gone towards football. We've invested roughly about \$10½ million in the Women's World Cup and Asian World Cup legacy funds. We're looking to work with Football Australia as much as we can to help promote and support the sport. We have also, by the same token, been landed with—we've got an enormous State debt which we're trying to service and manage, so there's challenges. But we do the best we can to work with Football Australia. The relationship, I believe, is quite good.

The CHAIR: You know that, despite the fact the football has the highest participation rate in New South Wales, investment lags behind that demand, especially in juniors and women, still?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They're statistics that have been provided by Football Australia, yes.

The CHAIR: Particularly around things like lighting, change rooms—things that actually increase the playable hours, increase the participation rate, what is the State Government doing in terms of that? There's a \$790 million shortfall in football change rooms, \$343 million in lighting infrastructure across Australia, or across New South Wales, from my understanding. How are we contributing to that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're contributing as best we can. We're looking to provide venues and facilities wherever we can. We're constantly assisting clubs with facilities, working together with the local governments in relation to co-funding certain projects. We're not going to catch that up overnight.

The CHAIR: No, I don't expect you to.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This arrears of nearly a billion dollars hasn't come about in the last year or two.

The CHAIR: Of course not.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It would've been nice to have had some of the—

The CHAIR: In terms of the next 12 months, Minister, particularly around the area of lighting, how much is going towards lighting upgrades and what does that equate to in terms of playable hours? I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't give a percentile. There isn't a target lighting objective, but we do look at lighting as very important. Obviously lighting increases the ability to utilise pitches. It makes grounds more available to women as well, because we've got growth in women's participation. Lighting is exceptionally important. You talk about lighting and women's facilities and dressing sheds, they're areas we're prioritising because it is beneficial to growing the women's side of it and accommodating our wonderful women. Look at our fantastic—at a professional level, look at football overall—

The CHAIR: I'm also more concerned about our juniors because that's where our future footballers come from.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely.

The CHAIR: If they don't have the ability to train and play, then they won't develop into our beautiful Matildas or Socceroos. Can I just switch to this announcement that has been made by yourself and the Minister for Transport around \$30 million for a commuter ferry wharf at Blackwattle Bay to piggyback off the new Sydney Fish Market. I just want to get some background in terms of whether we've done our due diligence on that. Maybe learning from the lessons of Kamay ferry wharves where we now have a great fishing platform that has cost us \$78 million and not a commuter ferry service. Do we actually have an operator that is willing to operate a commuter ferry wharf from Blackwattle Bay, or are we just building something in hope, and praying that an operator will come?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Transport for NSW is building the wharf. I think if there's any other greater detail—Tom, would you be across what's going on there?

TOM GELLIBRAND: More than happy to, Minister. There is a ferry service that currently services that Blackwattle Bay area. It rests on the Glebe side, and it's quite a small ferry. Given the prominence of the Sydney Fish Market to tourism operations in and around Sydney, Transport for NSW identified that there was a better opportunity to enhance ferry services in that area. They suggested the option of provisioning for a ferry at the end of the wharf that we were going to build as part of our project. Our project has been approved by Planning. It's got conditions of approval. We have to provide a public wharf, which we've been intending to do. That's for mums and dads to tie up to, and fairly small craft—mums and dads activities—to enhance the experience down there at the fish markets.

The CHAIR: What's the capacity for mums and dads to do that?

TOM GELLIBRAND: It depends on the size of the vessels but you're talking about 10 boats. They sort of nose in. Then Transport said, how about we look at a bigger ferry arrangement to get more people in and out which, I think everyone would concede, is a good idea. They've got an allocation of \$30 million in the budget, as you have mentioned. My understanding is that they've actually got pre-qualified suppliers for the building of wharves. I also understand that their objective is to come up with a wharf that could accommodate a ferry equivalent of about 100 tonnes. I think that's reasonably large. I don't know how it compares with some of the other commuter ferries, but it's certainly larger than the ferry that currently services Blackwattle Bay and berths on the Glebe side of Blackwattle Bay.

That's the transport objective. We're working really closely with them at the moment, saying, "Okay, if you want to tie up a hundred tonne ferry and you've got the money to do that, that's fantastic." So they'll take over that element of the project. I'm happy to volunteer that to actually build that wharf will happen after the fish markets close. There's a very sensible reason for that, because there's operational wharves that are servicing the existing fish markets that fishos use.

The CHAIR: Sure. Just to go to some of the other figures that were in the press release, you're talking it's going to boost annual visitation from 4½ million to six million. Where was that figure dragged from?

TOM GELLIBRAND: That would have been in the original business case, which I understand is circa 2017.

The CHAIR: What percentage of that increase do you expect to come via the ferry wharves versus the Wentworth Park light rail?

TOM GELLIBRAND: We haven't done any assessment of that and I think it's safe to assume that it wouldn't have been in the original business case, because the original business case wasn't contemplating a commuter ferry actually going to the fish markets, because that was back in 2017.

The CHAIR: So we don't really have concrete demand figures for this wharf or this service yet.

TOM GELLIBRAND: In terms of patronage on the ferry?

The CHAIR: Yes, patronage. Do we have any indication of what the patronage would be?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I'm not aware of any and that's no doubt a question for Transport for NSW, as they've been developing their plans for that ferry. They'll also look at the frequency of the ferry, hours of operation, and things like that, I expect. But we're not privy to their demand estimates for patronage.

The CHAIR: Obviously this wharf is not going to be completed in line with when the fish market opens, it's going to be—do we have a projected timeline, in terms of completion?

TOM GELLIBRAND: We're working on the basis it's in and around six months. Once the new fish markets commence operations, the fishos can use the new fishing wharves. That means that we can start to demolish the existing wooden and concrete walls that are on the existing fish market site. That then enables the new wharf to be built. Fairly straightforward works. Transport for NSW has got expertise in that area. So it's in that six month period.

The CHAIR: Touch wood when you say it's fairly straightforward.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, I've just got a few more questions in regard to the conservation hunting bill. I'm just wondering how comfortable you are with some of the aspects of the bill that obviously affect your portfolio. At the moment it requires Crown land managers to give consideration to using land for hunting when making their plans of management, and actually consulting with the Conservation Hunting Authority. Is that something that you did some consultation around with Crown land managers and councils that would be impacted by that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Councils—I don't know what consultation Crown Lands has directly, but obviously the appropriateness of the land—appropriate to allow the removal of feral animals, and whatever, it's got to be located close to it. Especially if it's Crown land that is attached to prime production land, or where it is quite relevant and it would be of great assistance to farmers. Mel, would you be across the consultation that's—

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm happy to talk this afternoon. Minister, I just want to understand from you, as the Minister, given the effect this bill will have on those Crown land managers, and I'm just trying to understand what conversations you had, Minister, with those Crown land managers, to make sure that they were comfortable with these changes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't had any conversations with Crown land managers.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Did you ask your department to conduct any consultation with Crown land managers, or the broader public, to see if they supported those changes to the Crown Land Management Act?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Can I ask why you haven't done anything like that before the Government actually came out in support of the bill?

MELANIE HAWYES: Most of the sites are direct managed, as in they're under the Minister's management control. There may be two Crown land managers. But, again, this is a proposal where sites could be suitable and made available for hunting, not that they are. There's a whole lot of risk assessment to go through. Most of the sites in the bill are managed by the Minister and the department.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, we heard from Local Government NSW, and we heard a lot from local governments as well. They are concerned around the burden that this bill could potentially place, still, in relation to their role as Crown land managers. I'm just trying to understand—this is not a Government bill, but obviously when bills come forward to the Government there usually is some level of consultation around that. The bill actually allows the proposed hunting authority to indicate more areas of Crown land that they would like to use for hunting, and we don't know what those areas at this point will be going forward. That could potentially have this massive impact on Local Government NSW and other Crown land managers. I'm just wondering why there was no consultation on that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think Mel was quite clear, most of the Crown land is directly managed by Crown Lands.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: That's the land that's already indicated in the bill. But the bill also allows the hunting authority to dedicate more Crown land, which we have no idea what that will be yet. So it's almost

like a blank cheque being signed over. I'm just trying to understand how you, as the Government, felt comfortable enough with this blank cheque being signed over for future Crown land managers, without any consultation in that space.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The sites would need to be defined by Crown Lands. So it's not about them determining which sites.

MELANIE HAWYES: Are you referring to the criteria compliant provisions?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm talking about the part of the bill that allows the Conservation Hunting Authority to indicate to the Government and to the Minister which further areas of Crown land they would like to open up, outside of what's already indicated in the bill.

MELANIE HAWYES: If it's the part that I think you're referring to, that kind of mirrors the regime that exists over State forest, in terms of basic criteria that could potentially mean that land could be made available for hunting. It doesn't mean it will be. It's criteria based on size.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: My question to the Minister, then, is, yes, it could be, and that's the whole point. These areas with Crown land management could be opened up for hunting without any consultation, with this bill passing, in regard to those Crown land managers. I'm just asking, Minister, if you feel comfortable that there hasn't been consultation, then, with these Crown land managers, with the potential that further areas of land will be opened up in the future if this bill passes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think there's strict criteria that is going to be set in relation to which Crown land would be available. I'm comfortable with that. Mel said there's only two that are not managed by—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: They're the ones that are listed, but we're talking about the fact that there's future possibilities of that opening up much further. We don't know at this point.

MELANIE HAWYES: Our advice has been that anything would be subject to risk assessment. There are public notification provisions under the existing regime. The bill seeks to mirror what occurs in State forest land, and that has public notification requirements and safety assessments, as you'd expect.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might come back to you with more questions this afternoon. Minister, would you be willing to meet with the Australian Guns Safety Alliance in regard to this bill?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Of course, yes.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Minister, I have a couple of questions in relation to your capacity as the Minister for Multiculturalism. Can you just tell us how much, roughly, New South Wales spends each year on trying to impose multiculturalism or promote multiculturalism in this State? What would be a ballpark figure?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I would say Multicultural NSW is pretty much committed to supporting and promoting multiculturalism in New South Wales, so the whole budget—

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Yes, but what's the dollar figure?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Whatever the figure is. I can't remember off the top of my head.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Well, it's important. Would you agree that—

The Hon. WES FANG: Here, I've got budget papers.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Good. Thanks, Wes.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Would you agree that in the ideal world, culture would come up spontaneously from the people; it wouldn't need to be imposed from the State? Do you agree that's the ideal?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think the State's got a role to play to maintain—we've embarked on a multicultural society for 50 years now. It's been the way. The State's got a great role to play in terms of promoting and celebrating our multicultural communities.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Yes, but every ethnic community has its successful entrepreneurs and other successful professionals. There's plenty of money sloshing around; they can fund it themselves. I think the Government is out there trying to buy votes and buy favours. I think that's what's going on. Do you hope that one day we can get to the point where we can end it, because we have such a harmonious, diverse society that there's just no need for the Government to do it? We can save the taxpayers money. Do you think that's the ideal, or will this just go on in perpetuity?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm happy to assist there, Minister, if that's helpful.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Okay, Joe, you might as well.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Absolutely. My aspiration would be to be able to turn the lights off one day and that our society exists and is cohesive. But you can't ignore the fact, at the moment, that we speak 285 different languages and we practise 139 different faith traditions, and we need some glue that helps bind that. The \$74.4 million that our agency has as a budget provides critical access to language services and supports communities in celebrating, building interfaith dialogues, connecting across their differences—I could go on and on.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: The figure was \$74 million per year?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Correct.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Wow, that's a lot of money. I'm pleased to hear that the end goal is that we can turn the lights off and save the taxpayers money, and we don't have to have the State imposing their culture on the people.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: But you're implying that the State is imposing its culture on the people.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: Well, it is. All these grants come with conditions.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: But the grants are sought from the people of New South Wales. It's not as if the Minister's running grant programs that communities aren't embracing. All different communities—all of our faith communities, all of our cultural communities—are applying for these things. It's not as if we're just talking about ethnic groups; we're talking about everyday Australians that are looking to connect—Rotary associations, Lions clubs.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: That comes under the multicultural spending?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Absolutely.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: I'm pleased to hear that at some point the goal is—hopefully in five to 10 years, maybe sooner—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's your time frame, not mine.

The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK: —we can shut it down. What are the key performance indicators that we're looking for to get to that point?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I think we would like to have a society—through you, Minister, if that's okay—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We would like to have a society that's connected. We'd like to make sure that there are no barriers across access to and support from government services. We'd like there to be an opportunity where our newest Australians that come to this country can have skills and fast-tracked recognition, can ultimately be employed, and that there aren't tensions based off the fact of race and religion in our schools.

The CHAIR: We will go to Opposition questions.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, with respect to the Palestine Action Group's march on the Sydney Harbour Bridge, what was your position before the march occurred on whether it should proceed?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Obviously there is an enormous amount of people that are just so worked up with the killings and the deaths overseas. We recognise that it's been a very sensitive issue, but we had a position and the Premier held a position at the time that at such short notice, and in order to maintain public safety as well, a march with such an amount of people would have been a risk to the community and, plus, would have cut off the city through a main artery. I held that position.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you supported the Premier's position that it shouldn't proceed?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Of course I did, yes. The court took a different position. But I respect and support everyone that turned up to march. It was great to see so many people out there.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you thought it was great to see so many people out there at a march that you opposed?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I didn't oppose the march; it was more so the location.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Your Government went to court to try to stop it.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was more so the location. Let's not mix it up here. It was a position that your party took too.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So it's a position that you still stand by, Minister—that we shouldn't have the Harbour Bridge used for such protests?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think if the Harbour Bridge is to be used for a rally, it should be done in a timely way where it's planned properly. I saw the relief in the faces of the police shortly after it, and it was genuine concern. They were genuinely concerned about something going wrong and managing the crowd. That's what the issue was, at the end of the day. They got the judgement and it went ahead, and I'm happy that it was manageable. But, obviously, this is highly sensitive within the community, and people wanted to express that they want an end to the carnage over there. It's impacted on a lot of people here in New South Wales. There are people that have got family that are over there, and there have been over 100 protests over what's happening in Palestine over the last year and a half.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, before the Premier made his call on opposing the march and before the police took action, were you consulted about that position, prior to the Premier's announcement?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't think so. I don't believe so.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Did he pick up the phone and say, "What do you think, as Minister for Multiculturalism?"

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There were conversations, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Over Signal, maybe?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There were conversations held. It wasn't on Signal, no.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, was Multicultural NSW consulted?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: About the last protest? Not from any Executive members of Government, more just working with police and colleagues across the board around, if it does proceed, how to make it as safe as possible and what are the insights in terms of sentiment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, was there any consultation with the Faith Affairs Council?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: About the last protest?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: About the march on the Harbour Bridge.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Not that I recall, but I'm happy to take the specifics on notice if I'm incorrect, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I'll ask this to you, but Mr La Posta may be able to answer. Has the Faith Affairs Council considered these protests or these marches on the Harbour Bridge? Have they come to any position?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe there have been discussions about the protests in the Faith Affairs Council but, essentially, this is about humanity. This is about people worrying about people overseas. It's not necessarily unique to any particular faith community. This is people worried about the carnage and wanting it all to end and protesting about it. People from all walks of life got up there and wanted to express themselves.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, I don't recall there ever being an agenda item on the Faith Affairs Council about protests, noting it that there's a divergence of views across our communities, with different sentiments about some of these things.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As the Minister for Multiculturalism, have you had concerns raised with you by Labor MPs in multicultural communities about the Government's position in opposing the march across the Harbour Bridge?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Government MPs have expressed themselves in a number of ways.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Who were those MPs and how did they express themselves?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: However they've expressed themselves, it's been in the public.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, we saw one of those expressions in our House, the Legislative Council, on 7 August. Anthony D'Adam indicated that he'd been bullied by a number of his colleagues. *The Sydney Morning Herald* indicated that you were one of those colleagues that bullied Anthony D'Adam. Did you bully Anthony D'Adam in relation to his position on multicultural issues?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't bully anyone. Look, at the end of the day—

The Hon. WES FANG: So he's wrong?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Whatever went on in caucus, that's for caucus. It's not to be aired here.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I know, but I've read about it.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Good on you.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you bullied Anthony D'Adam?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Maybe you should read more about it, if you know so much.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you bullied Anthony D'Adam? Would you deny that you've bullied Anthony D'Adam?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't bully anyone.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you deny that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't bully anyone.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, I think you've bullied me at times.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think the opposite.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, in relation to your support or otherwise for displays, public parades or protests, do you support the right of the Sikh community in Western Sydney to hold an annual parade? Do you think that it's a reasonable thing for councils to support a once-a-year parade from the Sikh community?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We're aware this issue has come up in the last couple of days. Happy to take the specifics on notice and give you a response. It's a democratic right, in terms of protests and these sorts of things. That's not to say that we're completely understanding of the intended—it literally has just hit the media as of yesterday.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, I appreciate your answer, but I'm asking the Minister. Instead of having a protest, the Sikh community in the Blacktown area want to have a parade. The Labor-dominated council has stopped that Sikh community having their parade. Will you call on your Labor colleagues on that council to allow the Sikh community to have their once-a-year parade, which they've been doing for two decades?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not familiar with the particulars there or why there's been—I'm not even across any of this issue with the Labor councillors at Blacktown.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you think you should be across this issue and perhaps get your Labor colleagues to actually acknowledge that this—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If it's brought to my attention, I should be. It hasn't been on the front page of the newspaper, Wes. It's not something that's coming to my attention.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're the Minister for Multiculturalism. You can't get my name right half the time, and now you're saying to the people of Western Sydney—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Wesley, sorry.

The Hon. WES FANG: —that the local Sikh community can't have their once-a-year parade that they've been holding for two decades.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not saying that. I've never said that.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you're going to support them?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know what you're referring to. I will get across it. I think Mr La Posta said that there is some mail that has come through.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, they would appreciate your support. I can tell you that right now.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're here today. If it was coming across my table—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Fang, if it assists you, I'm happy to connect with the group organisers in Blacktown council and understand the merits or otherwise of their decision.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There might be an email that has come through to my office, but I'm in budget estimates at the moment, so I can't—

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, that Sikh community wants your support to hold a celebration of their faith.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In due course, my friend.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: But he also can't override the local authority, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: The Minister should certainly be advocating for that community to be able to hold a parade to support their faith—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: As I said before, I'm happy to connect with that group.

The Hon. WES FANG: —as opposed to a protest, which the Government seems to—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's very fair, Mr Fang. That's why I'm happy connect with that group, and I'm happy to connect with council and understand the merits of their decision.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, I've been to Sikh events before. I don't understand what—

The Hon. WES FANG: Which is why I can't understand why you wouldn't support this community now, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have supported the Sikh community.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you will support them in their seeking a parade?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, well—

The Hon. WES FANG: Good! I appreciate that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If I've got an email, after budget estimates—a request—I will look into that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, it seems like whether it's the Harbour Bridge protest and, of course, the position the Government took with that, or whether it is the Sikh community in their festival and parade in Blacktown, these are issues that are percolating across communities in New South Wales. Is this something that the Faith Affairs Council should be discussing as an agenda item, potentially, in terms of protests and celebrations as well? Is that something that should be listed as an agenda item for the Faith Affairs Council?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Faith Affairs Council attends to many, many issues and provides advice on many cases. I must say they have been absolutely fantastic from the day dot. It's not to say that the Government always adopts everything. There are different opinions within the Faith Affairs Council—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of course.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —and we take them all on board. But when there have been challenging times, they have been extremely valuable in maintaining an order and communicating into the respective faith communities too, which has made it easier, from a government perspective, in terms of managing and maintaining social cohesion on the ground.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Could I just add to the Minister's answer?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, I'm happy to hear from you. Just in the interests of time—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'd like him to add to it.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Just the specificity of your question, in terms of the agenda—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You might be able to add on to another question I'm about to ask the Minister.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: —he doesn't control the agenda of the Faith Affairs Council.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I was going to ask about that as well. In terms of the agenda setting, Minister—also the minutes of the meetings of the Faith Affairs Council—do you get any of this information?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you get the agendas for the Faith Affairs Council? Do you get the minutes for the Faith Affairs Council?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, they do come through to me.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are the Faith Affairs Council minutes published publicly?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can take the specifics of that on notice. They're not published, but I can take the specifics in terms of what the Government requirements are around the subcommittee on that. You're exactly right. The minutes—the secretariat function of the Faith Affairs Council is provided by Multicultural NSW, under our legislation, as a subcommittee. And then in terms of the agenda being set, that's set by Right Reverend Dr Michael Stead, who is an outstanding chair of that group. I do want to commend him for his work.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, how many times has the Faith Affairs Council met? Mr La Posta, do you want to take that on notice?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can give you an answer in about 30 seconds. I think it's 13, but I'll just double-check.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We've engaged with them ad hoc at times, in all this—enormous need.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many times have you attended those meetings, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think I have attended three or four.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, do you make it a practice to read the minutes of the meeting after you've received them?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm generally briefed on what their position is on particular items. On many occasions, we've got varying views within the Faith Affairs Council too.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I want to return back to Allianz Stadium and the costings. You previously indicated that we could be seeing costs of up to \$70 million, which was quite a significant amount, considering that previously your office had indicated—or a spokesperson attributed to your office—that the cost would be anywhere between \$4.5 million and \$14 million annually. Are you just plucking out numbers from the air at the moment?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's over five years. I think it's extended over the period of the contract as the range.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Mather?

KERRIE MATHER: I didn't hear the question. Could you repeat the question?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the costs of Souths moving, what are those costs from your perspective? We've heard the Minister say previously \$4.5 million to \$14 million on an annual basis. Now we're hearing \$70 million. What do you put the costs to for any relocation of Souths to Allianz Stadium from Accor?

KERRIE MATHER: The cost is a function of the range of commercial sponsorships, which range from naming rights through to hospitality partners, to sponsorship programs and membership programs. That will depend on the content or the number of events to support the payments that they're actually making to the stadium.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We might return to that this afternoon. Minister, how much funding has the New South Wales Office of Sport committed to a new aquatic facility at Carss Park?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice in terms of the specific amount.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You don't know? Could the Office of Sport perhaps provide us with some information on that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Adam?

ADAM BERRY: I certainly can assist, Mr Farlow and Minister. The Government is committed to the outcome of delivering a reinstatement or replacement of the outdoor 50-metre swimming pool to Carss Park. The funding envelope to deliver that that we're currently working inside is approximately \$53.5 million, and that's from a number of sources.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that contained within the 2025-26 budget?

ADAM BERRY: No. The first year—this year—is substantially planning, with the bulk of the funds for construction coming in the subsequent two financial years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that \$53.5 million all anticipated to come from the New South Wales Government?

ADAM BERRY: My understanding is that's composed of a council contribution, a Federal Government contribution—which is still to be clarified with the Federal Government—and the State's contribution.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the State's contribution anticipated to be?

ADAM BERRY: I don't think we have the Federal contribution finalised yet to confirm that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think the Minister shouted out \$10 million. Is that your understanding, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From what I understand—but, as Adam said, it's yet to be clarified.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How much would you anticipate that the council would be providing?

ADAM BERRY: I can speak to that. The council has already spent, I believe, up to \$7 million on the remediation of the existing site, which had some contamination issues that needed remediating, and it's contributed \$10 million at this stage towards the construction of the new pool.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Those remediation costs were incurred at a time when there wasn't a plan to rebuild the pool, so it was capped off.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, with respect to this project, are you confident that the New South Wales contribution will be sufficient to deliver a year-round, multi-sport pool complex with lap lanes and learn-to-swim programs?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm confident that it will be delivering what was committed to. I believe there was an election commitment to replace the pool that was there.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're just replacing the pool that was there. An open-air pool?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, the facility—new.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: A new open-air pool. Is that right?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not right across all of the—

The Hon. WES FANG: There's that answer again.

ADAM BERRY: Mr Farlow, I can potentially assist with some of those scope details. The \$53.5 million envelope includes an outdoor 50-metre learn-to-swim pool that's heated. The pool, as currently scoped, has an operable swim wall which can be used to divide the 50-metre pool into two sections. It's the more modern technology. Pools previously needed to use a moveable boom, but operators have moved on from those to a swim wall, which does essentially the same thing. It will be accessible—it will have an accessible entry point and it will also come with the enabling support infrastructure that you need to operate a swimming pool: a small kiosk, office administration, first aid room, plant rooms, filtration rooms and storage as well. That is what the scope of the \$53.5 million delivers.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is it envisaged that the pool will be operational year-round or is there a view that it will be closed for any part of the year?

ADAM BERRY: It's actually designed to be able to be open and operated year-round. We're working very closely with Georges River Council. It will be the operator of the pool and, ultimately, the hours of operation and days of operation will be a matter for council. But it is certainly designed to be operated year-round.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But it will be an outdoor pool and not an indoor pool. Is that correct?

ADAM BERRY: That's correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What's the proposed timeline in terms of the pool and its operation?

ADAM BERRY: The best case that we are working towards is to commence construction in the second quarter of the next calendar year and then to go into delivery, with construction completed and the pool open—again, subject to weather and all the unknowns—for the summer of 2027, so the final quarter of 2027.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, numbers seem to jump around in terms of the land audit and how many homes it's producing. As of today, how many homes is the land audit producing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Leon, have you got the current update?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: While Mr Walker is looking that up, I should just stress that the number will always be indicative, because planning proposals have not come forward yet.

LEON WALKER: The audit is currently projecting in the order of about 14,000 dwellings from sites identified.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, what is the current backlog of Aboriginal land claims across the State?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Is it 42,000?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes—

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you say 42,000, Minister? I couldn't hear you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not sure.

MELANIE HAWYES: If you give me a second, I'll find the precise number. We have had a really significant uptick in the number of claims lodged in the past year.

The Hon. WES FANG: While you're pulling out the answer, I might ask as well, Minister, am I correct in understanding that Crown Lands is unable to approve any works or funding grants for assets which are subject to an Aboriginal land claim? Is that correct, Minister?

MELANIE HAWYES: No, that's not correct.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's not correct?

MELANIE HAWYES: If your question is we can't fund anything, that's not correct. A number of sites have assets on them.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, I'm saying that you're unable to approve works or funding grants for areas that are under a claim. Is that correct?

MELANIE HAWYES: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you can do that?

MELANIE HAWYES: We can do certain works and, particularly if they are supported by the claimant land council, we can enter into agreements on that land.

The Hon. WES FANG: How often does that happen?

MELANIE HAWYES: Across the State? There are hundreds of interactions across the State. I can't get you that kind of information. We talk to different stakeholders all the time. It's a huge portfolio with multiple land claim councils and multiple stakeholders.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay, but you're saying it's possible.

MELANIE HAWYES: Did you want the figure?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, please.

MELANIE HAWYES: As at 30 June, there were 42,644 claims awaiting assessment.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, I take you to the matter raised earlier about potential conflicts of interest involving your chief of staff. When did you first discuss with your chief of staff that he should be the Bayside mayor after the 2024 council election?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know if I discussed whether he should be.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Or he could be.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: He could be? I can't give you that date.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But you had discussions about it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I mean—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: If you could take on notice when you first discussed it.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —that's determined by a vote of councillors, Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It sure was.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's always conflict within parties.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sure. When did you first discuss with Minister Hoenig the plan to take the existing mayor, Bill Saravinovski, off the Labor Party council ticket?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I never discussed taking anyone off the ticket.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: When did Minister Hoenig tell you about the allegations against Mr Saravinovski that the Office of Local Government was looking into?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know if Minister Hoenig advised me or if it was made public knowledge. I can't recall. I can't recall any specific detail.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You said it's possible that Minister Hoenig discussed it with you. When do you think that was?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know. I'm not familiar with Mr Hoenig advising me of that. We may have discussed things after they've been public knowledge or whatever.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: After it was listed at NCAT, is that what you're saying? But it could have been before?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It could have been before. I don't know how this has any—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Okay, it could have been before. Thanks, Minister. When did you first discuss with David Dobson at the ALP head office that Saravinovski should be off the ticket, clearing the way for your chief of staff to become the mayor?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I never, ever, discussed with David Dobson that someone should be off any ticket.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What discussions have you had with Ed McDougall that he'd be your preferred replacement as the Labor member for Rockdale if the time ever came for that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't got a date or a time for when I'm looking to depart.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: We love having you here, but none of us are here forever.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The people might make that decision. People aspire to go into politics and they have conversations about people's aspirations, but not necessarily or in particular for my seat, and nor is it relevant in this environment.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: In terms of these conflicts of interest, what discussions did you have with Chris Minns, from the neighbouring electorate, about the way in which Ed McDougall would replace Bill Saravinovski as the Mayor of Bayside?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't think there was ever a discussion about Ed McDougall replacing anyone as the mayor. To get up as mayor you need your own caucus to support you and you need a bit more than that as well.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sure, but the caucus numbers changed by virtue of Saravinovski being rubbed out, didn't they?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, but Ed achieved that on his own. It's not something that I really overly discussed. It's nothing that he really expressed.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, it happened by osmosis; that's always the way.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know whether this questioning is in relation to my—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Well, it's in relation to the conflict of interest and also the public expense we have in paying your chief of staff who wears the two hats. Can I take you back to the Andrew Denny email about the turf tender, dated 14 February. He cc's in the usual characters at Venues, Adam Lewis and Johnny Naofal—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can I get a copy of that?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: —but also Rob Cooper from Living Turf. Why was Rob Cooper told of the fact that there were two applicants for the tender, Evergreen and HG Sports? Given that Rob Cooper consults for Evergreen, didn't this run the risk that he would be telling Evergreen, "When you present your tender on the Wednesday, you only have to beat HG Sports, and you're the winner"? Why was Rob Cooper, external to Venues NSW, cc'd in on the news that there were two applicants, given that Rob Cooper consults for Evergreen?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've got no idea. I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Ms Mather, is this how you normally run tenders, like insider trading?

KERRIE MATHER: He was engaged as an independent expert as part of the tender panel, but he has no voting rights.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Even though he consults for Evergreen, one of the two applicants?

KERRIE MATHER: On this occasion he was actually a—all of these consultants invariably work for people around the industry.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: They sure do, especially Evergreen.

KERRIE MATHER: He was engaged on a dedicated basis to provide industry input to the tender panel, but he had no voting rights.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: And who won the tender?

KERRIE MATHER: The tender is progressing.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: It hasn't been determined yet?

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Latham. Ms Hurst.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I just have a couple more questions, Minister. Going back to this particular bill, at the inquiry that occurred just recently, we heard from groups such as the Australian Gun Safety Alliance and Outdoors NSW, saying that they're concerned about the impact this bill will have on the ability for the public to use and enjoy Crown land spaces safely, and that includes school groups and families. We heard from Outdoors NSW that school groups may actually have to pull out from outdoor activities where there is an overlay of Crown land. Minister, I wanted to get your response to this in regard to the public safety around Crown land spaces.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In terms of the profile of the Crown land that we're referring to that could be potentially eligible for the purposes, I'm not sure whether it does currently have public access or—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I will come back to it this afternoon, but I just wanted to hear from you, Minister, in regard to any concerns from those advocacy organisations around the fact that these are shared public spaces.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Crown Lands has identified particular land parcels that would—

MELANIE HAWYES: Sorry, just quickly, the hunting regime that already exists utilises State forest land, and opens and closes that land.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I understand all this. We did hear this at the inquiry. I just want to get the Minister's response specifically in regard to the concerns that were raised at that inquiry by the Australian Gun Safety Alliance and Outdoors NSW about this expansion of shared public spaces, where other people will be using access to those lands. I understand that there is currently hunting in State forests already, but this is a large extension of lands and so I want to get a response from you, Minister, in regard to Crown land.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice for you.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, have you requested any changes or amendments on this bill as it has come forward?

The Hon. WES FANG: He wouldn't know.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, not at this stage.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Are you open to amendments that would improve public safety concerns?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's not my bill.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: But obviously the Government can support amendments that would improve public safety or they could vote against amendments that would improve public safety. I'm wondering what your position would be.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll think about that.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You would think about whether or not you would support public safety amendments.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, in terms of any required amendments—our position is to support an amended version, from what I understand. The bill is still—where is it sitting at the moment?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I do understand the amendments the Government is supporting. I'm just wanting to know whether you would personally support and advocate for amendments that would improve public safety.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Always public safety should be front and centre. It's just being convinced of the extent of the risk you're referring to.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: On 9 April this year you announced that the Northern Rivers Wildlife Hospital had been given a secure home on almost two hectares of Crown land. That's a great use of public land. Are you able to indicate how long the hospital has secured that land for and whether they're required to pay for the lease or whether it's a peppercorn lease?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've got to take that on notice, if that's okay.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You're not quite sure what I'm talking about?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I can't remember the detail of the lease term or any value there.

The CHAIR: That concludes our time with the Minister, unless there are Government questions.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: No, we're very satisfied with all the answers.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Banasiak, can I clear up one thing in response to Mr Farlow's question about the Faith Affairs Council?

The CHAIR: Sure.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I said 13. It feels like 13 because they've been very productive, but they've met nine times.

The Hon. WES FANG: Fudging the figures, Minister.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It was my response.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, I blame the Minister.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister. We'll now adjourn, and we'll come back at two o'clock.

(The Minister withdrew.)

(Luncheon adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back. We'll now start with questions from the crossbench. I'll throw to Dr Amanda Cohn for the first 10 minutes.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I've got some questions for the Office of Sport; I think that's Mr Berry online. Firstly, I want to ask about the Level the Playing Field fund. I understand that funding wasn't extended past the previous program, but there was a comment from the Minister this morning about his focus on lighting and women's facilities for football, which led me to believe there might be further opportunities for funding infrastructure that supports inclusion. Are there any opportunities moving forward for those kinds of grant applications?

ADAM BERRY: There's quite a lot to that. At the moment we're still delivering, with partners, 305 sports infrastructure grants, and a number of those are grants that enable participation—as the Minister said, improved lighting, improved accessibility to fields, improved drainage and a number of things. That's very much a pipeline that is still being delivered. Today, do we have a Level the Playing Field grant program available? We don't today, but we are doing a number of other things in the Play Her Way space; you might be familiar with our women in sport strategy, released last year. We are delivering a whole lot of initiatives in the Play Her Way strategy that enable better participation by women and girls in sports. I could list a number of those things, but they are on a slightly different tack to the question.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I'll come to those other initiatives in a second. While we're on the physical infrastructure—change room and lighting upgrades et cetera—you might need to take this one on notice. How many applications were there for Level the Playing Field that were unsuccessful? What is the unmet need?

ADAM BERRY: I would have to take that on notice, definitely, yes.

Dr AMANDA COHN: With reference to the Play Her Way strategy, which you've referenced, and which has a lot of really exciting initiatives in it, are any of those related to physical infrastructure upgrades?

ADAM BERRY: No. Most of the elements to the Play Her Way strategy are, I guess I could say, human-focused or person-focused. It's about improving the system and about improving the sector's ability to give women and girls access to sport.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I also want to ask about the Organisation Support Program, which I've asked about at estimates previously. Is there any update on any measured achievements of those agreements with the State sporting organisations? How are you measuring the success of that program?

ADAM BERRY: Yes, there certainly is. Reporting from the financial year just ended from the 97 State sporting organisations and sporting organisations for people with disability shows that in the gender equity space, 65 per cent of our boards of those organisations now have over 40 per cent female board membership, which is up from 58 per cent. A quarter of them are also demonstrating progress, have plans and are within reach of their target. Actually, 90 per cent of all our State sporting organisations are either at the target or are within reach of the target, and a very small number still have a bit of work to do that we're having to work with quite closely. In real numbers, the number of women on those boards, that measure's up from 304 to 325 last year.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Certainly the number of women on boards is excellent progress. What are the other types of things you're measuring, or what have the organisations agreed to as part of their Organisation Support Program grants?

ADAM BERRY: There's a number of things that we fund through the Organisation Support Program. That's been the primary target—female participation in leadership—but there's a whole range of things we do on leadership and culture participation partnerships, with an overall focus on inclusion. But in terms of the measurable, the leadership one has been the focus at the moment through the Organisation Support Program.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Can I just clarify that you said a quarter of them have demonstrated progress on that target, or did I mishear that?

ADAM BERRY: So it's 65 per cent are effectively where they need to be and a quarter are close to where they need to be. So it's 90 per cent that are either there or very close to there.

Dr AMANDA COHN: In terms of the broader aims of the Organisation Support Program, you're talking about a specific target in terms of gender equity. Do any of the agreements reflect broader inclusion initiatives for people with disability or from multicultural backgrounds, and LGBTIQ+ people?

ADAM BERRY: That's kind of what a lot of the Organisation Support Program does. I'll have to get the details on notice, but a lot of the intention of the program is to support organisations to be more inclusive, to be better governed and to be meeting their obligations under a range of legislation—child safety, inclusion and a whole range of measures. I could essentially get a model agreement to the Committee, if that would be helpful.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thank you. That would be very helpful. I also want to ask about budget funding for local community-based sport. There was a \$25.8 million budget line item to this effect. Can you provide us the breakdown of what that specifically funded?

ADAM BERRY: That funding, if I'm understanding the reference—I think it was \$25.8 million—is funding across three financial years, the first financial year being the one we are in now. It is funds distributed over three financial years. The intent is that it's an augmentation of one of any number of the existing initiatives that the organisation already delivers, so it's not targeted to any one at the moment. The intent is it's distributed across all of our programs to provide uplift to all of the programs that we currently have available.

Dr AMANDA COHN: To clarify my understanding, that's being used internally by the Office of Sport rather than allocated to external recipients?

ADAM BERRY: No, that's definitely not the intent. The intent is that it is to support the sector through a range of things that we already do, but existing programs that we already have. We already have a number of grant programs and a number of operations. There haven't been any decisions about where it goes, but it's intended to be an overall uplift towards the sector, rather than internal to the Office of Sport.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I understand. So that hasn't been allocated yet for this financial year that we're in?

ADAM BERRY: Not to particular initiatives in detail, no.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Okay. Thanks for that clarification.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I've just got to throw a couple to you, Mr Berry, as well, if that's okay. I might have missed some of the questions by Dr Cohn that you answered before I came in, so if this is a repeat, please let me know and I won't make you answer it again; I'll look at the transcript at the end. On 13 June it was announced that the Government had established a Multi-Sport Coalition with the aim of tackling the drivers of domestic, family and sexual violence through sport. I am wondering if you can give me a bit more detail about what work this coalition will be doing on the ground.

ADAM BERRY: The coalition was formed on the basis of the Government's primary prevention strategy but called out sporting organisations as a place where positive behaviours can take place and positive change can potentially happen. That's the "why" of why sports clubs. In terms of initiatives, there's a research project going on building the evidence base for what things will change behaviours most fundamentally at the sports club level. There are funds there for First Nations and Indigenous-led prevention programs through sport. A small amount of the funds actually is our people. There is an intent there for around \$1 million to be made available to sporting organisations themselves for projects and programs that may come forward that can meet the targets of the primary prevention strategy. That's this financial year.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Will those funds be allocated by some kind of competitive grants program which sporting organisations can apply for?

ADAM BERRY: I don't believe that we've determined the allocation methodology at the moment, but I would expect there would be some type of competitive process.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I know that Dr Cohn asked you about how the Office of Sport is requiring State sporting organisations to achieve gender equality on their boards. Previously in budget estimates we've talked a little bit about the Play Her Way strategy. I just want to get any updates on the implementation of that strategy more generally going forward.

ADAM BERRY: Thanks for the question. I think when I appeared in February we'd launched the strategy just before Christmas. I would have said then a focus on leadership, culture, participation and inclusion overall. Since then, we've done a number of things. We've started a research project with the University of Newcastle to get the latest insights into evidence-based approaches to engaging teenage girls, particularly, in sport. We've established the Teenage Advisory Committee of young women to guide us on what initiatives are effective and what initiatives might not be. We delivered a Careers for Girls in Sport summit, which is the first of its kind, earlier in May this year. That involved the university sector and the secondary school sector to try to start creating networks that promote career pathways and opportunities for girls in the sports sector. We funded Sport NSW to deliver a number of initiatives under the program. I believe not last week but the week before, Sport NSW ran one of their Women in Sport Leadership courses that was funded through the program. So there's quite a bit going on there in terms of the delivery of the Play Her Way strategy.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I think I asked more specifically around the actions being taken to ensure safe sporting environments for women, which is one of those specific strategies outlined in that strategy. Can you provide an update on the safe sporting environments for women projects specifically?

ADAM BERRY: I think, going back to a similar question—the one Dr Cohn asked—we actually don't have any active infrastructure grant project programs open at the moment. We are still running our 305 infrastructure projects, and a very common element of those is lighting and other inclusive measures, but currently there's no new grant programs in that infrastructure space.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm going to throw to Mr La Posta. In March 2025 the Government announced that it would deliver New South Wales' first standalone migrant workers centre. Are you able to provide an update on where the work on this centre is up to—where it will be located, when it's expected to open and those sorts of details?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thanks, Ms Hurst, for the question. Multicultural NSW, in partnership with SafeWork NSW and the industrial relations team in the Premier's Department, went through a scoping and a feasibility exercise and then ultimately a tender spec. The tender was opened and closed, and Unions NSW were the successful organisation to provide the services for the Migrant Workers Centre. The centre is scheduled to open, in my understanding, based off the contractual agreements that we've signed, in early 2026. They're just doing all of the preparatory work now and gearing that up for opening in early 2026.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do we have any idea at this point where it might be located?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No, I can take that on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: In terms of deciding that location, is there any select criteria that will be used to determine the best site for that centre?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I think the intention is—obviously because of the reality that, whilst there's a significant concentration of migrants in metropolitan Sydney, as Mr Fang and others will attest one in five people in Wagga is now born overseas, one in four in Griffith is born overseas, and nearly one in five in Coffs Harbour is born overseas, it's impossible for the centre to be all things to all people throughout New South Wales. It's more around what are the services, what's the literature, how can they connect them through hotlines and these sorts of things to be able to provide the migration specifics, the community legal contacts and all of the things that sit around that. I don't think the focus is necessarily about having a drop-in space; it's more around how to create the resources and the contacts to be able to get to as many people as possible across the State.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Will there still be some consideration around setting up this office in a regional area, given what you've raised?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The Government's allocated \$6.5 million over four years to this centre. Are you able to provide any kind of indication in regard to what this funding will be predominantly spent on or what the plans are for the breakdown of that funding?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can. Can I provide that on notice? Is that okay?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's along the lines of my previous answer in terms of the elements around migration law, but also in terms of access to legal support and so forth, and workers entitlements and safe work conditions. Obviously, the safe work component is a really important part; more than 50 per cent of the funding is associated with safe work. The general breakdown, and I'm happy to provide specifics on notice, is the industrial relations support to our newest Aussies and our migrant workforces, also acknowledging that there are some who aren't Australian citizens—PALM workers, temporary migrants and these things as well—that may wish to access the centre as well. But given the sheer volume of the number of migrants we have in New South Wales, I'm happy to take the specifics on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Will any of the funding, to your knowledge, be used to fund cover for emergency accommodation or financial relief for anyone leaving exploitative work situations?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That is an excellent question. Not that I'm aware of. That's not to say that there aren't other government services available to citizens to do those sorts of things. I know, particularly with PALM schemes and other things, there is increasing concern. I know representations have been made by anti-slavery commissioners in New South Wales—and the new Anti-Slavery Commissioner appointment now for the Commonwealth—where they're trying to really shine a light on this, and rightly so. That's not the focus of the Migrant Workers Centre. But if there is any elements of that tender spec which cover it, I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'd be interested to know, if it's not specifically in there, whether there's going to be any consideration of opening up pathways to ensure that any workers in crisis can actually be referred quite easily to those immediate support networks.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: You've nailed it. I think it's more around how they connect them to the referral agencies that are there and are able to assist.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do we know what languages might be prioritised for service delivery, and if there's any budget that's been allocated already for translation and interpretation?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. Absolutely a part of it is the capacity to be able to communicate to those affected migrants in language. That's always a challenge because, as I said before to Mr Ruddick, we speak over 283 different languages, so you don't want to produce material if it's not relevant to those languages. We'll probably prioritise the significant languages—your Mandarin, your Arabic, your Vietnamese—but then also have a focus on communities that we may identify as at risk: Have we got large cohorts of skilled migrants coming from Nepal? So then prioritising languages around need as well.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You talked a bit about the centre working as a kind of information hub to distribute a lot of information. Is it intended that the centre will cover issues such as employment law, workplace health and safety and immigration advice in that one service?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, that's probably why Unions NSW are well placed to be able to do all of those things, because of the contacts and the relationships they have. A part of their DNA is to shine light on issues where there are those workplace-related issues or exploitation or these sorts of things as well. In some respects they're a very logical partner and probably best placed to assist us in this process.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: How will the centre coordinate its work with related services such as SafeWork NSW, the NSW Anti-slavery Commissioner and the Fair Work Ombudsman?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm happy to take this on notice, but SafeWork NSW has regular—I believe quarterly—meetings around the objectives of the safe work Act and ensuring that the Migrant Workers Centre delivers on their objectives that are required to be able to access the funding that comes through that fund. With regards to IR, and also with the anti-slavery commission, the Anti-slavery Commissioner is aware of the establishment of the Migrant Workers Centre and is interested. I'll be guided by him, as a statutory entity, in terms of the appropriateness of how often he engages with those, and which cases, potentially, the Migrant Workers Centre and the anti-slavery commission choose to highlight or shine a light on. That's really at their discretion. But those links are established—so structured meetings through the arms of government in terms of entities such as SafeWork. In terms of anti-slavery commission, IR New South Wales and others, if there's a requirement to connect them, we will, but they've already got those pre-existing relationships, if I'm honest.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you very much for that. I'm going to throw another question to Ms Jones. We talked a little bit this morning about the concerns in regard to Bowdens mine. I wonder if you or anyone within the department have had any internal meetings about the impacts of the risks of lead contamination and reputational damage in regards to Mudgee's visitor economy, and looked at it from that perspective?

KAREN JONES: Yes, following on from your line of questioning this morning, we did follow up on those representations because, as I mentioned this morning, no-one's made any representations to myself. However, we do know that there were representations made to the former Minister, Minister Graham, and that Minister Graham's office did actually meet with the representatives that you're talking about. But, as I reiterated again this morning, I'm more than happy to then pick up those conversations and have those conversations with the impacted people.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Will you get a full handover, then, from Minister Graham's office around those issues as well?

KAREN JONES: Yes, I will. Yes, absolutely. I hope to go into that meeting well informed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Berry, understanding that you are unwell and want to get out of here as quickly as possible, we will try to direct our questions to you in the first instance and make it as quick as possible, and wish you a speedy recovery.

ADAM BERRY: Thank you, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We've all seen over recent weeks—and we've had some discussion about Allianz Stadium and the field there—fields across New South Wales that kids' sport has not been able to occur on. I'm wondering what the Office of Sport is doing to assist local sporting clubs in terms of playing throughout this period. Is there any assistance that's offered by the Office of Sport?

ADAM BERRY: Directly, no, but indirectly, yes. What I mean by that is that, ultimately, the vast majority of sporting fields that are used by community sport are owned by councils. Decisions on use or not are typically made by the council and/or the sporting associations. But, in a similar vein to the female-friendly facilities, a lot of grant projects that we have funded are drainage upgrades. Obviously the drainage discussions this morning highlight the importance of drainage in making fields return to use soon after inundations. The other thing: A number of grants that we would have funded would be for synthetic all-weather type of fields, knowing full well that they are not without their environmental matters to work through. But they're the ways that we really assist the sports sector and through those infrastructure grant projects that are really looking to improve existing facilities.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are there any guidelines that are given to local councils with respect to whether sport can be played on fields or not, or do you just leave that completely in the hands of councils in making those determinations?

ADAM BERRY: No, we leave that completely in the hand of councils. What I can say is that, as the operator of a number of sporting venues ourselves, we definitely understand that the people maintaining the asset, that have to invest in the asset, that have to keep it in a usable condition for the sport it's designed for, are usually the best ones to make the decision about whether or not it can be used in any kind of situation. We do deal with that ourselves with some of our facilities.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are there any initiatives—you talked before about some of the upgrade grants that the Office of Sport provide. Considering that Sydney has had record rainfalls over the last two years—I think I saw reports last night that maybe even since the start of records completely—what new initiatives do the Office of Sport have to improve drainage and all-weather usage of fields?

ADAM BERRY: There are no new programs, Mr Farlow. But what I will say is that, for a number of years, climate resilient proposals have been an assessment criterion in a number of our infrastructure grant programs. So it has often been something that will score a proposal up if there's something in there that's going to improve the resiliency of the field—typically drainage.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Also, I'm informed that New South Wales has lost both the 2025 and 2026 Australian Rowing Championships to Tasmania. I'm wondering what steps the Office of Sport and Destination NSW took to keep the Australian Rowing Championships in New South Wales?

ADAM BERRY: The 2025 championship was held in Tasmania. That's correct. We were in discussions with Rowing Australia in relation to holding the 2026 championships at the Sydney International Regatta Centre at Penrith. There was a commercial offer made. Ultimately that wasn't taken up by the sport itself, so that was a commercial decision they made.

KAREN JONES: Yes, I concur with that. We worked with the Office of Sport in terms of forming up that commercial offer.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And that wasn't taken up.

KAREN JONES: Correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was that because Tasmania offered more?

KAREN JONES: I can't comment on that. I don't know what Tasmania offered.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was the full amount of that money offered?

KAREN JONES: In terms of the ask from Rowing Australia?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes.

KAREN JONES: What I can say is, when people do put in a request for an event at a full ask, there is an assessment process that does occur, particularly at Destination NSW. We put it through an event assessment process where we do actually determine whether or not it presents as value for money. The Rowing Australia proposal would have gone through that process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Berry, has the Office of Sport discussed the closure of its eight regional offices that support regional sport?

ADAM BERRY: I'll take the opportunity just to correct a little bit of a misunderstanding there: None of our regional offices have in fact closed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have staff been cut from those offices?

ADAM BERRY: We still have staff operating at all of our regional locations that we had previously. I think the reference you're making is we did go through a reorganisation of our staff, and we changed some of our staffing structures. We did have some vacant roles that no longer exist. But we certainly—no staff members. I'll check the detail on that, but I don't believe that we that we actually removed any roles that were filled by people. I will need to confirm that on notice, though, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, thank you. Does this include that the office of the Tamworth Sports Dome is still operational?

ADAM BERRY: We still have staff members working at Tamworth, Dubbo, Orange, Jindabyne, Borambola and Far North Coast. We are in the process of changing our Newcastle and Hunter office from an office in Ourimbah to an office in Newcastle. That is one change that is happening, but that's actually unrelated to the organisational change. That was because there was uncertainty around our lease at Ourimbah.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the reorganisation as you outlined it, what are the costs of any redundancies?

ADAM BERRY: I would have to take that on notice. I don't have that to hand.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the learn to swim program, that falls under your purview as well, Mr Berry?

ADAM BERRY: Yes, it does.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to that, why are those living in Goulburn Mulwaree eligible under the learn to swim program but those in the neighbouring coastal Shoalhaven council are not?

ADAM BERRY: Rather than a question of eligibility, I'd say that the question is probably one about where there are providers who are able to provide the service. That new program is targeted to vulnerable communities, but it was very much a market-led process in terms of where providers were able to deliver. So, while we have deliverers across the State, there are places where the market was unable to provide a program, although we do have the majority of the State covered. Without knowing the particulars of Shoalhaven versus Goulburn Mulwaree—I'll have to look into that—I do know that we have most of the State covered, but not all of the State.

The Hon. WES FANG: If there was a provider that became available in the Shoalhaven, would that program then be expanded to that area?

ADAM BERRY: At the moment, Mr Fang, the program is fully committed with the current providers and funding.

The Hon. WES FANG: So that's no.

ADAM BERRY: We can only commit funds we have available to us. The funds were all fully committed.

The Hon. WES FANG: So there's no funding to expand the program is what you're saying.

ADAM BERRY: I'm saying the funds we have at the moment are fully committed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As I understand it, the website—similar to the program that we had with the defibrillators program—says that it actually is based on a socio-economic assessment. Is that incorrect?

ADAM BERRY: No, there was socio-economic assessment, but the learn to swim provider market also needed to be able to provide the services.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So there were two criteria, were there? One was on a socio-economic basis and the other was on a provider basis.

ADAM BERRY: There would have been—I don't have it in front of me—more criteria than that. But certainly that was part of the process. Let me get the full criteria.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Can you tell us—and I appreciate probably on notice—what areas were excluded on a socio-economic basis?

ADAM BERRY: I would have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, that is fine if you can do that. With respect to these providers as well, the criteria outlines that it's to target people born overseas and those living in the most disadvantaged areas of New South Wales. Why is an area like Bayside, for instance—which has got over 48 per cent of people born overseas—not included in that program?

ADAM BERRY: As I said to the previous questions, it was a case of providers being able to provide the service, and us also being able to fund the service.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So Bayside would have been excluded on a service provision basis rather than a socio-economic basis?

ADAM BERRY: I would have to take the details of location by location on notice, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It seems like the criteria on the website then is somewhat misleading. Was there a criterion in terms of non-English-speaking background that was applied to this program?

ADAM BERRY: I'll need to check the criteria. It's definitely communities of disadvantage because that's what the evidence and the data was telling us were groups most in need and most vulnerable when it came to drowning risk. Disadvantage can take a number of forms, obviously.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If you could perhaps take on notice what the criteria were for each area, that would be appreciated. Of course, we've ventilated this in estimates before—there's \$6.7 million that's been allocated in the budget to the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation. What improvements will be delivered as part of this investment?

ADAM BERRY: That funding is very specific to the reinstatement of the synthetic athletics track at the Sydney academy of sport. It's actually the only synthetic athletics track, effectively, north of the Parramatta River in Sydney. There's only a handful of tracks totally—six or seven synthetic athletics tracks. That one, the Committee might recall, has been out of service due to a combination of flood damage and material installation; I think we covered that in February. That \$6.7 million will reinstate the track in a more flood resilient manner.

That track, because of where it is—it's actually in a flood storage zone on Wakehurst Parkway—will always be inundated, but it will be designed and built to drain more quickly and be more resilient to flood damage. That's the scope of those works. It's a significant drainage upgrade as part of that project, as well as the return of the actual running surface itself and associated sound systems, timing systems and access points.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When do you expect the project to be completed?

ADAM BERRY: We're targeting the commencement of the summer athletic season next year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If the project exceeds the moneys allocated, what steps will the Office of Sport take to ensure the facility is once again available to the sporting community across New South Wales?

ADAM BERRY: We have a reasonable level of confidence in the cost estimating that we've done. Obviously, until you go to the market for a construction provider, that's never certain. But we feel like we have adequate funds available to deliver the project, so I don't think, Mr Farlow, that it will become necessary to chase further funds.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Berry, have you received any communication or correspondence about community sporting facilities in Wentworth Point at all?

ADAM BERRY: Wentworth Point specifically? I may have, but I don't recall receiving it, Mr Farlow. I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I might put further questions to you on notice with respect to Wentworth Point then.

The Hon. WES FANG: In relation to the Dubbo sports hub again, did the Office of Sport provide any advice to the New South Wales Government that it supported the PCYC's request to relocate the sports hub?

ADAM BERRY: We certainly provided advice to Government. We were the lesser funding partner in that program, Mr Fang; I believe \$9.6 million out of a \$50 million project.

The Hon. WES FANG: Nine point three, I believe.

ADAM BERRY: Ultimately, when the department—the now department of regional development—chose to terminate the funding agreement, there was no project for us to be a funder of anymore, so that was kind of the end of it.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that. However, was advice given to the Minister in relation to a position that the Office of Sport had around the PCYC's request to relocate?

ADAM BERRY: I'd have to take it on notice, Mr Fang. I was actually not involved in the grant program for the Office of Sport around the time that the termination was made, which was final quarter, I think—December last year.

The Hon. WES FANG: When you say you weren't involved, do you mean you weren't involved in relation to the relocation requests from PCYC?

ADAM BERRY: No, sorry. Prior to January I worked with the Office of Sport, but very much in the operation of our centres and venues. I had no role in the grant program. I'm just saying whatever conversations there were or briefings, I don't believe I would have been part of in my role at the time. I certainly can't recall.

The Hon. WES FANG: If you could take that on notice, I'd appreciate that. In relation to the \$9.3 million that was committed to the project that is now not going ahead because the Government's pulled the majority funding through Regional, what has happened to that allocation of \$9.3 million?

ADAM BERRY: The funds that were unspent—so PCYC went through an acquittal process. The project had existed, you are aware, for a number of years and there were funds expended. PCYC went through an acquittal process, and I do know that whatever was unspent was returned to the Office of Sport into our grant programs and reallocated across a number of programs. I don't think it went to anything in particular. Essentially, it came back to the organisation and rebalanced into other programs.

The Hon. WES FANG: In relation to that, are you able to tell me how much was acquitted and how much was returned?

ADAM BERRY: I could take that on notice, Mr Fang. I don't have it in front of me. It was the bulk of the \$9 million, but I don't remember the exact proportion. I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Let's assume it was, say, 50 per cent plus a bit—\$4½ million, 4.6 or thereabouts. In that instance, we've expended \$4.6 million on this project to this date to have it effectively shut down. What

are we doing now in relation to the other, say, \$4½ million that was returned? Has that money been reallocated to projects in the Dubbo region, or has it been allocated through just general grants programs throughout the State?

ADAM BERRY: I think it's been reallocated to a range of grant programs across the State, but I would need to take the details on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Effectively, the decision by Regional to pull that bulk of the funding has meant that Dubbo has missed out on, say, \$4½ million from the Office of Sport, plus they've already spent \$4½ or \$4-point million on a project that's gone nowhere because they've pulled that funding. Is that a fair assessment, do you think?

ADAM BERRY: I don't know the exact amounts. The amounts I would have to take on notice. I understand how you're phrasing it. I'd see it as the funds that were returned went to other sporting priorities across the State, and there's, I think it's been covered, there's no shortage of—

The Hon. WES FANG: But they went to other regions other than the region it was committed to originally.

ADAM BERRY: I'd have to take on notice exactly where it went. I think it'd be very difficult for us, actually, to track exactly where every dollar went, Mr Fang, but we'll do our best.

The Hon. WES FANG: I hope we do track every dollar. It is taxpayer money, and I hope we do it through all the New South Wales government. That's the very purpose of budget estimates. But I do appreciate your point. Just in relation to issues around sporting events, would that be something the Office of Sport is involved with or, say, Destination NSW?

ADAM BERRY: It all depends. A little more information?

The Hon. WES FANG: If I was going to talk about the Snowy Classic. Do you know what the Snowy Classic is?

ADAM BERRY: No, I don't, Mr Fang. Sorry.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's the Snowy Classic bike race. It was committed for three years. Are you aware of the project?

ADAM BERRY: I'm not, personally.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's all right. I can see a few smirks over on the table, so I might save that question for a little bit later. It's given you a little bit of heads-up as to what I might do. The one other question that I did have was in relation to ski fields that are in national parks. Does the Office of Sport have involvement in some of the more sporting aspects of how those ski fields are managed and maintained, or is that all left to National Parks?

ADAM BERRY: Not really. The relationship between the resort operators is with National Parks.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's a question that I'll be redirecting elsewhere. I have one more question. Is it true that Minister Moriarty yelled at the CFO for the Office of Sport over the phone in relation to the cancellation of the Dubbo sports hub?

ADAM BERRY: I don't believe that's the case, no. I understand what you're alluding to. I think there's an email between Office of Sport staff that talks about some robust discussions between our staff and the Department of Regional NSW.

The Hon. WES FANG: I think it was phrased differently than "robust discussions". I think it was phrased as "The Minister yelled at the CFO."

ADAM BERRY: Not our staff. Our staff would not have had any conversations with—

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not suggesting your staff yelled, I'm suggesting Minister Moriarty yelled.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. WES FANG: We know she's trying to take out Josh Black and Stephen Lawrence. I'm just wondering how your CFO is feeling about it as well.

The CHAIR: That concludes your time, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's a shame. I had more questions.

The CHAIR: Mr Berry, thank you for sticking it out a little bit longer for us. We wish you well. You are officially dismissed.

(Adam Berry withdrew.)

The CHAIR: Mr Gellibrand, I'll just go to you. How many of the current priority projects in the State infrastructure strategy are located in regional New South Wales? Do you want to take that on notice?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Yes, that would be best. The actual State infrastructure strategy doesn't so much list projects, it's more in State infrastructure plans where we've got a compendium of projects that are in the pipeline. I get the tenor of the question, so I'll take that on notice.

The CHAIR: You might need to take this on notice as well: What percentage of the total infrastructure spend over the next four years is going to be allocated to regional projects?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I will undertake to answer that as well. I may need some support from Treasury.

The CHAIR: How many regional projects recommended by Infrastructure NSW in the last five years have ended up not being funded?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I think that might relate to our Restart program that we administer.

The CHAIR: I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

TOM GELLIBRAND: I'll take it on notice, because we'll be able to get the data from there.

The CHAIR: Mr La Posta, just regarding regional towns and receiving migrant and refugee populations, how many multicultural liaison officers are stationed in regional New South Wales?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That is a question for the police. We had a meeting with the police on Friday last week to discuss this very issue. Obviously from our point of view we would love there to be more multicultural community liaison officers. The police were very receptive of that. Obviously they've got their budget constraints, so a question best for police but certainly know that we'll be advocating for more.

The CHAIR: What's the annual budget for regional settlement support services?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Settlement is a Commonwealth Government funded initiative.

The CHAIR: Have you mapped any service gaps in this area?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Is this my chance to tee off at the Commonwealth, respectively?

The CHAIR: If you'd like.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Because it's a Commonwealth Government responsibility, they determine where people who come through our humanitarian program are ultimately settled. My colleagues in the back of the room will tell you that we spend much time trying to work with our Commonwealth Government colleagues to give us as much possible lead time to make sure services such as housing, police, education, healthcare supports—all of those things that are State responsibilities—are in place. We've even established a better settlement planning committee that we, New South Wales, chair with other State jurisdictions to try and help get the Commonwealth to a point where we can do this better. There is some reform, some movement, better data sharing and those things, but certainly from a State point of view it is a key pillar to getting better at settlement planning by closing that loophole to help ensure the services are there. From a State Government point of view, we're doing everything we can, and we continue to advocate with the Commonwealth around their medium/long-term planning around settlement.

The CHAIR: Just going to multicultural festivals and funding, particularly in small country towns: Are there any specific funding programs that assist small country towns? I know we've got a lot of regional councils saying they're struggling to host those festivals due to skyrocketing insurance and compliance costs.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: There is three different grants. This gives me my chance to plug—the Wagga Wagga fusion festival.

The Hon. WES FANG: Hear, hear! Well done.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Are you coming this year, Mr Fang?

The CHAIR: Is he invited?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Of course he's invited, as a member of the local community. Everyone is invited.

The CHAIR: After last year?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm happy to stand corrected, but my understanding is it's the largest inland cultural diversity celebration in the country, with somewhere between 10,000 and 15,000 people. It's organised by Wagga Wagga City Council, and is something the New South Wales Government proudly supports. You get between 10,000 and 15,000 people that come—I think to the Botanical Gardens this year. That's a great example of those festivals. We've got the Griffith Multicultural Festival and others.

In terms of the specificity of your question, we have three grant rounds a year: two for community organisations called Stronger Together for festivals and events, where community organisations can apply, including regional community organisations, for grant funding between \$5,000 and \$20,000 to celebrate cultural diversity. Remembering that that's not about celebrating monocultural communities or festivals. It's about showing what your culture or your group does to other indifferent groups, and building barriers and a greater sense of community, cohesion and connection. Specifically to local councils, there's also the Stronger Together council grant program, which is open each year, which there is funding for. I don't have the exact date in terms of when that grant program opens, because I'd give it a plug, but that will open soon.

The CHAIR: Are any of these three funding streams you're talking about specific to regional areas, or it's just open to everybody to have a crack?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No, it's open to everyone. As an example, last year Wagga, Maitland—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Coffs.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Coffs—thank you, Kiersten—Queanbeyan, Wollondilly, Newcastle, Hilltops all received significant funding from that program. As you sort of said before around the statistics, getting a balance between regional and metro is really important.

The CHAIR: Ms Jones, what percentage of your budget this year is dedicated to I guess marketing lesser known regional destinations, if I can define it in that way?

KAREN JONES: We don't actually split up our marketing budget in that regard. Our marketing budget actually covers a whole range of different activities both within Sydney and across regional New South Wales.

The CHAIR: Do you split it in the case of metro and regional?

KAREN JONES: No, we do not. It's mostly based on the functions, as opposed to geographical locations.

The CHAIR: In the last budget, how many major events were funded in regional locations outside of Hunter, North Coast, Southern Highlands?

KAREN JONES: This is just for Destination NSW, I just want to make it clear that we fund a certain amount of events, but, of course, as mentioned already by Mr La Posta, there are a number of other events held in regional New South Wales that are funded by other government agencies.

The CHAIR: Sure, only speaking of Destination NSW, how many have you funded in those locations outside of the ones I listed?

KAREN JONES: Just doing a quick count now, there was about 15 funded in 2024-25. I will take it on notice, though, to confirm those figures.

The CHAIR: I'm happy for you to take it on notice, and detail as to where they were and amounts.

KAREN JONES: Yes, absolutely.

The CHAIR: Ms Mather, how many regional venues have you helped host major events in the last couple of years? Or last two years, let's say.

KERRIE MATHER: How many regional events?

The CHAIR: In terms of major events, I'm talking about.

KERRIE MATHER: At our regional venues?

The CHAIR: Yes.

KERRIE MATHER: This year has actually been quite a busy year for McDonald Jones Stadium, for example. We had the NRLW magic round. We've had the State of Origin women's. We had the Wallabies versus Fiji. We had the Wallaroos game. There has been quite a pipeline.

The CHAIR: McDonald Jones, that's Newcastle, isn't it? Let's say outside of Newcastle, Sydney, Wollongong.

KERRIE MATHER: Wollongong is—

The CHAIR: Outside of those three, where have we hosted major events?

KERRIE MATHER: We only have the four venues. We have Wollongong Entertainment Centre and WIN Stadium. We have the Newcastle Entertainment Centre and McDonald Jones Stadium.

The CHAIR: So you're not involved in trying to bring any of those events outside of those stadiums that you host—

KERRIE MATHER: Those four venues?

The CHAIR: —to country towns. You know how the NRL hosts events in country towns. You don't facilitate or help facilitate any of those?

KERRIE MATHER: No, we actually don't have a recurrent budget from the New South Wales Government. Our objective is to try to self-fund ourselves, so we can only do that within the portfolio that we have.

The CHAIR: I might throw back to Opposition questions for the moment.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Jones, I alluded to the Snowy Classic earlier. How did it go this year?

KAREN JONES: Since you've mentioned the Snowy Classic, I'm actually asking for some information on it now so I can answer your questions, because it is not an event that we've funded this year, to my knowledge.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you know why?

KAREN JONES: I'm going to get that information for you.

The Hon. WES FANG: I can possibly help you: It got cancelled. Do you know why it got cancelled?

KAREN JONES: I've just quickly had a read of an article that suggests that it was cancelled because of increasing operational costs.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, and do you know who those increasing operational costs were blamed on?

KAREN JONES: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you know how much it would have raised for the local economy had it gone ahead?

KAREN JONES: No. Again, I'm sorry, Mr Fang, I will take that on notice and I'll hopefully try to come back to you during this session.

The Hon. WES FANG: Moving forward, do you think that the Government may seek to liaise with other New South Wales government departments to avoid the cancellation of events like the Snowy Classic—which was impacted by one government department over another government department—and the consequent impacts on the economies of rural and regional communities?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order: I think the witness has explained that she is doing the best she can with the information she has at hand to answer the question, but she has indicated that she is receiving some more background detail. I think this line of questioning is a bit unfair in pressing her for specific answers, when she has indicated quite honestly and up-front that she doesn't have all the information at hand and is trying to actually get it. My suggestion is that the witness be invited to take it on notice. To press it further is a bit unreasonable when she has said what she has said.

The Hon. WES FANG: To the point of order: I've got to go to the Whips panel very shortly, which is why I'm trying to get to all the questions that I need to, so I'd appreciate it if they could take them on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Perhaps indicate at the beginning that you understand Ms Jones may need to take these questions on notice and then list them, and then she can simply say, "Thank you, I'll take those on notice," rather than a back and forth.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that, Deputy Chair. I know that, unlike the Minister, Ms Jones is generally across her brief, so I thought she might actually have the answers. I don't expect that from the Minister.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: At this point she has made it clear why she is only just getting across this.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, I was just getting a shot in at the Minister as well.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: If you wanted to indicate that you've got several questions to take on notice and you want to put them on the table now, you can do so. Ms Jones has indicated she'll do her best to make sure she tries to get as much information in this session as she can.

The Hon. WES FANG: I very much appreciate Ms Jones taking them on notice. Given that you've taken some of those parts on notice, I'll leave it there. Perhaps we'll see what happens when we get the replies back. Mr La Posta, how are you?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Very well, thanks, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's good. In relation to the questions that the Deputy Chair was asking you about the workers hub, which you indicated was a tender won by Unions NSW—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Correct.

The Hon. WES FANG: —could you provide to me how many organisations tendered?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I don't think I can, but I can outline the procurement process for you.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm actually more interested in understanding how many organisations were responsive to the tender and the decision-making around the tender.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Okay, I'll do my best. You tell me if there are any holes that you still need me to take on notice. The Migrant Workers Centre was identified by SafeWork NSW as a particularly vulnerable group to workplace health and safety risks. The Premier's Department, Multicultural NSW and SafeWork NSW collaborated in building the scope of services the Migrant Workers Centre will deliver. The procurement process undertaken involved, one, market analysis through a request for information to identify organisations that could deliver the service and progress to the second stage of the tender process; two, following the market analysis, a limited tender being distributed to eligible organisations; three, tender evaluation undertaken by an evaluation team; and, four, a successful tender identified. The successful organisation was identified and entered into a human services agreement with Multicultural NSW. All stages of the tender were published on buy NSW, so they're public. Following the procurement process, Unions NSW Property and Services Limited was identified as successful and engaged to establish the Migrant Workers Centre, delivering critical support to migrant workers in New South Wales.

The Hon. WES FANG: Excellent answer, Mr La Posta.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thank you, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: The hole that I've identified in that answer was this: During the limited tender process, how many organisations were involved in responding to that?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I am happy to take that on notice, noting that I am no expert in terms of our procurement and tender processes, so I don't know if I can actually share that information. But, if I can, I will take the question on notice and give you the whole list.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Tidball, we've finally got a question for you. Are you able to provide some further indication around that process? Was DCJ involved in that process?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: No, Mr Fang, DCJ was not. In terms of the statute under which Mr La Posta operates, it would fall within the purview of Multicultural NSW, subject to the New South Wales procurement guidelines, but I'm not familiar with this particular matter at all.

The Hon. WES FANG: So DCJ had no oversight or involvement in relation to that tender process?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: I am, out of an abundance of caution, going to double-check after giving my evidence now, but not to my knowledge.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, outside of Multicultural NSW, you indicated that the Premier's Department was involved in drawing up the scope. You said SafeWork NSW was involved. Can I assume that the department and office of the Minister for Industrial Relations was perhaps involved?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: To the secretary's point, let me take a step back, because there is a part that DCJ supports us with in terms of the procurement portals and so forth. The secretary is quite right: The onus and the responsibility sits with me and then, ultimately, I make a decision that not even the Minister can be involved in, because it's a procurement process, but I advise the Minister of the outcome of the procurement process. To the parties that had an interest in this on behalf of government, Multicultural NSW, SafeWork NSW and the Premier's

Department, in terms of their industrial relations team—they were the three that worked on the scope and the spec. In terms of the process, to ensure that we adhered to correct processes, we collaborated with colleagues through the Department of Communities and Justice to advise us, because they have a sizeable team that advises us on all of those things. And then it's all run through the standard tendering processes through buy NSW, which are public.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did the Minister for Industrial Relations, her office or her department have any involvement other than through SafeWork NSW?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Nothing to me.

The Hon. WES FANG: Given the time and given that I've got to get to the Whips panel very shortly, I'll put to you my concern around this. You said that the industrial relations team at the Premier's Department was involved in the collaboration and the forming of the tender process. I've asked a number of times about the number of organisations that tendered, because it's my suspicion that there was one organisation that would have tendered for that, which would have been Unions NSW. If the scope was so narrow that only one organisation, being Unions NSW, could actually tender for and receive this contract, that would be a concern for me, given that the Premier's office and the Premier's Department seem to be driving this aspect.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I understand where you're going.

The Hon. WES FANG: I want to understand with clarity how the Government formed the tender process, the scope and the decision-making around this tender.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, and just understanding the delineation between the Premier's Department, which are objective public servants—subject matter experts—and the Premier's office, which report to the Premier.

The Hon. WES FANG: I understand that, yes.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We didn't collaborate with the Premier's office on this.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, but the Premier's Department probably did.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We collaborated with the Premier's Department and the IR team, who are subject matter experts.

The Hon. WES FANG: But they may have done that.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not suggesting you have.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thank you for reinforcing your confidence in us. The point is, the reason we engage the IR team of the Premier's Department is because they've got expertise in IR. The reason we engage SafeWork is because they are part funding—if not majority funding—the Migrant Workers Centre to ensure that migrants have access to and the support of all of the initiatives the New South Wales Government funds through SafeWork. Then, in terms of why we played the leadership role, it's because of our cultural understanding of the cohorts that potentially are most at risk and what needed to be supported. Again, it's a process that is separated from government because it's a standard procurement process that comes through. Ultimately, I am the signatory to that procurement process, and then I send a brief to the Minister to advise what the outcome of that process is. The Minister doesn't even get to approve the process.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not suggesting that that's the case. What I'm suggesting is that where you've got such a narrow scope—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Understood.

The Hon. WES FANG: —that only one organisation is eligible to tender. The information you provided around the process, from the original recommendation from SafeWork all the way through to the actual signature on the tender, and the approval of the tender, would indicate to me that there was a very limited ability for other organisations to tender. I also note—and this is the difficult part—that Unions NSW is probably one of the biggest donors to the New South Wales Labor Party, which is the current party in government. You've now got a tender that has been released to Unions NSW. They were effectively the only organisation that could tender for it.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm hearing what you're saying. I'm reading between the lines here. If I can share the number—the specificity on that—I will share that with you with complete transparency. I'm just not sure of the nuances around the specs on this sort of tendering process. I don't want to divest information that may be commercial in confidence, or may potentially put other unsuccessful parties at risk if I share that information, because then they're perceived in a negative light.

The Hon. WES FANG: Whilst I understand that, I don't think knowing the number of organisations that tendered is in any way commercial in confidence or a matter of Cabinet in confidence. It would seem to me that it would be a reasonable question that could be pushed for an answer.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I don't have an issue providing that question on the basis that I can.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Tidball—

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Can I please collect my notes before you fire your question at me? It might be of assistance to me.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of course. Apologies. Mr Tidball, with respect to a range of operations within the Department of Communities and Justice, including the Child Protection Helpline, the Domestic Violence Line, the Link2Home homelessness line, the jury service inquiries, the New South Wales Victims Access Line and the LawAccess NSW line—do all of these services have interpreting or translation services attached to them?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: A number do. I would not want to give a generalised response, so if I can take that on notice, Mr Farlow?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes. Can you take on notice the number of telephone interpreting services that are available when calling DCJ helplines?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That would be helpful. Also, does the Department of Communities and Justice provide written information in languages other than English?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Can I—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Take that on notice as well?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: I believe it does, but you'll want some specificity around that, and I'm happy to provide it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When calling through to any of these access lines where there are interpreter services, how is that accessed or how is that made known to the public?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: For example, in relation to the Child Protection Helpline, there is comprehensive website information. There are also prompts when people come in and they're queued. It is my understanding that there are also appropriate prompts at that juncture. I'm happy again—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To take that on notice?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: —to elaborate. It's quite a detailed question and a very legitimate question. I'd like to provide you with the specifics.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are there any costs involved for those who are using interpreter services through any of the DCJ lines?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: No. Again, that is subject to me verifying that answer, but I believe that it is not the case.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I have some questions with respect to the Department of Communities and Justice *Multicultural Plan 2022-2025*, ensuring that people have equitable access to and experience with DCJ services. Of course that plan aligns with both the Multicultural NSW Act and the Multicultural Policies and Services Program. How is DCJ tracking progress on the goals that have been set out in that multicultural plan?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Can you repeat the years of the plan?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's 2022 to 2025.

MICHAEL TIDBALL: My belief is that all of the priorities and actions are on track, but I would appreciate the opportunity to verify the response I've just given.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the multicultural plan, considering we're at 2025 now, are there any views to refreshing that plan and creating a new plan within DCJ?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes, there are.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has consultation begun on that process at this stage?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: I do not believe so. I would need to take that on notice. I will make the point, though, that Mr La Posta and I have been in discussion to ensure that there is a really tightly knitted dovetailing between the work of the DCJ multicultural team and Multicultural NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I take it that that plan would cover at least 2026 to 2029.

MICHAEL TIDBALL: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When do you envisage that that plan will be made public?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: I would be responding to that on the fly. I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will multicultural communities have a direct role in shaping that next plan?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: They absolutely must.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How do you envisage that that will be done?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: DCJ is, can I say, good at consultation across law reform, across the shaping of our services. In terms of the way we develop our commission services, we are good at consultation. Our multicultural team will consult. They have well-developed networks. They will have a plan for consultation which can be publicly shared.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Tidball, are there any learnings that you have from the operations of the 2022-2025 plan that you would like to see rectified or improved in the upcoming plan?

MICHAEL TIDBALL: I think there is scope for us to really tightly coordinate with Multicultural NSW, not with a view to becoming more efficient in terms of with an eye to reducing cost, but doing more with what we have and absolutely ensuring that we are—with the events we run, with the services that we provide—feeding off the evidence of Multicultural NSW and developing services which are really tightly coordinated in lockstep with Multicultural NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr Tidball. That's the end of my questions for you. I think we're getting close to the break, anyway. We'll see if there are any further questions, otherwise I'd be happy for you to be excused.

The CHAIR: I've got no questions for Mr Tidball.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much for your time today.

(Michael Tidball withdrew.)

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, the Government has made a recent announcement about combating Islamophobia.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Can you confirm whether the million dollars to combat Islamophobia is a one-off grant or recurrent funding?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Two years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So \$500 million a year?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that already allocated within the 2025-26 budget, or is that an initiative that has been announced following the budget and wasn't envisaged at the time of the budget?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It doesn't impact on my operational costs in 2025-26.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Does it impact on the Premier's Department operational costs in 2025-26?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So all funding will be in 2026-27, I take it.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I take it that this is new money from somewhere.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's money that doesn't impact on our operational budget for this year. In the same way that I gave Mr Ruddick the answer to the question before about our operational budget, which is obviously public and all of those things, the allocation of budget we have for 2025-26 is \$74.4 million, and we don't need to absorb the costs for the Islamophobia register in 2025-26 or 2026-27.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Where is it coming from, then?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Can I take that on notice?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, you can—and any split with any departments that it might be coming from.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sure.

The CHAIR: Ms Hawyes, how many Crown land parcels in regional New South Wales are currently listed as inaccessible or restricted for any reason? It could be for weather events et cetera.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not really sure how to answer that because, obviously, the portfolio is made up of millions of parcels and we have reserves. The reasons we might close a reserve could be temporal reasons, such as safety or, for example, when we have floods we might close reserves for those reasons.

The CHAIR: Can we break it down in terms of temporary versus more long term?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can have a look. I can probably commit to getting you a list of reserves that we have consciously closed, but every single parcel I can't do—there are millions and millions of parcels of land across the State.

The CHAIR: I'm after a number rather than an exhaustive list identifying each single parcel.

MELANIE HAWYES: Sure. I can commit to that. It's for those sorts of reasons, though, such as there's a natural disaster or there's some safety-based reason why we might have to close a reserve.

The CHAIR: Are we up to date in terms of renewing any Crown land leases that are up for renewal? How is the department tracking in terms of processing those?

MELANIE HAWYES: Again, I'll probably have to take some of that on notice because, obviously, leases are temporal. They'll expire at particular stages and sometimes those negotiations can be quite protracted, so it is a dynamic part of the business. I don't know, off the top of my head, how many are currently up for renewal.

The CHAIR: And are in that process.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The CHAIR: I've had some representations of concerns around Reflections Holidays parks operating on Crown land and evicting long-term residents and then hiking-up site fees, particularly in the Clarence Valley and Tumut. Has your department had any representations around this matter in terms of concerns about long-term residents being evicted and them having to try to come back but the site fees have been hiked up?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'd probably have to take on notice any current representations. In the past there were a few. I forget exactly the area, but it was some changes they were making in terms of long-term stays—because they are holiday parks; they're designed for short stay. Not currently, but I'd have to take that on notice, or I'll try to get back to you after the break. You've quoted Tumut and Clarence, did you say?

The CHAIR: Yes, that's predominantly where the concerns have come to my office from.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll find out in the break if there are any issues there.

The CHAIR: Mr McLachlan, I have a couple of questions around Value NSW. I've heard constituents' concerns around regional land valuations jumping up and, obviously, that having an impact on their rates and the cost of living. I know that southern New South Wales has seen a \$9 billion increase in total valuation. Have you done any work to understand what's driving that increase? We have heard through my REZ inquiry that there are concerns around speculative development offers from renewable energy providers potentially artificially inflating land values. Has your department done any work in that space at all, in terms of the impact of speculative renewable energy developments on land values?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Is there a specific paper or something like that that we've undertaken? No. Our role, in terms of determining land values on behalf of the Valuer General, is done under the Valuation of Land Act, and the primary method of valuation relies on sales evidence. So if, in fact, prices have risen, then land valuations, obviously, logically rise, and that's our legislative remit. I'm happy to take on notice if there's a specific area that—but what I would say is every year we undertake valuations across every single parcel in New South

Wales as at 1 July, and then in about October or November we do regional and LGA-based media releases around how land values may have moved and the drivers for that movement. So if there's a specific area that you're interested in—

The CHAIR: Let's look at all the areas that are impacted by a REZ: Central West, New England, South West, Illawarra and Hunter. Are you able to, on notice, break down how those land values have changed since the announcement of REZs back in 2022?

STEWART McLACHLAN: We can certainly itemise the relevant changes in those areas annually from 2022 to now, yes.

The CHAIR: Could you, perhaps on notice, provide that?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Sure. I'm assuming you'll want it for different categories—so, residential, industrial, commercial and rural type properties.

The CHAIR: Yes—predominantly rural, because that's obviously where a lot of the REZ infrastructure is going. But yes, if you can, break it down.

STEWART McLACHLAN: Sure. I think it's just important to note as well, though, that—and this is a common misconception—just because a property's land value goes up, it does not mean that in fact your rates go up. If everyone's land value moves arguably the same, then unless council has sought a larger rate base, you pay the same amount of rates.

The CHAIR: But I guess if there's a significant proportion of land being bought up in an area to facilitate large-scale development, like we have in renewable energy, then there'd be a greater propensity for the overall land value to go up and, potentially, for council to consider rate rises.

STEWART McLACHLAN: Potentially, but there's another complicating factor: that council apportions different types of rating classes to the types of land. So they could arguably lower that proportion. That's within their remit under the relevant Act.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: While you're there, Mr McLachlan, why don't I ask you my questions and then I think you're off the hook—and, no, Ms Hurst doesn't have any questions for you today. Earlier the role of the Valuer General or Value NSW in the land audit was discussed. Can you outline to the Committee just how you undertake that work when an area is identified as part of a land audit?

STEWART McLACHLAN: In terms of the valuation?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes.

STEWART McLACHLAN: Our role is separate to the Valuer General's for that. That's a service we undertake on behalf of government in line with the Government Property Framework but also in line with the Treasurer's direction, which essentially stipulates that our agency is the determining agency of market value. Market value is pretty well-trodden through valuation standards as a "willing but not anxious buyer" and "a willing but not anxious seller". How do the valuations occur to determine that market value? There's a variety of methodologies that are utilised in line with standards. The most prevalent valuation methodology to determine the market value is direct comparison. Our valuers would receive a brief from Property and Development NSW that would outline the relevant parcel and details, and any other particulars that it may have uncovered.

We would then undertake our own relevant investigations, which would also include, on many occasions, inspection of the site and any other information we can obtain. We would then look for similar sites, if we were to use direct comparison, and then make the relevant adjustments back to that site. So, arguably, if you're selling a site that's residential zoned, you would look for similar types of sites that are residential zoned in that area and what they've sold for, and then you make adjustments back to the land, if that makes sense. That's the primary type of methodology used, but there are other methodologies that valuers use.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to those valuations that you may provide, when do you do that in the audit process? Is it after Homes NSW or Landcom have made a determination that they're interested in the site or is it in every site that might be put up?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Leon might be able to talk to the specifics of when the sites get categorised, but certainly they do the initial due diligence. They're the lead agency. They do the initial due diligence. They then flag sites for further assessment. Once they reach a certain threshold or category, that's when they have discussions about whether they may or may not be interested, and that's when we'd undertake the assessment. That is then provided to Homes NSW and Landcom as whether they're interested in purchasing at that value.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I don't know if this is for you or Mr Walker to answer. After evaluation has been provided, how many sites have been rejected by Homes NSW and then subsequently by Landcom?

LEON WALKER: I'd have to take that on notice. It wouldn't be a large number.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I wouldn't want you to draw an automatic nexus between the cost of the site and whether Homes NSW or Landcom accepts it. It will also be whether it's suitable for their requirements. In the circumstance of Homes NSW, it needs to be well located near public transport, for instance, so there are other variables.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That is, in a sense, why I'm trying to work out when evaluation is sought.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I understand. I just don't want you to draw the assumption.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's why I'm trying to work out at what stage of the process it is that this is offered to Homes NSW or Landcom. Are they then provided with how much the value of the site would be determined by government at that stage, or do they say, "This looks good because it's well located", close to public transport or the like, and then evaluation is sought after that determination is made, and then they have another chance to determine whether it's within their funding envelope or not?

LEON WALKER: There's quite a comprehensive review undertaken by Property and Development NSW. That provides enough information for a group called the Land Audit Working Group, which includes Landcom and Homes NSW, to make an assessment of whether the site is suitable for residential use. From that, as I think has been noted on previous occasions, Homes NSW gets the first run at it. If they determine that they have an interest in the site, they'll go through their due diligence process, and part of the subsequent work that is done is the work of Value NSW to assess the value of the site. They might express or determine that they're not interested in the site as a result of having done that work. It will then be offered to Landcom. They go through the same process and either quickly determine that it's not of interest to them or do their own due diligence. Coming out the back end of that process, if they wish to acquire the site, the acquisition price is determined by that valuation that Value NSW undertakes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To date, there have been quite a few sites that have actually sold on the private market. Have you done any assessment following those sales as to the closeness of your evaluations of those properties as a result of the auction or sale process?

LEON WALKER: I'll take it on notice to give you an exact answer, but my understanding is that they've all sold at or above valuation to this point.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think that might be all I have for you, Mr McLachlan. I might stick with the land audit, however, Mr Walker, for the remaining session. Firstly, I might ask if you've got that information to hand that you took on notice and promised to come back with this afternoon.

LEON WALKER: Yes, I do. This was in regard to the sites—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Considerations for Homes NSW sites.

LEON WALKER: Homes NSW have so far acquired three sites for an aggregate value of \$30.9 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Does that include the site at James Ruse Drive as well?

LEON WALKER: No—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What sites does that cover?

LEON WALKER: They are 20 Nelson Road, Box Hill; 451 and 633 of Alford's Point Road and Old Illawarra Road, Menai; and 72, 84 and 86 Menangle Road, Camden.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the site at James Ruse Drive, which was indicated to be transferred to Homes NSW, what's the status of that? Has that not been transferred yet? That's the 19.4-hectare site on the corners of Victoria Road, James Ruse Drive and Kissing Point Road at Rydalmere.

LEON WALKER: No. That site is a larger site owned by Property and Development NSW. Homes NSW didn't have interest in the entire site. It was only in a portion of the site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How will that be worked out in terms of the portion of the sites and any consideration paid by Homes NSW in that regard?

LEON WALKER: If they retain an interest in it at the time—we're still going through an expression of interest and RFT or request for tender process for that particular site. It's quite a significant site. It could deliver over 2,300 homes plus a school, plus open space, plus, plus, plus. Homes had previously expressed an interest in

only a small portion of the site, possibly for one or two buildings. But we'll have to assess that again at the point at which the RFT gets to the point at which we're looking to select a preferred tenderer and at the price that would be paid for that site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Carriageworks site—the clothing store sub-precinct—I believe that was one that was identified for Homes NSW as well?

LEON WALKER: We've not had a huge amount of direct involvement in that. We did identify that site through the land audit. But that question is probably best directed to the homes Minister, because Homes NSW are dealing directly with Transport for NSW.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: It's a Transport for NSW site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to consideration that is paid, those that you've outlined are only Property and Development NSW sites that—

LEON WALKER: No. It can be all sites. It's just for that particular one, it's working outside what I would call the normal process because of the direct relationship of the parties.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So it's a direct deal or something between Transport for NSW and—

LEON WALKER: Yes. It doesn't take much imagination. It's quite a complicated site because of where it's located, and it includes transport infrastructure.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What's the status of the transfer of sites at Woolloomooloo, Sydney Olympic Park and Hurstville that were announced to be transferred to Homes NSW?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Woolloomooloo is also a Transport for NSW site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And Sydney Olympic Park?

LEON WALKER: Sydney Olympic Park was completed. Sorry, I'll correct that. I'll take it on notice just to make sure I give you exactly the right information. The agreements have been exchanged. I don't think the transfer of ownership has occurred yet.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Which is why it's not part of that list of three sites that you outlined?

LEON WALKER: Yes. Sorry, what was the third one?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Hurstville.

LEON WALKER: Hurstville is another one with Transport for NSW where there's transport infrastructure that just needs to be separated from the land that will be developed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Box Hill has been transferred. Does that include Riverstone as well or not 4at this stage?

LEON WALKER: Sorry, just bear with me. You're jumping around a bit. Perhaps let me take it on notice. I'll come back to you after the break.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The site at Alford's Point Road, is that the Menai site, or is that another site that I might not have on my list?

LEON WALKER: Was it Alford's Point Road and Old Illawarra Road, Menai. Is that the one?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes. That is the Menai site?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: My notation was wrong in terms of Alford's Point. What's the status of Haberfield in terms of transfer to Homes NSW?

LEON WALKER: That's another one with the need for—it's located above the tunnels for City West Link.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: On Parramatta Road?

LEON WALKER: Yes. So there's work with Transport to resolve what can be developed over the tunnel infrastructure.

The CHAIR: That takes us to 3.30 p.m. We will now break until 3.45 p.m., unless there are any questions from the Government.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: No questions.

The CHAIR: We'll break for 15 minutes.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Do you need everyone after the break?

The CHAIR: I'll discuss with my colleague and we'll let you know.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Thank you. We appreciate that, Chair.

(Stewart McLachlan and Kerrie Mather withdrew.)

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back after that short break. Before I go to the Opposition, I invite Ms Hawyes to provide some feedback on some of the questions that were taken on notice.

MELANIE HAWYES: Thanks, Chair. I just want to clarify a couple of the answers and some that I had to take on notice earlier. Chair, you raised concerns about residents in caravan parks in Clarence Valley and Tumut. The advice I have is that the Clarence Valley caravan park is a council operated Crown land reserve, not a Reflections reserve. Similarly, Reflections does manage a holiday park in Tumut, but that park doesn't have long-term or permanent residents.

We have a few other matters we want to clarify, including the cemeteries question from this morning. I'll do a few first and then throw to David to elaborate on the pet burial provisions that Emma Hurst was discussing. Ms Hurst asked me about Racing NSW developing a conflict of interest policy. I am advised that the department has reviewed a draft, so that is work in progress, and we're continuing to work with Racing to finalise that document. Mr Fang raised questions about whether Crown Lands can approve activities, funding and works on land which is the subject of a land claim. We can and we do. We do consult with the relevant Aboriginal land councils and other stakeholders, including local government to inform those decisions. I just want to add on the record that there is not history of a project being deemed ineligible or not funded because of an ALC. I hope that clarifies those points. David will speak in more detail about the pet burial amendments of the Act.

DAVID RAPER: This is in response to a question from Ms Hurst this morning. The changes that went through the Parliament that commence next month, on 1 September, clarify the law that it's now permissible to bury pets in interment sites, but it does not require that cemetery operators do that. Operators have a discretion about how to respond to that law. The good news is many are now developing a policy on approach in terms of what they're going to do. Of course, as the cemeteries regulator we do enforce the Cemeteries and Crematoria Act, but don't force operators and won't force operators to accept pet burials because it is at their discretion. What we are doing is assisting them to work through this new policy with advice about how it works, connecting operators so that they can network and develop what their approach is going to be. For the particular case that Ms Hurst talked about that was about which representations had been made to the Minister, that was Tamworth. We have been in contact with Tamworth, who have not made a new decision to prevent pet burials. That was their existing policy and what they're in fact doing now is going through a process of how they respond to this new law in consultation with their community, and their policy is under review.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. I might continue on with the land audit, Mr Walker. I have some questions on that. The Minister quoted that 14,000 homes were being delivered as part of the land audit. Is that correct?

LEON WALKER: I think I made that comment, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You made that comment at the time. I'm just trying to work out the figures. Is that with respect to land that hasn't been announced yet?

LEON WALKER: Let me just go to the schedule.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: While you're looking for it, I'll caveat on the point that this morning the media were reporting 9,000 homes as a spokesman for the Minister, and in the budget it was indicated that the sites had the potential to deliver more than 8,200 locatable homes. I'm just looking at what has happened and where have these nearly 6,000 homes come from since the budget?

LEON WALKER: I think I did misstate this morning. The number is that 9,000 figure that has been announced.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With that being said, the budget had 8,200 homes, which is what was indicated in the budget release on 24 June. To my knowledge, there haven't been any further announcements from the budget of sites. Where have those 800 homes come from then?

LEON WALKER: The numbers do get adjusted progressively. For example, there was a number of additional dwellings able to be identified on the Landcom site at Camperdown. We conduct the initial assessment based on the prevailing planning controls, but then as approvals come through or there's rezoning, we update our numbers so it's sort of a live tally. Where sites have been upzoned or there's been approvals come through, we update the numbers to account for that.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That's why I stressed that these are indicative figures.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I understand. We have a large variance in what some of these indicative figures appear to be. With respect to that point in terms of approvals, have there been any approvals on any of the sites to date?

LEON WALKER: I'd have to take that on notice. The Camperdown site is a good example where there has been an increase in the numbers, but I can take it on notice.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That's been rezoned, but to my knowledge the development applications have not yet been submitted. The EIS, we'll wait for that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have there been any development applications lodged on these sites as of today?

LEON WALKER: I'd have to take that on notice. A number of the smaller sites wouldn't require it because they'd be within existing zoning. For some of the larger sites, yes, that will be subject to subsequent approvals.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect, these questions, I anticipate, you might take on notice as well, or I might just put them on notice to be fair to you in terms of the position of many of these sites, but there is one that I will go to. There are a number of sites that have already been sold at auction. That's correct?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the total value of sales at auction so far as a result of the land audit?

LEON WALKER: Private sales, \$42 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to those sales as well, what's been the commission paid to real estate agents as a result of the marketing campaigns and any commission payable.

LEON WALKER: I'd have to take that on notice. We run it by a competitive process, procure the agents and it would vary so I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And all of that money is into consolidated revenue, is it?

LEON WALKER: It's as per the answer that was provided this morning. The money initially goes back to the land-owning agency. If they have approvals in their capital program, they can spend it; otherwise, it would go back to consolidated fund.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of the 22 sites that have been included in the expression of interest campaign, how many have been matched to a preferred proponent at this stage?

LEON WALKER: I'll have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We might come back to some of those on notice. I suspect that might be the best use of our time. Ms Hawyes, I might turn to you now with respect to the Swansea seawall, if you're familiar with this at all. Has your agency provided advice to the Government recommending funding for the Swansea seawall repairs?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think I'll have to take that one on notice. I'm not completely across the status of that one in terms of funding status. I'll try and find out while we're still in session, though.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much. We might return to that then, and if you have some information, I might take you to more questions on the Swansea seawall. I might ask questions to Cemeteries and Crematoria, if possible. Mr Raper, the Minister at one stage seemed to rule out doing anything on the Carnarvon Golf Club site until after the lease expired, but then equivocated somewhat on that. With respect to

what you are actually exhibiting at the moment, is it envisaging starting on that site before 2035? Or is it a view to starting after 2035?

DAVID RAPER: I think questions about this process might be better for Ms Hawyes.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, David's here in the capacity of the regulator.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, my apologies.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm happy to take that question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As that is the case, I don't have anything further for Mr Raper, if he wants to be excused.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr Raper. You're free to go.

(David Raper withdrew.)

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Hawyes, back to you.

MELANIE HAWYES: MMP, as we discussed this morning, has done its own assessment of potentially suitable sites, taking on board and looking at different criteria, including the physical characteristics of the site as well as travel distances for people in the metropolitan areas. They are consulting on that at the moment. There hasn't been a decision made, so it's a bit of a moot point to talk about what will happen with the lease because it's in consultation at the moment. It's not at the point where you can go any further than seeing how the consultation will play out.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But I would anticipate, with respect, that there might be people who potentially may not have an aversion to it if it occurred in 2035 but might have some concerns if it was to happen next year, for instance. Are there any markers being given in terms of when a cemetery will be operational on the site as part of that consultation?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't say. Obviously we're at a state where MMP is looking to find a suitable site for new supply. From there you need to go through a process of planning and assessment and planning approval. If this site does eventually proceed, there would obviously be discussions about the timing of that, but we're not at that point. We're at a point of consultation on a potential site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has the Government obtained any legal advice with respect to its powers to reclaim the site before the lease expires?

MELANIE HAWYES: Certainly not through me. If there was to be any discussions around the potential lease, it would primarily be through MMP with the leaseholder, but that is all hypothetical at this point. We're at a stage of consultation on a potential site that has been chosen because it meets the essential requirements for a new memorial park.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is the Metropolitan Memorial Parks board considering any sites on the urban fringe, like Catholic Cemeteries and Crematoria have done with Varroville?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think I'll take that on notice; it's a matter for them. My understanding is that they have done assessments of multiple sites, including how to do more with the sites they already operate. They're doing the most they can to respond to the exhaustion projections that they're facing. They have multiple things in play at the same time to try to respond to that, including getting more out of the cemeteries they already operate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Walker, on the Pre-sale Finance Guarantee, one of the articles that was published following the budget—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I stop you, Mr Farlow? That's a question for Minister Scully's budget estimates.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I wanted to clarify that, in a sense, because one of the articles said that Property and Development NSW will assess developers and projects for their credibility, capability and capacity before agreeing to act as a guarantor on up to 50 per cent of dwellings in each project. If approved, developers start building within six months. Does Property and Development NSW have that role?

LEON WALKER: Property and Development NSW does have a role, but the department is actually the administrator of the program under Minister Scully's remit.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So what is the role of Property and Development NSW?

LEON WALKER: I'd describe it as basically an in-title-only owner of sites.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Gellibrand, the fish markets is a site that you and I both love and will love, no doubt, in the new fish market configuration. What are we anticipating with respect to its scheduled opening date? Are we going to see the new fish markets operational before Christmas Eve this year?

TOM GELLIBRAND: Thank you for the question. The precursor to the beginning of operations is the completion of the building, which we're responsible for. We're confident that we'll have that building finished in the coming months. Subsequent to the building completion—actually, it's happening now—is the tenants are progressively fitting out their retail spaces. Then when we reach practical completion, there's an obligation on the fish markets to commence operations, commence retailing within a four-week period after that. A very long response, perhaps, but we're confident that trading will happen well prior to Christmas. We're also confident and working closely with Sydney Fish Market, their tenants and the organisation itself to make sure that they're familiar with the building and its operations so that when the tenancies are fitted out, they are familiar with the building, they're confident that they can operate successfully and the building will be a huge success.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Some concern has been expressed with respect to the power supply in the new fish markets being insufficient to support the operations of the tenants. Would you like to address those concerns and whether they're warranted?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I was about to say, if I start backwards and address the issue of whether or not it's warranted. I shouldn't do that because I think people are entitled to express their concerns about anything, especially things delivered by government. Sydney Fish Market were very effective in doing that. They made their concerns known to many people. We worked closely with the fish markets to talk to them about the assumptions we'd made in terms of all the plant and equipment that were going to be in the building. Each electrical piece of equipment has a draw on power, and we calculate all those things. We make provision for peak loads, and also a redundancy and an allowance for growth. We shared all that information with Sydney Fish Market.

They still had concerns. Under the agreement for lease that we have with them, there's an ability for them to raise a formal dispute, which they did, along with a couple of other matters as well. We had independent peer reviewers. We hired them, but they were independent. Collectively, between ourselves and the fish markets, we agreed to the experts; it wasn't done unilaterally. Those experts did an assessment, again finding that the power we were supplying was adequate for the foreseeable operations, in terms of plant and equipment, and a growth. The fish markets were still concerned about that, so it did proceed to dispute. There was an expert determination. That determination also found that we had complied with our obligations in terms of power.

Since that time, it's gone quiet. What we've done, and I think prudently, is to look not just at the existing operations but look at potential pathways for increasing power if, at some time in the future, it was required. There is a spatial allocation outside of the building for an additional substation, which would increase the power. We've also made provision within the building itself to enable conduits to take, effectively, cables from a power source back into the building and into the meter box, for want of a better expression. So we have futureproofed it in terms of additional power. We're still not really in a position where we can foresee that that's required, but we have made that prudent adjustment, and there's a pathway for increasing the supply of power, if required, in the future. We're still of the view that it's not required, but in the event—perhaps they might change their operations. They might actually want to introduce new activities which could increase the power over and above what they currently do. If they were to do that, we think there's a pathway for accommodating that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If that were to occur, at whose cost would that be? Would that be at the cost of the fish markets or the taxpayers?

TOM GELLIBRAND: I think that would have to be a negotiated outcome. I'll take that on notice because, when we've completed the building, we anticipate handing it over to Place Management NSW to operate. They operate similar buildings in Darling Harbour and The Rocks and places like that, so we see them as being the natural government agency to run the facility. I'll confer with them and take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With the finalisation of the leaseholders at the Sydney Fish markets, were there any financial incentives paid to secure the tenant signings?

TOM GELLIBRAND: The new fish market has essentially double the retail area over the existing one. A good way of looking at the retail tenancies is what we refer to—and it's not anything to do with their age—as the grandfather tenants: the tenants that are in the existing facility. Then we've got an equivalent area of the building that will be leased out to new tenants, and they're often referred to as the additional retail areas. When we were going through—and it was led by Place Management NSW—the process for identifying new tenants for the additional retail areas, lease incentives were definitely looked at.

Quite often in the past, those incentives generally relate to rent relief: They come in and they don't pay rent for a year and blah, blah, blah. One of the things—and this is definitely outside my area of expertise—that we were briefed on was that, post-COVID, new retailers weren't interested in rate relief. They actually wanted to have direct contributions for fit-out costs: "If my kitchen costs \$1,000, could I please have my kitchen paid for and I'll pay full freight from day one?" The basis for that was that, during COVID—as we all know—unfortunately a lot of businesses became insolvent because they couldn't meet the terms of their financing for many of their operations. The tenants for the new Sydney Fish Markets were also in that position. They wanted to offset their obligations to banks to lend money to fit out the premises.

Yes, indeed, there were some incentives offered to those additional retail areas in terms of fit-out, but not rent relief. Then, in terms of grandfathered tenants, the original agreement for lease that was entered into with Sydney Fish Markets made provision for a contribution from the State towards fit-out. That was for the seafood school—we're talking things like gas burners, air conditioning, benchtops, appliances and what have you—as well as the grandfather tenants themselves. That contribution is bound into the agreement for lease, which—I don't want to sound difficult—is a commercial-in-confidence document, so I can't divulge the specifics of it. But we reached an agreement for a contribution from the State towards fit-out for the grandfather tenants.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, I think we briefly discussed the combating Islamophobia announcement. Then we may have run out of time, but I have more questions to ask you. In terms of the \$1 million funding, how much will be going specifically to the Report Islamophobia Support Line?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: In terms of the breakdown, the Islamophobia funding is going to one organisation, which is the Australian National Imams Council. My team and members of the Social Cohesion Unit of the Premier's Department are working through with the Australian National Imams Council how we would like to see the specificity of the grant actually structured—in terms of reporting, in terms of awareness building campaigns, and in terms of collaboration with different government departments—to make sure that it's successful. Obviously an element of this is about providing support to victims of Islamophobia, but it's also about working with members of our non-Muslim community about building an awareness and understanding of the hurt and damage that's affiliated with Islamophobia. We're working through all of the specifics on that now. But the entire agreement is with the Australian National Imams Council.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So it'll be all to the ANIC.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So they will be running the Report Islamophobia Support Line, will they?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: They will, which is different from the Islamophobia Register. The Islamophobia Register is one of the partners through our COMPACT program now. In terms of the spike and increase that's being reported about Islamophobia—I think we're at 580 per cent now in terms of its increase—that will continue to operate. We will use the findings and the data from that to inform—not so much the support hotline but in terms of informing the New South Wales Government's approach with the Australian National Imams Council to tackle it and address the symptoms of it, in a sense.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What case management and support services will the Australian National Imams Council be operating then?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'll need to take that on notice. I don't know the answer to that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Also in that respect, what training and frontline services will they be providing?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's an element of it. Let me take that on notice and come back to you with the specifics.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you have any visibility on the advocacy and awareness campaigns that will be provided as well by the ANIC?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to this, do you know how many staff they will be employing to operate those programs?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I do not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So none of these are part of the funding agreement?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: They may be. I'm not intimately familiar with the funding agreement. Obviously I endorsed the program in its totality and briefed the Minister up on it but, in terms of the specifics, I'll need to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of KPIs, have these been set for this initiative at all?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Given the Scanlon Foundation's research showing negative attitudes towards Muslims have worsened since 2024, do you believe that this initiative is a reactive initiative rather than a long-term policy solution?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's a really good question. I thought you were actually going to ask me about declining levels of social cohesion and the Scanlon Foundation's finding. With someone whom you know very well in Will Nemesh, and Sarah Swan and also Dylan Parker—the three mayors of the eastern suburbs councils—they ran a fantastic social cohesion summit with bipartisan support right across local, State and Federal government. The evidence is there in terms of the reporting. I'm working closely with my team. We have a systemic change team within Multicultural NSW that's looking at racism more broadly and reported incidents of racism. We've partnered with a university to look into this. Obviously it's an issue. It's something that is felt by communities significantly.

In terms of the specifics of your question, I just don't know. I think it would largely depend on—obviously, geopolitical issues are a key driver of people's sentiment and emotions right now, as are protests domestically. I commend the New South Wales Government for responding as it did during the antisemitism crisis that we endured over the summer period, for responding and providing support to communities that right now are disproportionately affected. But in terms of the work of my agency and my team, we want to get more information and more insights around hate and racism more broadly, and be thinking about the Government's approach to tackling those systemic issues.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you received calls from the Hindu community for similar initiatives with respect to Hindu-phobia?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I haven't received calls from the Hindu community, but I am aware that they have specific concerns about Hindu-phobia.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the Government seeking to do to address the concerns about Hindu-phobia?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's the point that I made before: All of these issues—antisemitism is the oldest form of hate. Islamophobia is largely something that is based off the behaviours around prejudice towards different faith communities. In my view, all of this comes back to a lack of education, a lack of understanding and, at times, a lack of awareness in terms of the ramifications that these things have as a massive handbrake for our society. What I want my team to do, and working with colleagues right across the Government, is to understand the issues that are impacting communities specific to hate and racism, and then how we start to address those issues more holistically across the board. My team was supposed to meet with the Race Discrimination Commissioner the other day. That's been postponed, but we're obviously working inclusively with them. We're looking at Victorians and other jurisdictions, and we'll also look to the direction of the new Commonwealth Government's Multicultural Unit to collaborate with them.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, does Multicultural NSW currently possess sufficient staff to meet the demands of the agency's program and initiatives?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's a bit of a loaded question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: This is your chance to do an audition for more staff, Mr La Posta.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I don't mean to be a bit cheeky about this but, really, we're not going to solve these systemic issues as an agency. It's incumbent upon everyone across the Government and across society to tackle these systemic issues. Just like your questions to Secretary Tidball before, if the Department of Communities and Justice continually improves their part of the equation, the Department of Planning continually improves their part of the equation around intergenerational households and all of the other planning levers that need to be considered, if the departments of community, sport and so forth are thinking about how to create more inclusive sporting environments, all of those things, we don't need more staff.

We don't need more staff. What we need to do is make sure that the voices of those lived experiences—whether they be refugee cohorts, whether they be vulnerable cohorts, whether they be people that have overtaken some of these barriers—exist right across the board in government and right to the most senior leadership levels

of government. The solution, some would perceive, is give Multicultural NSW staff to do that more. What we're thinking about is how to systemically influence the behaviours of government more holistically, and also ensure that the voices of community, as you all advocate for, get better at connecting with government at the right times to influence public policy. The short answer is our levels of staffing at the moment are sufficient, but it's really incumbent upon all of us to work together to promote social cohesion and community harmony.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is that level of staffing at present?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Good question. Give me one second.

MELANIE HAWYES: While Mr La Posta is looking at that, just to let you know, I've got some information on the seawall you were interested in, whenever you're ready.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. How about we let Mr La Posta find that and I'll return to him.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, thanks.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the seawall?

MELANIE HAWYES: Belmont Street at Swansea is a council managed road corridor with public roads, footpaths, paved areas, foreshore access, landscaping et cetera, and an adjoining seawall, which is there to protect those council managed assets. There's a coastal management program for Lake Macquarie for which council is the lead, which contemplates upgrades to coastal protection works. From our perspective, council is the appropriate authority to manage any coastal protection works at that site. I do note it's not within my remit, but council would be eligible to apply for funds through the Government's Coastal and Estuary Grants Program to assist with any erosion upgrades or mitigation strategy and works. But to answer your question, it's a council managed coastal protection asset.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: From your perspective, you don't see any role for Crown lands at all in this?

MELANIE HAWYES: If there's to be works done on Crown lands, we would be involved in that. Similarly, my understanding is that council has a licence for a jetty and a wet area in that area too. If you want to get into some more detail, I'd probably need to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If you can, that would be good. At the moment the Government doesn't have any intention of funding or contributing?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't answer that. I just can say that there is a funding—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If you could take that on notice in terms of whether the Government has any intention to fund any of the repair works for the seawall.

MELANIE HAWYES: That would be a question for the environment Minister with responsibility for the coastal program. But I do know that that funding program exists. We can take that on notice and get that information for you via our colleagues.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, 118 full time staff and roughly about 1,000 casual interpreters and translators¹.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's the same staffing allocation you reported in 2023-24. Is that correct?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, pretty similar.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You don't have any changes to staffing. You haven't had any increases or reductions in staffing since the 2023-24 financial year?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Not really.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many band 1 directors are currently employed?

¹ In [correspondence](#) to the committee dated 16 September 2025, Mr Joseph La Posta, CEO, Multicultural NSW, provided clarifications to his evidence.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Five.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You did have a staff increase from 2022-23 to 2023-24 of 13 positions. Is that correct?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What were those roles?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: To do with the whole-of-government translation service. Some of the funding that your government gave us during COVID we were able to carry forward as lessons learnt off the back of the COVID pandemic to make sure that government didn't make the same—sorry, how can I say that a bit better? The Government took lessons away from the pandemic and realised that engaging with, and communicating effectively with, culturally and linguistically diverse communities, particularly linguistically diverse communities, was a priority going forward. That enabled us to cement scholarship programs and other things that, again, the previous government started but enabled us to carry them forward and also enabled us to put more staff in our language services business to be able to support the growing demand from departments like Communities and Justice, NSW Courts and Tribunals, NSW Police Force, Service NSW, Personal Injury Commission—these sorts of groups that are now coming back to us and using our service.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, in the last estimates we asked the Minister—with respect to the Safe Places for Faith Communities Grants—whether he'd consider including security guards as an eligible item for future grant rounds. He said at the time, and I quote, "It's something we could consider." Is that something that has been considered?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: There's no changes that have been made to security guards?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: There's no changes to the grant guidelines.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When will the next round of these grants open?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, that's an excellent question. I always love plugging my grant programs. We have one round remaining of \$5 million. The first grant round of \$5 million went to 103 different religious organisations. I think you were chasing some of the numbers last time, so hopefully this helps. The second grant round of funding was \$5 million to 126 religious organisations, and we have one grant round remaining for \$5 million.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So \$10 million has been provided to organisations?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, \$10 million to date, \$5 million to come.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As part of that next round—I note you don't have an indication of when that will open—will the eligibility requirements be changed with respect to security personnel and guards?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: My recommendation preference is no.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Why is that?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I knew you were going to ask me this.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You should have an answer prepared.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'll answer the first part of your earlier question. The grants will open towards the end of this year. I think there's an element that needs to be carefully considered around the Government giving grant money for security guards that, in some instances, are armed; and then the consequences of that and the liability that rests with that. Because if the Government is directly funding these security guards, then there is an argument, potentially, to be made that it should have a responsibility of how these guards behave, and if there was any adverse issues responsible from those guards.

To be honest, this grant is incredibly popular. It cuts through all different community organisations. It reaches the Anglican community at the back of Bourke and helping them install one or two CCTV cameras, to supporting some of our really high-profile security locations and religiously significance sites and supporting them. I think that the time and effort and energy that's gone into the grant guidelines is pretty good. It can always be different or better, and if the decision of government was to change the grant guidelines, then so be it; we will administer it accordingly. But I just think these sorts of programs need to be really carefully thought through.

I'm really proud of the work of my community resilience team for how they've structured this up and also their work with Public Works, and I'll give them a shout-out, and New South Wales police, and I'll give them a

shout-out, because it's brought all the different departments together—Planning and others—to build these guidelines so they're as holistically inclusive as possible, and also de-risk Government against any potential adverse consequences.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Faith Affairs Council, when do the terms expire for each of the current members of the Faith Affairs Council?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The Minister just renewed them. Their initial terms have expired and he has just reappointed them.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: All of them?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So there were no expressions of interest that were taken for anyone else to be included?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Let me get the specifics on my comment for you. No, not this time. The first time there was. This time he was comfortable with the performance of this group. He obviously sought their interest in being reappointed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And they all sought to be reappointed.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. Everyone from Dr Ali from the Shia community to Reverend Topp, to Bill Crews. I give a shout-out to Reverend Crews and the fantastic work he's doing. People that have been under incredible stress in the past 12 months—people like David Ossip, Imam Shadi and others—are all reappointed. I'd like to thank all of them, because they do that voluntarily in their time. There is Surinder Jain and others; obviously the chair, Dr Michael Stead—they do an amazing job. They generously give us their time and they obviously tackle complex issues that impact on faith communities, but they've also got an eye towards how they can help support Government with housing issues, food security issues and all of these other things as well. I do want to commend and thank them for their work.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We thank them as well. With respect to the multicultural community liaison officers currently employed by the NSW Police Force, do you have any oversight over those roles?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Ms Hurst asked me that question earlier. We've made representations.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: There we are. Sorry. It was Mr Banasiak.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We've met with senior members of the police.

The CHAIR: I'm insulted that you called me Ms Hurst.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Was it you that asked?

The CHAIR: It was.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Well, you both ask incredibly interesting and intelligent questions, so I apologise that I conflated the two of you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Very similar. Mr La Posta, with respect to the Language+ app for the NSW Police Force, do you know how many police devices now use the Language+ application?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, this is uncanny; it's almost as if you were watching what I was doing on Friday, because we met with the police—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I wasn't, I can assure you of that.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's a little bit alarming. It's like when you say something and then suddenly all your social media feed pushes you sheds in the garden or new fishing rods, perhaps, or whatever it is. In this instance, yes, we were talking with the police the other day about exactly that. We asked them for some statistics in terms of their download numbers across the Language+ app. For those that don't know, we've built this really cool app. It's available for the police and it goes on their MobiPOL device. It effectively now allows them—it's in the thousands of commonly used phrases in different languages, such as, "Can you count to 10 in the breath-testing device," to "Show us what's in your bucket," if you're the water police, to "I'm wearing a body camera," to "I need to detain you"—all of these different things. It's really cool.

If, for whatever reason, that doesn't work, which is why Mr Farlow is asking, it then connects you directly to an interpreter. It means that they no longer have to pull someone off the side of the M4 who only speaks Mandarin and take them back to the police station to talk to them. It now allows them to have a three-way

conversation with an interpreter on the side of the road, issue their fine and their notice, explain to the person what they need, then everyone gets on with their day. It was incredibly popular first round that it was pushed to the police. We're asking and working with the senior leadership again, the executive leadership of the police, to now do another round and another round of those communications. Our hope is that every police officer downloads the app on their MobiPOL.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Who developed the app?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Multicultural NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But yourselves, or through a third party?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We got in a third-party provider that helped. We are not app experts.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, I suspected not. Who was that third-party provider?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Can I take that on notice?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You can take that on notice. What was the cost of the app's development?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was that borne by Multicultural NSW or by the police?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It was actually part of our—I should check this and take this on notice, but I'm 99 per cent sure it was part of the Digital Restart Fund that allowed us to develop that app.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Fantastic. Are the police paying for that app to Multicultural NSW?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No, but if their work comes to us now, which is why I liked your questions before to Mr Tidball—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The translation services.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Exactly. That allows us to then bring the interpreting in-house and be able to pay government casual staff to be able to undertake that work.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will you be offering the app to other frontline agencies apart from the police?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. I'm not going to announce that today, but yes. We think it's of value to other parts that are tackling natural disasters, tackling emergencies and those sorts of things.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think we asked the questions with respect to the Migrant Workers Centre and Unions NSW involvement. How much did the 21-24 evaluation of COMPACT by Urbis cost Multicultural NSW?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Give me one second. Do you want to come back to me and I will see if I can get you a direct answer on that from my team?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Sure. The NSW Settlement Advisory Council was announced on 20 June 2025. How was the chair selected and how will the members be selected?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We're still going through that at the moment. The chair will be Professor Peter Shergold, AC, who is the New South Wales Coordinator General for Settlement. He was in that role under the former Government and has been reappointed to that role under the current Government. The continuity is incredibly important and we're very fortunate to have someone of Professor Peter Shergold's time and passion in this space. He sort of transcends politics and breaks a lot of things down. So he will be the chair of that group, but in terms of the membership, we're still working through that at the moment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How often do you anticipate that it will meet?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Four times per year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What's the annual budget for the operations of the council?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's a good question. In terms of how much they're paid, or in terms of the costs?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Both. How much they're paid to be on the council and how much as well it will cost in terms of Multicultural NSW to support its operations.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: If you can also take on notice the chair's remuneration in that role as well.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: He won't be remunerated in that role, because he's already on a contract with us for his Coordinator General for Settlement role. It'll be built into his contract, in terms of his days.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Regarding the Multicultural Centre for Women's and Family Safety at the Adira Centre, is the \$4.4 million allocated for the establishment of the centre provided over four years a one-off or is it a recurrent annual allocation?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Is this the Department of Communities and Justice's domestic violence hub?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That would have been a good question to ask Secretary Tidball, because it doesn't sit under my purview. Sorry.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. We'll bring him back.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I've been told to take on notice the evaluation question. They're still chasing up the number.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many people attended the Premier's Harmony Dinner this year?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sixteen hundred. I thank both of you for your continued support of that event, and all members of Parliament.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I don't get an invite anymore, though.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: What do you mean you don't get invited?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I don't get an invite anymore.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, you know you are a friend of Multicultural NSW. We would love to have you at the event.

The CHAIR: Just turn up, like I did.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: You absolutely wrangled your way in.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I've fallen off the list. It happened about two years ago or a bit more than that, funnily enough.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Farlow, that is one of the true bipartisan events. I think that your side of politics even purchases a table to the event, or something along those lines. We would love to see you at the event.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What was the cost of the Premier's Harmony Dinner?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I get in trouble for this, because we get lots of sponsorship, ticket sales and all of those things, so I continually try and say that it's almost cost neutral, which it is, but it actually has a hard cost. Let me just see if I can find that for you in the immediate future and I will answer it. If not, I will take it on notice, but I'll try and find the cost for you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Page 60 of the Multicultural NSW *Community Relations Report 2024* notes:

... the findings of the 2023 Mapping Social Cohesion report by the Scanlon Foundation Research Institute ... showed that social cohesion in Australia is under pressure and declining, primarily due to economic pressures ...

Have Multicultural NSW or the Minister highlighted to the rest of the Government and the Cabinet how cuts to cost-of-living measures are putting increasing pressure on our social cohesion? Will you reinstate Active Kids to improve social cohesion?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That is a question for the Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is it something you've highlighted from that report?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It is fair to say that when we undertake our regional community networks across the State—impeccable timing from our regional representative here—Israel-Gaza is an issue, but their number one and two issues are cost of living and housing. We have shared that sentiment. I think the Minister would say—I don't want to verbal him, but he would say that is absolutely the focus of this Government in terms of addressing

cost-of-living and housing issues. There's no disconnect between the sentiment that our multicultural community is feeling and the key issues that are being discussed on a daily basis across the Government and Parliament.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Now, the Korean community funding.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The most recent—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Congratulations on the announcement of \$2 million in funding to support the Korean community in New South Wales, in particular, I take it, for the Korean community hall at Croydon Park.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. You are a very strong supporter of the Korean community and have been for some time, so I'm unsurprised that this is of interest to you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you for that acknowledgement. I'm a regular attendee at the Korean community hall in Croydon Park.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: They do outstanding barbeques.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: They do indeed. The bibimbap is good. Mr La Posta, is this a one-off grant?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, to support them with capital improvements, in partnership with Canterbury-Bankstown city council. I thank Matt Stewart and his team for how proactive they've been in already meeting with that group. The three groups—the Australian Korean Society of Sydney, or whatever the latest iteration around their name is at the moment, Canterbury-Bankstown city council and Multicultural NSW—will work out exactly what needs to be undertaken at their building. At this stage, it's likely the council will undertake those refurbishment works on their behalf once they've effectively agreed what the scope is of the works that are needed at the building and need to be prioritised.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To your knowledge, is part of that an extension of the lease to the Korean Society of Sydney?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That is one of the conditions, which is, I think, a Minister Hoenig question. But that is one of the considerations, that they have the extension of their lease through Canterbury-Bankstown council and the Office of Local Government, on the basis that they undertake these essential repairs to bring the site up to basic building compliance standards and occupational standards.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And there's a lease extension for the Korean community as part of that.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: My understanding is that that's already been granted, conditional on them getting this funding, which has now been secured. So there is no risk, to the best of my knowledge, in terms of their continued tenancy at that site.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I don't think OLG has a role in that. I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the announcement on 9 July regarding \$100,000 for IMMA, what specific programs will this money fund?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: What will it do?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What are the programs? What's going to be funded by it?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Effectively, the Independent Multicultural Media Association, or IMMA, received some Commonwealth Government funding to help them with their automation and also their capacity to directly service government, rather than having third-party buyer agents and others in their space, and also their ability to better capture their data penetration from the different groups that they work with through their various different platforms—traditional media, obviously, in print and radio, but then also more modern media, in terms of social media and online and so forth.

The Commonwealth Government has funded them with a substantial sum of funding to get all of that work off the ground—to effectively build capacity within that organisation. Our organisation, realising that the Commonwealth Government funding didn't kick in for six months—as a State government, we said to them, "We think you should get on with this work now." They said, "We'd love to get on with this work now; we just don't have the funding available." So we provided \$100,000 of funding to fast-track that so they could start to employ resources to be able to get onto that work. They're now negotiating contracts with the Commonwealth Government to be able to sustain that work, ongoing. It's a one-off to meet an immediate, short-term need.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will independent multicultural media outlets be eligible to access any of that funding?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's really a question for IMMA.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, so it's not something in terms of the design of the program.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Hawyes, in the last budget estimates, the Minister advised that the intention of the 2024-25 round of the Crown Reserves Improvement Fund grants was to focus on reserves with the most visitors. Is that why the eligibility criteria for that round of CRIF grants included heavily weighted visitation criteria and a minimum application amount of \$100,000, which could not consist of multiple projects?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, that was included as one of the criteria, but there are a number of criteria that we look at—utilisation is one—in the funding.

The Hon. WES FANG: Of the 98 successful applicants, how many received grants for projects over \$100,000?

MELANIE HAWYES: I might need to take that on notice. I don't think I've got the full list of every single project with me. Can I take that one on notice?

The Hon. WES FANG: You can. It's your purview and I respect your ability to take it on notice. In budget estimates in February, the Minister said that around \$10 million in CRIF grants would be offered and around \$4.5 million would be reserved for strategic emergency grants. Was the \$4.5 million in addition to the \$10 million that was indicated?

MELANIE HAWYES: The short answer is yes. In 2024-25 we had three streams of funding, which delivered a total of \$14.3 million through 116 grants around the State. The open-funded program delivered 98 grants worth just over \$11 million. The project support round delivered 10 grants worth \$2.7 million, give or take. There were eight grants for emergency works, which were—as you'd expect—smaller, ad-hoc-type emergency funding.

The Hon. WES FANG: And there's still \$200,000 in the kitty. Is that correct?

MELANIE HAWYES: It might be a bit more—I'll have to take that on notice as well—but, give or take, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Ultimately the Government executed \$11,183,932 in CRIF grants. Was the money taken away from the CRIF strategic emergency grants to cover this 12 per cent discrepancy?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't think I follow the question. What's the discrepancy?

The Hon. WES FANG: The CRIF grants had \$10 million allocated to them but, ultimately, there was \$11,183,932.

MELANIE HAWYES: I see, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: So there was—

MELANIE HAWYES: No, we had a little bit more than a strict 10. There wasn't anything taken away to make that up, put it that way.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you put out a media release this year announcing the outcomes of the 2024-25 funding round?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, we have. My understanding is we have. We've announced them recently.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you do a media release relating to the outcomes of the 2023-24 funding round?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, we do it every year.

The Hon. WES FANG: So there's been a media release for both 2023-24 and 2024-25?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I'm pretty sure.

The Hon. WES FANG: Could you perhaps take that on notice, just to double-check?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, will do. But it's a standard annual cycle and it's a really well-established grants program. We go out and the results are public.

The Hon. WES FANG: I don't disagree. I suspect the reason that the question is in my little notes is that there may be some question as to: one, if it went out; two, where it was distributed; and, three, what information was provided on it.

MELANIE HAWYES: It is a regular grants program and I will confirm it, but the answer is yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: The 2023-24 round of CRIF funding received 609 applications, and in 2024-25 there were only 297 applications. Do you believe this is due to there being more restrictive eligibility criteria?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't answer that definitively. We will obviously look at the spread of applications that we've got and take on board feedback, such as the feedback you're giving me now, and have a look at it. But I can't really answer that definitively today.

The Hon. WES FANG: So the fact that there was less than half, year on year, didn't trigger a "What's happening here?"

MELANIE HAWYES: We get requests in various ways, but the fund is always oversubscribed because of simply the size and scale of the portfolio and the amount of Crown land reserves and Crown land managers there are. But every year, multiple grants are handed out all around the State. There's a range of works that's able to take place because of this funding program. It is a steady, reliable funding program for Crown land managers.

The Hon. WES FANG: I agree. Are you aware of any small communities who have humbler needs and would have applied for grant funding for projects under \$100,000 if they were eligible?

MELANIE HAWYES: We have relationships at the local level with Crown land managers, and those sorts of interactions and needs are made apparent through our regional networks and escalated up through to our funding areas all the time. I wouldn't be able to give you a number today. We have so many relationships with Crown land managers where we are live to their needs, whether it's a museum that needs something fixed or all kinds of local works, and we funnel those to grants programs where we can.

The Hon. WES FANG: What would be an example of a grants program that would provide funding to a smaller community that has a request for funding that's under the \$100,000 application limit that was in the CRIF?

MELANIE HAWYES: The CRIF itself—as I said, utilisation is one criterion, but there are others too. We also have a small provision for emergency works for things like power boards and that kind of thing. Those requests can come in as the need arises. There's a range of avenues to raise those needs with us and a range of ability to respond.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you able to take on notice, perhaps, the number of requests that you've received that would match the criteria that I've described—that's similar in scope but under that \$100,000 floor limit—and also how many were actually funded through Crown Lands?

MELANIE HAWYES: I can take on notice formal applications. As I said, people raise their needs and what's going on at the local level informally first. Obviously, I can't take that on notice, but I can take on notice any formal applications that have been put to the department.

The Hon. WES FANG: In supplementary questions for February's budget estimates, there was mention of the Illabo Showground land manager that was seeking \$40,000 to provide security for equipment and protect it from the elements. What grant funding options are available for somebody in that circumstance?

MELANIE HAWYES: Again, to get in contact with us. The Project Support Program could be an area to explore. I'm happy to talk to them if they've got those sorts of needs.

The Hon. WES FANG: So there's no specific grant program that is seeking that lower amount that is quite needed by the Illabo Showground land manager?

MELANIE HAWYES: We have the open round, as you know, and we also have the ability to fund emergency works to a limited degree, and we have the Crown Lands Project Support Program. There is a range of potential avenues for people to explore depending on what their needs are.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm sure you can expect a phone call from Illabo. Will the 2025-26 round of CRIF grants cater to projects of this more humble value?

MELANIE HAWYES: As I've said, there are three sorts of funding avenues for people to explore. We set the criteria with the Minister's office on an annual cycle. We'll go out again this year with the CRIF. There's the open round, there's the project support fund, and then there's the ability to talk to us if there's a genuine emergency that arises in the course of a year.

The Hon. WES FANG: The Government's 2025-26 budget *Infrastructure Statement* includes a \$4.6 million line item for asset maintenance on community assets and fire trails. What is the program and all programs related to this expenditure?

MELANIE HAWYES: There's a differentiation there between the fire program and asset funding. As you probably would be aware, we have helicopter-based inspections of fire trails across the State once a year on a regular cycle, and then works follow from that. There's an allocation for that, and then there's an allocation in the budget separately for critical asset repair works. There are two different allocations.

The Hon. WES FANG: Will this funding be distributed via a competitive process in the form of capital works grants?

MELANIE HAWYES: My understanding is that you're talking about funding that's been provided to the department to undertake those programs, rather than—they're not open-funded rounds.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you don't expect that there'll be outsourcing of those programs; it'll all be in-house work?

MELANIE HAWYES: We run the inspection program, but we also outsource some of the actual works that need to be done when we've done the inspections and we can see what condition the fire trails are in. We work with Public Works, for example.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have these programs been launched, and is there an opportunity for people to express an interest in providing assistance to Crown Lands to provide services?

MELANIE HAWYES: These are core land management services that we provide. They're not really new programs in that sense. It's core business for us to do asset works, fire protection works, pest and weed control—those sorts of things. What you're talking about is the current budget allocation that's been given to us for those works.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes. How much of that work is done through employees and how much work is done through third-party suppliers?

MELANIE HAWYES: We work with the department of Public Works to do a lot of those works. There may be occasions where we engage a local contractor to do particular things, depending on what we discover. It's a mix. But the staff responsible for coordinating the works, issuing the contracts and tendering for local works—they're in the department.

The Hon. WES FANG: Excellent. Turning to interment services levies—did you cover that?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: By extending the interment services levy to cemetery operators outside of metropolitan areas from 1 July 2024, how much additional revenue did Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW earn in the 2024-25 period compared to 2023-24?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't know that we can answer it in that specific way, but the levy itself is designed to fund the activity of the regulator as a self-funded model—to mature the regulator from being, as it was before, a very small agency of I think less than 10 people at one point in time to a regulator that can work with the sector to ensure that it's well managed and to ensure that people who are seeking interment services get a good standard of service. My understanding is the levy raises around \$5 million a year in total, and that is used to fund the activities of the regulator, including educative things for the sector as well as enforcement activity. That's what the levy is used for.

The Hon. WES FANG: I understand that part. What the question is really seeking to understand is that from 1 July 2024, not only were metropolitan areas levied but there was the additional levy imparted on rural and regional communities. What was the difference between 2024-25 and 2023-24? We can actually, in a roundabout way, work out how much was pulled out of our rural and regional communities. We're already in a cost-of-living crisis.

MELANIE HAWYES: I would note that the bulk of services provided by the Crown operators in metropolitan areas—they are the bulk of the demand. But I understand your point. I don't know that we can answer it exactly as you framed the question. David, you might have a bit more detail about what difference it makes in terms of the funding that we've received from the Crown.

Mr DAVID RAPER, Acting Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW, on former affirmation

DAVID RAPER: On the question itself, to begin, the levy, when it was expanded at the beginning of 2024, was expanded only from the Crown operators to all operators across the State. It wasn't a straight-up metro levy that was expanded to regional areas. There were other operators in the Sydney metro area that weren't paying the levy before. What the changes to the levy did—they changed from raising about in the order of \$850,000 from those two operators to, as Ms Hawyes said, when it's fully implemented, about \$5.1 million is what we expect across the whole State.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you're looking at a 600 per cent increase in the take under the levy to fund an expansion. That's an extraordinary increase—600 per cent—from \$800,000-odd to \$5 million or thereabouts.

DAVID RAPER: It's a significant increase in the levy, and there's been a significant increase in the consumer protection activities of the regulator right across the State, in metro areas as well as in regional areas, because of that injection of funds. And so people are enjoying new protections no matter where you live now.

The Hon. WES FANG: So we've expanded the protection provided by this increase in the levy. In relation to the operations of the regulator, what enforcement, what penalty arrangements, what warning letters—what has the public received and how have they received that protection, now that you've indicated that there's a greater protection?

DAVID RAPER: We have a regulatory framework that outlines the range of tools that we can use and we have set out a compliance plan for the next couple of years that says these are the priorities that we're going to be working on and how we're going to be doing it. The sorts of things we do fall into a few categories. The first is really working with operators in an educative way to make sure they understand the regulations and what they need to do to comply. There has been substantial activity in that area, including roadshows across the State. We have regular forums where operators can get together. We provide them with information et cetera. We're about to go out to another set of roadshows, given the recent changes to the Act, before the end of this year. So that's one set of activities that happens.

The second set of activities is more in the investigation and compliance space, where this year we began our first proactive compliance. We now have a regular program of site audits that happen right across the State, where we visit cemeteries and crematoria. We inspect their operations, we inspect their processes and their documents. As I said, we began undertaking those last quarter. We now have a quarter-by-quarter program where that happens. In addition to that, the audit program also includes what we're calling desk-based audits, which is more let's take a look at a theme and hear from everybody, as opposed to one operator. We've done one of those and we'll be doing more of those through the year.

The Hon. WES FANG: You said that the program started in the last quarter. Has that started from, say, 1 July, or are you talking about 1 April?

DAVID RAPER: The new part I was talking about, that proactive compliance and really being out on the front foot, sorry, I should probably say that we did our first one of those in March and then the first full quarter that we did it was the April, May, June quarter, and that's now ongoing.

The Hon. WES FANG: In relation to that new proactive program, how many sites were visited, how many audits were conducted and what were the results of those inspections?

DAVID RAPER: We undertook—if maybe I can talk to that March-July period rather than strictly the quarter?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes. From the first inspection, let's call it four months—a quarter and a bit.

DAVID RAPER: For four months, yes. We've done 13 audits during that time. We have a robust process of selecting the providers that includes their size; their potential level of risk; rural or metro; and private, local government or Crown. We've done those and I would characterise what we've found is either compliance or what I would call minor noncompliance at this stage. And where we do find that, we just send a very clear letter, "These are the areas of noncompliance. You need to bring yourself into compliance by this date," and we follow up. What we're finding in the main, or so far, in totality, is when operators get that very clear message about what needs to happen, actually there is quite a willingness to move into compliance. So far we haven't had to go beyond that to achieve the outcomes that we need to achieve.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you able to take on notice the regions where these inspections have occurred? Maybe by LGA would be the best way to do that, if you're able to. I'm not asking you to name operators at the moment. That's probably going to be my next question: At what point do we start to name and shame, if that's the will of the government of the day? Could you take on notice the LGAs, the number that you found noncompliance in and the remedial steps that have been undertaken? That would be most appreciated. I'm just

trying to understand how we're spending this 600 per cent increase in the levy being taken from New South Wales people during a cost-of-living crisis.

MELANIE HAWYES: Just on that, if I can, the previous setting was a levy applied to only a couple of operators.

The Hon. WES FANG: Two, yes.

MELANIE HAWYES: Two operators only. It's being applied to all operators. The bulk of the costs are paid by the bigger commercial operators. But the system before was based on only two providers contributing. I guess our perspective is that everyone benefits from a well-regulated sector and it's fair that all operators are covered by the levy, noting that it's proportionate, right? If you're a big commercial operator you pay more than if you're a very small, almost exhausted, cemetery in a rural setting. It's proportionate, the cost you pay. But the benefits are that the sector is regulated effectively.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that. That's one perspective people may have of the new regime as it's been implemented. The other one is that at a time when people are grieving the loss of a loved one and already having to reach into their pockets during a cost-of-living crisis—and we know that burial and cremation services are expensive—whether it be a small amount or a large amount, this is an additional cost. It's these ever-increasing regulation issues that are intruding on people's lives. I want to know whether this is an actual problem. Is the regulator finding huge noncompliance and that justifies this levy? Or is it the case that most people are doing the right thing and now the Government's just gone and created a whole new level of bureaucracy at a time when people are—

MELANIE HAWYES: I understand.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We'll be more than happy to provide you with the detail. But you know, as public servants, we can't comment on Government policy, just the way it is operationalised.

The Hon. WES FANG: I know. I'm taking advantage of that to just—

MELANIE HAWYES: But I also think as well—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: You can make any statement you wish to, but we are obviously operating under the policy of government.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that.

MELANIE HAWYES: But under the scheme, for example, there are now provisions for contracts to be clear and transparent, so people know what they're purchasing. A lot of the problems from the past were that people weren't clear on what their rights were that they were purchasing. So it has those broader benefits: as you say, in a time of grief, clarity of what you're buying and the standard you can expect, and holding the sector to a level of accountability for basic consumer protections in that time.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not saying I disagree with it, I'm just saying I want to be able to see the measurement of what people are getting for their money.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I understand.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has there been an increase in the number of Crown roads sold and converted to freehold since the removal of concessions for Crown road enclosure permit fees from 1 July 2024?

MELANIE HAWYES: There has certainly been an uptick in people expressing an interest in purchasing those areas. I'll take on notice the exact amount, unless I can quickly find it now.

The Hon. WES FANG: Whilst you're having a look for that, you might stumble across the answer to my next question. Has there been an increase in the number of Crown road enclosures relinquished by permit holders since 1 July 2024 in comparison to previous years?

MELANIE HAWYES: Okay, bear with me. As you know, this is about phasing out concessions, because we are obliged to charge minimum statutory rent, and that is what we've moved to, with a phase-in period for people to adjust, including an extra year for people who hold multiple permits. I might have to take it on notice, because I can't quickly find it.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's all right.

MELANIE HAWYES: You're asking how many people have applied to purchase their permit?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Excellent. And also how many permits have been relinquished during the phasing out? Has the Government calculated any revenue lost—based on the previous statutory rent, which was \$604—because people have relinquished permits?

MELANIE HAWYES: I actually can help you a little bit more in this session. All in all, there's something like more than 23,000 enclosure permits across the State and we're currently assessing 1,534 applications to purchase a Crown road associated with an enclosure permit, so that gives you a bit of a sense of scale.

The Hon. WES FANG: Sorry, what was the number?

MELANIE HAWYES: There are 1,534 applications on foot to purchase. I'm not privy to what's prompted people. They may have been interested in purchasing them anyway.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you still anticipate the removal of concessions for Crown road enclosure permit fees will increase the revenue by \$9.6 million per year?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think that was our original projection, but we'll see how that pans out in terms of people making a decision to purchase or not.

The Hon. WES FANG: In relation to cemeteries and crematoria, is the full staffing capacity for Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW still 23 FTE?

MELANIE HAWYES: Where are we up to with that, David? My understanding is yes, but you're closer to how we're going with recruitment.

DAVID RAPER: The full staffing would be 22 FTE, and we are pretty close to that at the moment.

The Hon. WES FANG: Someone has lost a job somewhere.

DAVID RAPER: Right now we're at 20.8.

The Hon. WES FANG: We're almost there—1.2 to go.

DAVID RAPER: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, 2.2 to go, depending on whether someone has lost a job or not. Is that 20 people full time and one person at 0.8?

DAVID RAPER: It's 22 headcount.

The Hon. WES FANG: And 20.8 FTE.

DAVID RAPER: With a bit of four days et cetera, it's 20.8 FTE.

The Hon. WES FANG: What additional proportion of Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW staff reside outside of metropolitan areas since the interment levy was extended to operators outside of metropolitan areas from 1 July 2024?

DAVID RAPER: We currently have four headcount outside Sydney. I believe two of those are new hires.

The Hon. WES FANG: You had two.

DAVID RAPER: I believe the change has gone from two to four.

The Hon. WES FANG: It's a lot of area to cover for those new people, given that all those other roles were metropolitan except for two of them. I imagine those two people were working in the metropolitan area, given that was the only area that was serviced by the levy prior to 1 July 2024.

DAVID RAPER: No, that's not correct. Prior to the expansion of the interment service levy, we were working across the State. Those two operators were funding us, but that money was going across the State. That activity was happening in the State, and that still remains the case. Extensive services—and I might even say the bulk of our services—relate to particularly operators outside the metropolitan area. As you know, regional councils play a very important role right across the State. The vast majority, certainly, of our education support activities would go to them. For example, the roadshows that we'll be hosting in October and November—we anticipate doing seven, and six of those will be in rural and regional areas, including in Wagga Wagga.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Head on down.

The Hon. WES FANG: He knows how to win a man over.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you have one in Drummoyne?

MELANIE HAWYES: We'll have an extra one for you.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The inner "Wes-t".

DAVID RAPER: When you see the LGAs by audit, you'll also see that there's a fair spread across the State.

The Hon. WES FANG: On that note, I think I might put the rest on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I just have a brief one for Ms Jones. We were talking about the Australian Rowing Championships before.

KAREN JONES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I didn't want you to think I'd forgotten about the role of Destination NSW in that. What had Destination NSW previously funded to support the Australian Rowing Championships?

KAREN JONES: That's a good question. I will take that on notice but, as per my previous answer, they did submit a proposal to Destination NSW. We did go through that assessment process and then they decided to take the championships to Tasmania.

The Hon. WES FANG: Shame!

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was the amount that Destination NSW was offering less than what it had previously offered with respect to those championships?

KAREN JONES: I'll take that on notice, but I think you'll find that that figure will be commercial in confidence anyway.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: There has been some talk in terms of rowing for the 2032 Olympics in Brisbane. Is there any work that Destination NSW is doing with the Queensland Government in order to be able to secure rowing in New South Wales rather than croc-infested waters in Queensland? Aussie, Aussie, Aussie, snap, snap, snap.

KAREN JONES: I think it's actually included in the report that came out from the Brisbane Olympics and the independent review that they did around their infrastructure investments that the New South Wales Government, through Destination NSW and also the Office of Sport, did provide some information in terms of the feasibility of having those events at our facilities in Penrith.

The Hon. WES FANG: The Cammeray golf course lease is split in two. Is that correct?

MELANIE HAWYES: Split into—sorry, yes. There are two tenures at the site.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is Crown Lands actively negotiating a long-term lease with the Cammeray Golf Club to provide certainty for its ongoing operation?

MELANIE HAWYES: I need to take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: What is the time frame for finalising a new lease to replace the current rolling six-month arrangements for the clubhouse and the car park?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll have to take it on notice. I also can answer your question. You asked me about CRIF releases. They are both out. They were both released respectively in July 2024 and June 2025 on the CRIF grant funding.

The Hon. WES FANG: Excellent.

MELANIE HAWYES: And we have also funded a number of projects under the \$100K threshold—some pest and weed projects totalling \$98,000.

The Hon. WES FANG: That was in that round that specified a \$100,000 minimum application.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, but we still took some applications for pest and weed grants.

The Hon. WES FANG: I just wonder if people that were dissuaded from applying because they didn't reach the \$100,000 threshold maybe should have applied because, ultimately, there were grants accepted.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That's a hypothetical you're putting to my staff.

MELANIE HAWYES: That's a different category.

The Hon. WES FANG: It is a hypothetical. I think that's probably the concern that the person who was assisted with these questions was raising. Will the Government consider consolidating the existing split leases under Crown Lands to allow for a unified approach to the management of the entire golf course site for Cammeray?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Given North Sydney Council's open hostility to the continued use of Cammeray Park as a golf course, what measures will the Government take to ensure the lease renewal process in 2026 is fair, transparent and free from bias?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will take it on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: You might have a swing? I'm sure the Minister is not paying attention. You can just announce policy.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I thought you were talking about a golf swing, Wes.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: The question itself does have an element of bias in the way it is structured.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Will the Minister guarantee the golf club is given an equal—

MELANIE HAWYES: You might have asked him this morning.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Just a small point: The Minister is not at the table.

The Hon. WES FANG: Perhaps I should say, has the Minister indicated that he will guarantee the golf club is given an equal opportunity to renew its lease, regardless of the council's position? That's probably a better way to phrase it, Greg.

MELANIE HAWYES: I think you probably should have asked the Minister this morning.

The Hon. WES FANG: Probably. We probably will.

The CHAIR: Put it on a supplementary.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, it will be supplementary. Are you aware of the Government's position—see, I got around that, Greg—on the future of Cammeray golf course following its recent multimillion-dollar State-funded reconfiguration?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm going to take it on notice, because these are questions that probably could have been put to the Minister this morning.

The Hon. WES FANG: Let's be honest, he probably wouldn't have known the answer anyway.

The CHAIR: Before I throw to the Government, are there any mop-ups? Hand in your homework early.

LEON WALKER: Can I answer a couple more questions?

The CHAIR: Mr Walker?

LEON WALKER: Mr Farlow, you had a couple of questions. On Woolloomooloo, could you please direct that question to the homes Minister? On Sydney Olympic Park, as I mentioned earlier, contracts have exchanged. Settlement is just pending subdivision of the site. Box Hill—that's 20 Nelson Road—settled on 27 June this year. Riverstone should be directed to the homes Minister. There are two sites that have been declined by Landcom, one at St Leonards and the other at Kogarah. Any development applications would also need to be directed to the respective agencies or their Ministers.

MELANIE HAWYES: Chair, this is the last one for me. You asked about leases a little while ago. We've got about 7,000 leases across the portfolio. Our systems are showing that there are 45 on weekly holdover at the moment. Twenty-six of those have submitted applications for new leases and, of the remaining 19, we're either waiting to receive an application or considering a different kind of management arrangement.

The CHAIR: There's no other homework being handed in early. I'll throw to the Government for questions.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: We're satisfied.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Not at this time.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you sure? I think Murphy went upstairs to get Linda's questions and come back.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Mate, you're the guys who ran out of questions.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think it's quarter past. We can keep going. We've got more.

The CHAIR: That will do us. Thank you guys for your time. You have taken some questions on notice. The secretariat will be in touch in order for you to get them back to us. Thank you for your time.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Thank you, Chair and Committee, for your courtesy and your interest in our work.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.