



BUDGET ESTIMATES 2019-2020 THE LEGISLATURE

Questions on Notice

Hearing: Monday, 16 March 2020

Answers due to Committee by: Monday, 13 April 2020

THE LEGISLATURE

Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC (on behalf of the NSW Labor Opposition)

Questions on Notice

1. **The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Mr President, do we have an idea of roughly how many people would pass through the New South Wales Parliament on an average on a daily basis?**

Mr WEBB: In general, on a non-sitting day, you would probably have between 400 and 600 people through the building. On a sitting day, up around 1,000 people through the building.

Correction to above statement:

Non sitting day numbers are correct, however Including functions and events, on a sitting day up to 2,000 people pass through the building.

2. **Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Are some of the cleaning staff provided on a casual basis?**

Mr WEBB: Yes. Some of the cleaning staff do come through agencies and, you are right, we are budgeted for those activities.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: So we have cafe and cleaning staff. Where else do we see as casual staff?

Mr WEBB: Primarily they are the two locations.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Can I ask you this, Mr. You say you are in discussions about, I assume, those two categories of staff in your mind when you are having discussions about protection going forward.

The PRESIDENT: Yes.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: There is money available in the budget to effectively pay them through their subcontractor. Will you continue to negotiate on a good faith basis with their employers to see if we can ensure that they have economic security going through this?

The PRESIDENT: The short answer is yes. And it is a fair question. The longer answer of course is that we are also in discussion with the agency because we also want to ensure the agency is doing, as you put it, the right thing by those staff.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: Yes. We need to make sure we are not just providing money to the agency. The key thing here is the people who work among us and provide the service.

The PRESIDENT: And I am with you on that.

Mr DAVID SHOEBRIDGE: When you land those negotiations, will you commit to informing the members about where those negotiations could lead?

The PRESIDENT: Let me take that as a question on notice, which compels me to come back to you.

In response to the impact of the COVID-19 virus, a range of measures have been taken to support casual staff in different areas across DPS, including cleaning and catering. These measures include finding suitable re-deployment opportunities; work from home arrangements; negotiations with employment agencies; access to Pandemic and other leave where possible; and providing support and assistance in seeking the recently announced Federal Government income support. Every effort is being made to ensure our valuable casual staff are supported and not left without an income.

3. The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: Notwithstanding the understandable preoccupation with the virus and the effect that it is going to have on health and the economy, are we still putting in an exemption for the efficiency dividend?

The PRESIDENT: I can answer that and I am happy to provide more on notice because I am noting the time. As you are aware, we were required under the current budget to meet an efficiency dividend of 4 per cent. The reason it was 4 per cent is that—the usual efficiency dividend of 3 per cent plus we were given a deferment of 1 per cent from the previous year. So we were required to meet 4 per cent. The good news is that the Treasurer has agreed to not require us to meet that 4 per cent efficiency dividend for this financial year. We are of course still in negotiations and will continue to be in negotiations and discussions with the Treasurer in relation to the efficiency dividends for the next financial year onwards but we do not have to meet it, which is wonderful news for us. From memory, it was approximately \$1,377,000, which would

have been extremely difficult, if not near impossible to find. So that issue has been resolved.

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: For 2019-20?

The PRESIDENT: For 2019-20. We are still in discussions. We have just about completed the 10-year business plan that we were required to complete. Again we can add more to that on notice, noting the time. I could talk about this for the next two hours if you want to come and see me.

In response The Treasurer confirmed in writing the reversal of the efficiency dividend for the Parliament for 2019-20 on 25/2/2020.

A funding proposal was submitted for the 2020-21 budget process seeking exemption from efficiency dividends deducted from the Parliament's budget for all forward budget years.

The current joint Treasury/Legislature Budget Review is examining the Parliament's capacity to meet efficiency dividends in future years.

Answer to QoN question 60:

In regard to the efficiency dividend levied on the Parliament for 2019-20, the background is:

- The Parliament submitted a proposal a full exemption from the efficiency dividends for 2019-20 and also for the two forward years that had been applied;
- The funding proposal was not supported;
- On 1 August 2019, the Presiding Officers wrote to the Treasurer requesting that the Parliament's proposal for full budget exemption for 2019-20 be reconsidered in light of other budget issues being experienced including the underfunding of special constables of \$2.234 million and additional costs arising from changes in the Legislative Council following the election.
- The Treasurer replied on 25 February 2020 advising that the efficiency dividend for the Parliament will be waived for 2019-20 although no increase to its Appropriation was advised in the letter meaning the accompanying cash has not been allocated.
- The Treasurer's letter of 25 February 2020 did state that the "joint Treasury and NSW Parliament Funding Review will assess the adequacy of future funding requirements and assist in future resource allocation decisions".