

Customer Service
Budget Estimates 2019-2020
Supplementary Questions

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

Coronavirus (COVID-19)

1. What actions is the Department of Customer Service taking to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
2. What actions is Service NSW taking to respond to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
3. What actions is the Department of Customer Service taking to support and protect its staff during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
4. What actions is Service NSW taking to support and protect its staff during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic?
5. Has the Department of Customer Service and/or Service NSW received additional financial resources to address the impacts of the coronavirus (COVID-19)?

(a) If so, what additional resources have been provided to the Department of Customer Service and/or Service NSW?

ANSWER

1 & 2. The Department of Customer Service (including ServiceNSW) is responding to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in accordance with its responsibilities under the NSW State Emergency Plan and as directed by the NSW Crisis Policy Committee and NSW State Emergency Operations Centre.

Currently, work relating to COVID-19 is the Department of Customer Service's top priority. The Department of Customer Service is focussed on minimising disruption to its essential and critical functions and is dedicated to ensuring the wellbeing of both its people and its customers whilst ensuring service delivery to the community is maintained.

In support of the Government's response to COVID-19, DCS is delivering measures that protect jobs and support the businesses and citizens of NSW. Our measures to date include:

- Leading and co-ordination of the NSW Government's communication and community engagement, through Service NSW and other channels including a dedicated COVID-19 hotline in ServiceNSW and a single source of information for all non-health related COVID-19 information via nsw.gov.au.
- Expanding the operations of ServiceNSW customer contact service to 24-hour service delivery.
- Creation of 1000 jobs to support the expansion of the ServiceNSW customer contact centre and service delivery.
- Data analysis and citizens insights to help support public health and other government decisions in response to the crisis
- Regulatory guidance and support from our RevenueNSW and Better Regulation agencies to enable the practical application of stimulus measures to protect jobs and support business in an environment of social distancing including, waiving a range of fees and charges to ease the burden on businesses.

The actions of the Department of Customer Service (including Service NSW) in response to the COVID-19 crisis are evolving on a day to day basis in line with the NSW Government's needs.

3 & 4. The safety and wellbeing of our people is a top priority for The Department of Customer Service (including ServiceNSW). The Department has implemented measures to support our people and minimise their risk of exposure to coronavirus (COVID-19), whilst ensuring service delivery to the

community is maintained. These actions are being implemented in alignment with official NSW Government advice.

- Increased use of flexible working, including equipping employees with necessary technology and hardware to enable them to work from home wherever possible, and expanding our hours of operations to help our people manage work and family commitments.
- Increased social distancing and cleaning of all DCS worksites (corporate and customer facing) including provision of hand sanitiser.
- Encouraging our customers to access government services online, and to pay using electronic methods where possible, and adapting our service capability in response.
- Where adapting our services is not currently an option, we have taken measures to protect the safety and wellbeing of our staff including:
 - Postponement of Driver Testing conducted by Service NSW (for a minimum of two months for practical driver assessments and three months for aged driver assessments). Holders of a current overseas driver's licence who have become permanent residents now have six months to convert to an NSW licence.
- Provision of additional mental health and wellbeing resources and further online support through the DCS Employee Assistance Program.
- Provision of paid special leave for up to 20 days for employees who are unable to work from home and are directed to not attend the workplace due to isolation requirements.
- Diverting older employees and employees with underlying health conditions away from customer facing roles.
- Brought forward the DCS flu vaccination program.

5. The Department of Customer Service continues to work collaboratively with the NSW Government and NSW Treasury to ensure that we have the funding required to meet our commitments, including initiatives in response to the Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Volunteer firefighter payment

6. How many people have applied for the payment for volunteer firefighters which is being administered by Service NSW?

7. How many people have received the payment for volunteer firefighters which is being administered by Service NSW?

8. What is the total value of payments made to people who have received the payment for volunteer firefighters which is being administered by Service NSW?

9. How many people in NSW are estimated to be eligible for the payment for volunteer firefighters which is being administered by Service NSW?

ANSWER

6. As at 21/4/2020: 2, 144 individual applicants applied and had their claim accepted.

7. Refer to question 6.

8. \$8.46M.

9. Service NSW does not have a dataset that indicates total eligible customers.

Stamp duty relief for bushfire-affected homeowners

10. How many people have applied for stamp duty relief for bushfire-affected homeowners?

11. How many people have received stamp duty relief for bushfire-affected homeowners?

12. What is the total value of payments made to people who have received stamp duty relief for bushfire-affected homeowners?

13. How many people in NSW are estimated to be eligible for stamp duty relief for bushfire-affected homeowners?

ANSWER

10. 47 as at 3 April 2020.

11. 28 people as at 3 April 2020. 19 are awaiting processing.

12. \$659,677

13. More than 2,200 homes were lost in the bushfires. Subject to other eligibility criteria being met it is estimated that these landholders will be eligible for bushfire relief.

Bushfire Recovery Grants worth up to \$50,000

14. How many small businesses and not-for-profit organisations have applied for bushfire recovery grants?

15. How many small businesses and not-for-profit organisations have received bushfire recovery grants?

16. What is the total value of payments made to small businesses and not-for-profit organisations which have received bushfire recovery grants?

17. How many small businesses and not-for-profit organisations in NSW are estimated to be eligible for bushfire recovery grants?

ANSWER

14. Small Business Grant (\$50,000) – 1908 applications received as at 21 April 2020. See also volumes for the Small Business Disaster Recovery Grant set out below.

Small Business Bushfire Support Grant (\$10,000) – 12,800 applications received as at 21 April 2020.

15. Small Business Grant (\$50,000) – 936 applicants have been approved for payment as at 21 April 2020. See also volumes for the Small Business Disaster Recovery Grant set out below.

Small Business Grant (\$10,000) – all applicants have been approved for payment, as at 21 April 2020.

16. Small Business Grant (\$50,000) – \$26.6 million has been approved for payment as at 21 April 2020. See also approved payments for the Small Business Disaster Recovery Grant set out below.

Small Business Bushfire Support Grant (\$10,000) – \$128 million has been paid, as at 21 April 2020. All payments approved but not yet paid are being actively progressed.

17. No official figures are available to determine this exact number. Support has been designed to be made available to all businesses that meet the agreed criteria.

Bushfire Recovery Grants worth up to \$15,000

18. How many applications have been received by Service NSW for the bushfire recovery grants worth up to \$15,000 which were previously administered by the Rural Assistance Authority?

19. How many applications have been successful for the bushfire recovery grants worth up to \$15,000 which were previously administered by the Rural Assistance Authority?

20. What is the total value of payments made by Service NSW for the bushfire recovery grants worth up to \$15,000 which were previously administered by the Rural Assistance Authority?

21. How many entities in NSW are estimated to be eligible for the bushfire recovery grants worth up to \$15,000 which were previously administered by the Rural Assistance Authority?

ANSWER

18. A total of 161 applications have been received for the Small Business Disaster Recovery Grant RAA (\$15,000).

19. A total of 97 applications are approved for payment, as at 21 April 2020.

20. A total of \$1.42 million has been approved for payment as at 21 April 2020.

21. The total number of entities in NSW estimated to be eligible for the Small Business Disaster Recovery Grant was 3,250, as advised by the Office of Emergency Management on 23 March 2020. It is to be noted that the RAA had already processed applications prior to the involvement of Service NSW and continues to process applications, other than those relating to small businesses.

Payment of accounts

22. Page 47 of the Annual Report for Service NSW for 2018-19 contains information regarding the percentage of accounts paid on time. In relation to this:

(a) What percentage of accounts for Service NSW were paid on-time in:

- i. November 2019;
- ii. December 2019;
- iii. January 2020; and
- iv. February 2020?

(b) What percentage of invoices received from small businesses were paid on-time in:

- i. November 2019;
- ii. December 2019;
- iii. January 2020; and
- iv. February 2020?

ANSWER

22a

- i. 90%
- ii. 90%
- iii. 84%
- iv. 87%

22b

- i. 100%
- ii. 100%
- iii. 100%
- iv. 61%

The fall in on-time payments made in February 2020 can be attributed primarily to unplanned staff absence. ServiceNSW have actively cleared the back log during March 2020 and have taken responsive steps to ensure that this is avoided in the future.

Regional Seniors Travel Card

23. How many people have applied for a Regional Seniors Travel Card?

24. How many Regional Seniors Travel Cards have been issued?

25. How many people are eligible to receive a Regional Seniors Travel Card?

26. Why were veterans not included in the eligibility criteria for the Regional Seniors Travel Card when the program was launched?

27. Are veterans currently able to apply for, and receive, the Regional Seniors Travel Card?

(a) If not, by what date will they be able to do so?

28. On what date did the NSW Government first contact the Commonwealth Government to begin making arrangements for veterans to receive the Regional Seniors Travel Card?

29. Does Service NSW collect feedback from people whose application for a Regional Seniors Travel Card was unsuccessful?

30. Other than the Regional Seniors Travel Card, what other programs administered by Service NSW involve the provision of people's personal information to for-profit entities such as banks?

ANSWER

23. As at 21 April 2020, 275,449 people have applied for the Regional seniors travel card.

24. 241,000 cards have been issued to customers as of 20 March 2020.

25. With the expansion of the eligibility criteria, 474,383 customers will be eligible.

26. The eligibility criteria, set by the NSW Government.

27. Yes

28. Service NSW commenced discussions with the Commonwealth Government regarding expanded criteria for the scheme in February. NSW Transport were in touch with the Commonwealth earlier.

29. Yes.

30. Service NSW works with NRMA to issue International Driving Permits for customers.

Jobs Cuts

31. Page 30 of the Annual Report of Service NSW for 2018-19 states the agency had an unbudgeted provision of \$2.4 million for redundancies. In relation to this:

(a) How many staff took redundancies in 2018-19?

(b) Were these redundancies forced or voluntary?

(c) How many staff have taken redundancies so far in 2019-20?

(d) Were these redundancies forced or voluntary?

32. How many full-time equivalent positions existed across the Customer Service cluster:

- (a) On 1 July 2019?
- (b) On 1 March 2020?

33. How many full-time equivalent positions existed at Service NSW:

- (a) On 1 July 2018?
- (b) On 1 July 2019?
- (c) On 1 March 2020?

34. During the Budget Estimates Hearing on 9 March 2020, Service NSW CEO Damon Rees stated Service NSW would address 'budgetary challenges' through 'the consolidation of corporate services functions' which 'includes teams like finance, technology, people and culture, marketing, communications, risk governance' (Uncorrected transcript, p. 30). In relation this:

(a) How many full-time equivalent positions have been, or will be, made redundant during the 2019-20 financial year in the teams responsible for:

- i. Finance;
- ii. Technology;
- iii. People and culture;
- iv. Marketing;
- v. Communications; and
- vi. Risk governance?

(b) How many full-time equivalent positions in 'frontline' roles have been, or will be, made redundant during the 2019-20 financial year?

(c) Page 9 of the Service NSW Annual Report for 2018-19 states that each week an average of 125,000 people visited a Service NSW Centre and 770,000 visits are made to the Service NSW website. In relation to this, does Service NSW consider staff who work in technology to be 'frontline' workers who should be quarantined from redundancies?

(d) Has Service NSW or the Department of Customer Service undertaken any analysis of the impact redundancies could have on frontline services and customer experience?

i. If yes, will this analysis be made available to the Committee?

ANSWER

31.

Voluntary redundancies are a component for agencies to achieve their efficiency dividends. The Labour Expense Cap introduced in the 2012-13 Budget also continues to give Secretaries as much flexibility as possible to achieve these savings in the most appropriate ways to meet the service requirements of their agencies. Frontline staff and regional employees have been quarantined from this measure.

32.

(a) & (b) The number of full-time equivalent positions within the Customer Service cluster, correct as at 30 June 2020 will be published in the Department of Customer Service 2019/20 Annual Report

33.

(a) This information is publicly available within the ServiceNSW 2017-18 Annual Report correct as at 30 June 2018.

(b) This information is publicly available within the ServiceNSW 2018-19 Annual Report correct as at 30 June 2019.

(c) The number of full-time equivalent positions at Service NSW, correct as at 30 June 2020 will be published in the Service NSW 2019/20 Annual Report

34. (a) As at 9 March 2020, the consolidation of Corporate Services functions has resulted in 21 positions being made redundant

(b) There is no anticipated reduction in the number of full-time equivalent positions in 'frontline' roles.

(c) No

(d) There is no anticipated reduction in the number of full-time equivalent positions in 'frontline' roles.

Critical Communications Enhancement Program

35. What was the budget for the Critical Communications Enhancement Program in each of the following financial years:

(a) 2016-17;

(b) 2017-18;

(c) 2018-19?

36. What is the current budget for the Critical Communications Enhancement Program in each of the following financial years:

(a) 2019-20;

(b) 2020-21;

(c) 2021-22;

(d) 2022-23?

37. How much was spent on the Critical Communications Enhancement Program in each of the following financial years:

(a) 2016-17;

(b) 2017-18;

(c) 2018-19; and

(d) 2019-20 (to date)?

38. What percentage of works for stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program were forecast to be completed in each of the following financial years:

(a) 2016-17;

(b) 2017-18;

(c) 2018-19; and

(d) 2019-20 (to date)?

39. What percentage of works for stages 1, 2 and 3 of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program were completed in each of the following financial years:

- (a) 2016-17;
- (b) 2017-18;
- (c) 2018-19; and
- (d) 2019-20 (to date)?

40. How many people reside in areas which are covered by:

- (a) Stage 1 of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program?
- (b) Stage 2 of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program?
- (c) Stage 3 of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program?
- (d) Stage 4 of the Critical Communications Enhancement Program?

ANSWER

35 -37. CCEP funding announcements are publicly available. The year-end spend on CCEP is published in the Authority’s annual reports.

38- 39. Information on the CCEP’s progress can be found in the Authority’s annual reports.

40.

(a) to (d)

Stage 1 included a pilot region in north western NSW. Population covered is greater than 15,400.

Stage 2 and 3 of the CCEP are being delivered concurrently and will cover a population greater than 7.2 million.

Stage 4 of the CCEP will cover a total population of approximately 109,000.

Cyber security

41. Does Cyber Security NSW maintain a central register of cyber security incidents across all NSW Government agencies?

(a) If so:

i. When was this register established?

ii. What is the total number of incidents which have been recorded on this register to date?

42. How many cyber security incidents involving NSW Government agencies occurred in:

- (a) 2017;
- (b) 2018; and
- (c) 2019?

43. What is the estimated cost of cyber security incidents involving NSW Government agencies which occurred in:

- (a) 2017;
- (b) 2018; and

(c) 2019?

44. How many people were affected by cyber security incidents involving NSW Government agencies in:

(a) 2017;

(b) 2018; and

(c) 2019?

45. Is it mandatory for all NSW Government agencies to report cyber security incidents to:

(a) Cyber Security NSW?

(b) The NSW Police Force?

(c) The Australian Cyber Security Centre?

46. Have any NSW Government agencies terminated any contractual relationships with private companies due to breaches of those companies' obligations to mitigate cyber security risks or protect people's private information?

(a) If so, how many contractual relationships have been terminated for these reasons?

47. Does Cyber Security NSW maintain a register of private companies which are barred from performing work for the NSW Government due to a failure to mitigate cyber security risks or protect people's private information?

(a) If so, how many companies are listed on this register?

48. A submission by the Department of Customer Service to the Public Accounts Committee dated 14 August 2019 states Cyber Security NSW would train 75 executives in cyber security awareness by the end of September 2019. Did this occur?

49. How many cyber security personnel have accessed the technical skills training portal provided by Cyber Security NSW?

50. How many cyber security personnel are employed across the NSW Government?

51. How many full-time equivalent employees work for Cyber Security NSW?

52. Page 40 of the Annual Report of Service NSW for 2018-19 states "there remain residual risks" for Service NSW in relation to cyber security. In relation to this:

(a) What are the residual risks which Service NSW has identified in relation to cyber security?

(b) What actions have been taken to address these risks?

53. How many NSW Government agencies are currently at 'maturity level zero' for one or more of the Australian Cyber Security Centre's 'Essential Eight' strategies to mitigate cyber security risk?

ANSWER

Question 41.

Cyber Security NSW does keep a register of cyber security incidents that are reported to it by agencies.

- i. The register was established in February 2017
- ii. Incident reporting to Cyber Security NSW by agencies is sensitive and not for public release.

Question 42.

Incident reporting to Cyber Security NSW by agencies is sensitive and not for public release.

Question 43.

NSW Government agencies do not routinely estimate the cost of cyber security incidents, nor has there been a requirement for this to be reported. Cyber Security NSW, through activities including operational coordination, cyber security advice and functional exercises, ensures improved continuity of government during and following cyber security incidents.

Question 44.

Cyber Security NSW does not manage the tactical response for individual cyber incidents impacting government agencies and is not able to estimate how many people were affected.

Question 45.

The NSW Cyber Security Policy came into effect on 1 February 2019 after extensive consultation at all levels of the NSW Government with strengthened mandatory requirements.

Agencies must now report incidents to Cyber Security NSW, this has resulted in increased detection of incidents and reduced impacts across NSW Government. The increased reporting provides NSW Government with information used as early warnings to other agencies to assist in their detection.

Cyber Security NSW liaises closely with the NSW Police Force cybercrime command and the Australian Cyber Security Centre despite no mandatory requirement for NSW Government agencies to report.

Question 46.

No. Cyber Security NSW does not maintain a register of contract termination across NSW Government.

Question 47.

Cyber Security NSW does not maintain a register of private companies barred from performing work. However, agencies and clusters are required to do their due diligence on all vendors and third parties before entering into a contract with them, using the Procure IT Framework for the acquisition of information and communications technology-related products and services.

Question 48.

In 2019, Cyber Security NSW provided 70 senior government executives with specific board-level cyber security awareness training. This course was developed in conjunction with Data61 and facilitated by the Australian Institute of Company Directors.

Question 49.

There are 60 active user on the technical skills training portal.

Question 50.

Each cluster is accountable for managing and staffing their own cybersecurity functions. Cyber Security NSW does require clusters to report their cyber security maturity levels as part of annual NSW Cyber Security Policy reporting and assists clusters in uplifting cyber security maturity.

Question 51.

As at 24 March 2020, there were 25 full-time employees working at Cyber Security NSW.

Question 52.

Service NSW manages a range of traditional and specialist security risks including phishing and ransomware attacks, fraudulent citizen activity, product security exploits and service disruption attempts

(Denial of Service). Service NSW works with Department of Customer Service and Cyber Security NSW to report and share intelligence on emerging risks.

Question 53.

This information is publicly available.

Service NSW Centres

- 54. Will the NSW Government establish a permanent Service NSW Centre in Shellharbour?
- 55. Will the NSW Government establish any new permanent Service NSW Centres outside metropolitan Sydney during the next four years?
- 56. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Merrylands?
- 57. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Randwick?
- 58. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Revesby?
- 59. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Northmead?
- 60. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Engadine?
- 61. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Glenmore Park?
- 62. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Prestons or Edmondson Park?
- 63. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Roselands?
- 64. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in North Sydney?
- 65. By what date will the NSW Government open a new Service NSW Centre in Schofields?

ANSWER

- 54. This information is publicly available.
- 55. There are 10 new Service Centres will be added in Sydney's growth suburbs to ensure more people have access to a conveniently located Service NSW outlet. Locations of the 10 new Service NSW Centres are:

Merrylands
Engadine
Revesby
Glenmore Park
Roselands
Northmead
Schofields
Prestons/Edmondson Park
Randwick
North Sydney
- 56. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for Merrylands, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.
- 57. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for Randwick, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We

are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.

58. A new Service Centre is due to open in Revesby during 2020

59. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for Northmead, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.

60. A new Service Centre is due to open in Engadine in 2020.

61. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for Glenmore Park, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.

62. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for Prestons/Edmondson Park, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.

63. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for Roselands, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.

64. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for North Sydney, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.

65. In line with the announcement, the 10 new Service Centres, including one for Schofields, will form part of a staged rollout over the next four years. Local communities will be kept informed of progress. We are in the early stages of planning and expect an extensive range of services to be available at this location.

Branding, advertising and communications

66. How many full-time equivalent employees in the Department of Customer Service currently work on branding, advertising and communications?

67. What is the Department of Customer Service's budget in 2019-20 for branding, advertising and communications?

68. How much did Service NSW spend on branding, advertising and communications in:

(a) 2017-18; and

(b) 2018-19?

69. How much has Service NSW spent on branding, advertising and communications in 2019-20 to date?

ANSWER

66 – 69: The FY17/18 and FY18/19 figures are publicly available in the SNSW Annual Reports *in the Financial Statements section*. The line "Advertising, general marketing, promotions etc" includes but not limited to these reported spends.

NSW Government website changes

70. On 3 February 2020, an article in The Australian reported that Minister for Customer Service Victor Dominello planned to abolish 500 NSW Government websites. The article stated the webpage of the Long Service Corporation and an E10 fuel compatibility website had been identified for abolition. In relation to this:

(a) What are the domain names of the other 498 NSW Government websites which are planned to be abolished under this initiative?

(b) What methodology was used to determine that these websites should be abolished?

(c) What consultation has the NSW Government undertaken with the public and affected stakeholders in relation to this initiative?

(d) Has the NSW Government undertaken any market research, polling or focus groups in relation to this initiative?

i. If so, what was the cost of this research?

71. How much will the initiative to consolidate NSW Government websites cost, and what are the estimated savings which this initiative will deliver?

72. By what date will the initiative to consolidate NSW Government websites be completed?

ANSWER

70. The Department of Customer Service is working closely with agencies to evaluate the suitability of each website for consolidation based on opportunities to improve overall customer experience in dealing with government.

A range of content will be exempt from the consolidation project such as independent Statutory agencies.

The NSW Government websites consolidation strategy has been developed in consultation with more than 200 stakeholders across government. The strategy has been developed by leveraging existing customer research and insights.

71. An initial estimate suggests the consolidation of websites could save tens of millions of dollars over the next 10 years.

72. The website consolidation will happen progressively over the years ahead.

Regional Seniors Travel Card: Processing times

73. How many staff are employed to process application times for the Regional Seniors Travel Cards?

74. How many people have applied for the scheme online?

75. How many people have applied for the scheme using the phone line?

76. How many people have applied for the scheme by attending a Service NSW location?

77. What is the typical wait-time between applicants applying and receiving their card?

78. The Government had budgeted for an uptake of 40% for the program over the course of the first year, but the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads has said that the take-up rate is already at 45% with 180,000 people applying in the first 5 weeks. In terms of resourcing and staffing, did Service NSW also plan for a 40% take-up of the scheme?

ANSWER

73. As at 20 March 2020, 43 call centre staff have assisted with applications over the phone. During peak periods, 93 call centre staff processed applications for customers.

74. As at 20 March 2020 56,951 seniors had successfully applied for the card online.

75. As at 20 March 2020, 31,106 seniors had successfully applied for the card over the phone.

76. As at 20 March 2020, 161,860 seniors had successfully applied for the card at a Service NSW Service Centre.

77. Customers receive their cards by post within 5 to 10 days. The variance in the timeframe is due to the postal service and the customers location.

78. This is a matter for the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

Regional Seniors Travel Card: DSP and Carers exclusions

79. Has the Minister or the Department provided feedback to the Deputy Premier, Minister for Regional Transport and Roads or Transport NSW regarding the exclusion of veterans, seniors with disability or carers?

80. What was that advice?

81. Did you have any say on whether seniors on a Disability Support Pension or a carers payment were excluded from the scheme?

82. Are Service NSW staff keeping a log of complaints, issues or enquiries about the card?

83. Is that log being regularly sent to the Department of Transport and Roads?

84. What feedback has Customer NSW given to the Department of Transport and Roads regarding the scheme?

85. What directive has been given to Seniors NSW staff when seniors on a DSP or carers payment visit Service NSW centres and find out they're ineligible to apply for the Regional Seniors Travel Card?

86. Is it true that Service NSW staff are informing ineligible seniors that the Minister is "reviewing" the eligibility for the scheme in relation to seniors on a DSP or carers payment?

ANSWER

79. Yes.

80. This is a matter for Transport for NSW.

81. No.

82. Yes.

83. Yes.

84. Service NSW provides regular feedback to Transport for NSW regarding customer experience. This includes but is not limited to

- Customer complaints
- Wait times
- Customer feedback through the online channel.
- Online customer sentiment (currently 99.3% positive customer sentiment from applicants online).

85. Customer service staff are advising those customers that the regional seniors travel card is being offered as a two-year trial. The eligibility criteria is listed on our website. The card is not available to people receiving any other payments. Staff are informing customers about the other rebates and savings

available to help with their cost of living. In email correspondence to customers, we have also advised that all feedback is being passed on to Transport for NSW for consideration as part of its evaluation of the trial.

86. No.

Regional Seniors Travel Card: Veterans

87. How many veterans or war widows have attempted to apply for the scheme since the Government announced a backflip to allow them to apply for the scheme on February 15?

88. Why hasn't a manual system been set up to enable these vulnerable seniors to apply?

89. Do you think it's appropriate that veterans were first told they couldn't apply, then told they would be included, and then told they'd have to wait for another three months?

90. Is the hold up in processing these applications with Service NSW or with the Department of Regional Transport?

91. Given your assertion during Estimates that you would become personally involved should it subsequently be revealed that there was an additional wait in processing applications for veterans, what action have you taken to initiate a manual process for applications?

ANSWER

87. As at 24 March, 15,900 Veterans' who are eligible under the new criteria have expressed an interest in applying for the travel card.

88. Safeguarding taxpayer funds and suitable fraud controls is paramount. A manual process would add additional risk of allowing applicants to potentially double claim.

Expanding the eligibility criteria requires technical development of the online solution to ensure the NSW Government can determine applicants are eligible for the scheme. This takes time for development and testing to ensure the solution is effective and works seamlessly. An online registration of interest has been established for customers who will be eligible.

89. Refer to answer 88.

90. Veterans can now apply through Service NSW.

91. Service NSW are assisting customers with registering their details to be notified of the availability of application.

Regional Seniors Travel card: Westpac

92. Are there any other programs that Service NSW is involved in where a major bank is responsible for the operation of the program?

93. What aspects of the application process and deliberation is Service NSW responsible for? And Westpac?

94. When in the application process is the personal information of an applicant given to Westpac?

95. What protections are in place to ensure that personal data is not sold on to private entities or used to sell other Westpac products?

96. What feedback have you received from applicants specifically related to the involvement of Westpac or the use of personal data?

ANSWER

92. No.

93. Service NSW is responsible for the application process. Westpac, engaged by Transport for NSW, is responsible for issuing of cards to approved applicants.

94. Once an individual applies and is successful (eligible) SNSW sends the customer details to Westpac for the purpose of issuing them the card. If the customer is unsuccessful (ineligible) no customer details are sent to Westpac.

95. This is a matter for the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

96. Service NSW has not received any specific feedback from customers relating to the engagement of Westpac.

Regional Seniors Travel Card: Delays

97. Why were cards not available until applicants until February 2020?

98. When was the first cohort of cards sent out?

99. Who monitors how much has been spent on the scheme? Dept of Transport or Service NSW?

100. How many applicants so far have been from bushfire affected communities?

101. Has the Department made any effort to speed up the processing time for seniors in bushfire affected communities?

ANSWER

97. This is a matter for the Minister for Regional Transport and Roads.

98. 16 February 2020.

99. Transport for NSW.

100. This data is not captured.

101. Service NSW is committed to deliver a quick service to all customers. Cards are dispatched within 48 hours of the applicant successfully applying.

Regional Seniors Travel Card: Reporting

102. What is the process by which Customer Service or Service NSW reports the number of applications to Treasury and/or Transport NSW?

103. How frequently is this information conveyed?

104. Does Customer Service or Service NSW have a role to play in transferring information around the spending habits of cardholders?

105. At any stage does Customer Service or Service NSW obtain any information about the spending habits of cardholders?

ANSWER

102. The number of applicants is shared in real-time with the use of reporting dashboards available to Transport for NSW and key stakeholders.

103. The information is in real-time and accessible at all times.

104. No

105. No.

Regional Seniors Travel Card: Digital Literacy

106. How has the Department worked to reduce the barriers to accessing the scheme for seniors on the basis of digital literacy?

107. Has Customer Service or Service NSW provided any advice to Transport NSW or the relevant ministers regarding the barriers faced by older people and people from CALD or NESB backgrounds when applying or managing the scheme?

ANSWER

106. The application is available to all seniors through our call centre, service centre as well as online. Our frontline staff are actively alerting seniors in regional NSW of the availability of the program.

107. Yes. Service NSW has advised that the following services are available for customers:

- The Service NSW website uses a free online language translation service to automatically translate our content into a variety of community languages. A free National Translating and Interpreting Service is available on [131 450](tel:131450). Customers may call this number and ask them to call us on [13 77 88](tel:137788). The service provides immediate phone interpreting.
- At some Service NSW service centres, customers can access staff who can speak languages other than English that are popular in the local community.

Cost of Living Measures

108. What has been the total number of people who have taken up each of the Government's 70 rebates so far in 2019-2020?

109. What is the total number of eligible people for each rebate or savings projected by the Government?

110. What has been the total cost of these rebates and savings in this financial year?

111. What is the total cost for each rebate or savings projected by the Government?

ANSWER

108 - 109. Since July 2019, over 35,000 people have accessed the Cost of Living program. These customers could be eligible for more than one rebate. Data is not available on numbers of all individual rebates.

110 - 111. The Cost of Living service is a service offering providing customers with increased awareness and access to Government rebates and ways to save through Service NSW. Costs of rebates and savings remain with the relevant government agencies.

Cost of Living One-Stop Shops

112. How many cost of living one-stop-shops have been established in NSW?

113. What has been the total cost of establishing cost-of-living one stop shops in Service NSW centres?

114. What was the total cost of branding, signage and livery for the cost of living one-stop shops?

115. What was the total cost of updating digital assets in relation to cost of living one-stop-shops?

116. What is the total cost of marketing and advertising cost of living one-stop-shops?
117. How many residents have used the cost of living one-stop-shops?
118. How many complaints have been recorded against the cost of living one-stop-shops?
119. How many staff are employed in the cost of living one-stop-shops?
120. How many people have used the online and phone services associated with cost of living one stop-shops?
121. How many staff are employed in the operation of both of these services?
122. What is the total cost of operating both of these services?
123. How many complaints have been received in relation to both of these services?

ANSWER

112. No specific 'cost of living one-stop-shops' have been established. Cost of Living appointments are available at Service NSW Service Centres including the Mobile Service Centres and some Council agencies.

113 -116. The total upfront cost of establishing cost of living appointments is absorbed within the Service NSW operating budget.

117. 45,103 customers have attended Cost of Living appointments as of 23 March 2020. There have been approx. 3.15M completed Cost of Living assessments using the Savings Finder since July 2018.

118. There have been 17 complaints (0.04%) regarding Cost of Living appointments as of 23 March 2020.

119. There are 62 Support Service Specialists who undertake Cost of Living appointment services across the Service NSW network.

120. Service NSW does not identify individual customers through telephone enquiries however 40,022 calls have been answered for the Cost of Living service since the service commenced in July 2018.

Service NSW does not record individual customer usage of the Savings Finder (Cost of Living digital tool), however there have been approx. 3.15M completed Cost of Living assessments using the Savings Finder since July 2018.

121 -122. This information is publicly available.

123. 5 complaints in total have been made in relation to these services.