



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2019-2020 Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Industry

Regional New South Wales, Industry and Trade

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Answers due by: Monday, 27 April 2020

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REGIONAL NEW SOUTH WALES, INDUSTRY AND TRADE

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

Bushfire Clean Up

1. How many sites have so far been cleaned up by Laing O'Rourke statewide?
 - (a) How many site owners have not yet been engaged in discussions about works at their site?

ANSWER:

I am advised that as at 19 April 2020, 545 properties have been cleared under the program.

I am advised that as of the 18th April the Laing O'Rourke call centre has directly engaged with more than 3,000 inquiries and has issued more than 8,950 emails. To date Laing O'Rourke has made more than 4,200 direct outgoing calls to registered property owners to arrange property inspections

2. Is there any kind of Exclusion Zone, of for example 15 metres, around a destroyed property that Laing O'Rourke will not clean up?

ANSWER:

No, there is not a 15 metre exclusion zone. The program focuses on safety hazards and issues that could impede people rebuilding their homes. A detailed assessment and scope document is available on the Service NSW website.

3. Are there footings or foundations which Laing O'Rourke has been asked to excavate and remove but which it refuses to?

ANSWER:

I am advised that The Public Works Advisory has not received any representations or complaints regarding this issue.

Further information regarding the program's eligibility requirements may be found at www.service.nsw.gov.au/system/files/2020-03/bushfire-property-clean-up-scope-overview.pdf.

4. How many sites does Laing O'Rourke plan to clear up by the end of April?

ANSWER:

Based on the programs issued to Public Works Advisory on Friday 20 Mar 2020 and taking into account current events and resource availability, LOR is projecting to be clearing approximately 900 to 1000 properties by the end of April 2020. Further COVID restrictions related to construction or travel may impact the achievability of this target, targeting approximately 250-300 cleared per week.

5. What is the average cost per lot for the bushfire lot?

ANSWER:

I am advised that property type, size, location, access, hazardous materials, and waste volumes all influence the cost of a property. The total cost of clean-up is expected to run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

6. Will people whose homes were cleaned up by their insurer before the Government announced the coordinated clean-up project be refunded the value of that clean-up cost by government so as to restore to its full value their insurance payout?

ANSWER:

Yes, where a property is eligible for the Government's clean-up program.

Further information regarding the program's eligibility requirements may be found at

www.service.nsw.gov.au/system/files/2020-03/bushfire-property-clean-up-scope-overview.pdf.

7. What is the funding allocation to the overall clean-up effort if the amount announced in November 2019 for the North Coast region alone was \$25 million?

ANSWER:

I am advised that the total cost of clean-up is expected to run into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

8. If the June 30 deadline is not met as promised, will you provide financial support to people who are waiting for Laing O'Rourke to clear their destroyed homes since they must pay for temporary accommodation while they wait?

ANSWER:

People can contact the Bushfire Housing Assistance Service within the Department of Communities and Justice to discuss their individual circumstances and for more information.

9. If Laing O'Rourke fails to meet the deadline of June 30 are there any penalties payable in their contract?

ANSWER:

Any potential increases in the time for delivery of the program beyond June 30 need to be justified. As the payments process in the contract is done on a schedule of rates, and cost plus basis, this means that payments are essentially only made for work that is done, whether the scope increases or decreases.

10. If the clean-up project drags on beyond June 30, will additional funding over and above that already committed to in the existing contract be provided to Laing O'Rourke?

ANSWER:

I am advised that the funding allocated is sufficient to meet the program's core objective of cleaning up eligible properties that have been destroyed or damaged by the recent bushfires.

11. On 9 January 2020, the Government announced \$1bn in recovery funding "to rebuild bushfire impacted communities across New South Wales". How much of this \$1bn funding has been expended so far?
- (a) How much of this discrete allocation of funding covered by the 9 January announcement has been expended on rebuilding or repairing government owned assets?
 - (b) How much of this discrete allocation of funding covered by the 9 January announcement has been expended providing direct assistance to bushfire survivors?

ANSWER:

The NSW Government has committed \$1 billion to replace and enhance vital state infrastructure following the devastating bushfires. Hundreds of kilometres of roads, rail lines, bridges, schools, health facilities and communication facilities are being repaired and rebuilt. NSW Treasury has responsibility for administering this funding in consultation with INSW. Questions regarding payments and allocations should therefore be directed to the NSW Treasurer.

12. Will you direct the Minister for Property to co-fund fencing replacement for farmers' whose properties adjoin Crown Lands, despite Crown Lands enjoying an exemption to the Dividing Fences Act which requires a 50/50 division of costs?

ANSWER:

The NSW Government has committed \$209m as a co-contribution to rebuild boundary fences adjacent to crown lands.

13. Have you received correspondence from any community representatives asking for full, open and public hearings for the Bushfire Inquiry?

ANSWER:

I am advised that any correspondence regarding the Bushfire Inquiry is referred directly to the Inquiry.

Offshoring of jobs by NSW Government Departments and Agencies

14. Does your Department model the impact of other Departments' decisions to send procurement projects overseas?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Treasurer, for NSW Treasury, and for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces for the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment.

15. Do you know how many jobs were lost or forgone through the decisions to offshore
- (a) New Intercity Fleet Trains to South Korea?
 - (b) Light Rail trains to Spain?
 - (c) Double Decker Buses to Malaysia?
 - (d) Ferries to China and Indonesia?

ANSWER:

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

Jobs and Employment

16. To what factors or causes does your Department ascribe the recent increases in unemployment and youth unemployment in the Shoalhaven and Southern Highlands region?

ANSWER:

Overall regional NSW has seen strong growth in jobs figures, despite enduring the worst drought in living memory. In the year to December 2019, employment in Regional NSW grew by 38,200 people. The total Regional NSW employment figures for the year ending December 2019 (1.153 million) were significantly stronger than other regional jurisdictions - Victoria 735,900 jobs, South Australia 175,500 jobs, Western Australia 271,500 jobs and Tasmania recording 139,300 jobs. There are pockets of high youth unemployment in regional areas, including in the Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven. The global pandemic Covid-19 and recent bushfires are likely to have further negative impacts on employment.

The NSW Government is actively working to address unemployment in the Southern Highlands and Shoalhaven through initiatives such as the Infrastructure Skills Legacy Program, the \$10 million Youth Employment Innovation Challenge, the Illawarra Youth Employment Strategy and Sticking Together Social Impact Bond.

17. Will you direct the Minister for Energy to make a direction to Essential Energy not to move ahead with the planned 500 job cuts by 2024?

ANSWER:

We have committed to no public service job cuts in regional NSW and we stand by that.

18. Will you direct the Minister for Energy to make a direction to Essential Energy to retain the 182 jobs which were to be cut but for which the current direction expires in August 2020?

ANSWER:

We have committed to no public service job cuts in Regional NSW and we stand by that.

Regional Job Security

19. On page 56 of the uncorrected transcript Mr Roberts said, “(...)we have some very creative and innovative customers who are looking at all sorts of different ideas. There will also be a lot of jobs in the bush. We have a huge replanting program ahead of us and there may well be some opportunities there.”

- (a) Please advise what industries these customers come from?
- (b) How many customers are looking to develop industry in the regions?
- (c) What support is the Department giving to these customers to develop their ideas?
- (d) Have any job positions have been confirmed?
- (e) Does the Department conduct tours with interested customers/parties? If yes, please list location and date of tours

ANSWER

- a) The forest and timber industry.
- b) Forestry Corporation has been talking with its own customer base about their own individual business plans and opportunities.
- c) The Government currently provides concessional loans through the NSW Forest Industries Innovation Fund a \$34 million loan scheme that provides long-term low-interest loans to projects that contribute to supporting industry innovation and the exploration of new markets for forest products.
- d) Forestry Corporation does not directly employ the staff of its customers and contractors and does not have visibility or involvement in their current or future job positions.
- e) No

20. What specific jobs was Mr Roberts referring to when he said ‘a lot of jobs in the bush’? Please provide job title and amount of FTE positions?

ANSWER

The forest and timber industry is continuing throughout regional NSW. Recovery tasks including salvage harvesting, haulage, processing and replanting will be substantial and are likely to require additional staff or increased hours for existing staff. These roles are carried out by Forestry Corporation’s customers and contractors and staff carrying out these roles are not directly employed by Forestry Corporation.

21. How many jobs will be created from the replanting program?

- (a) How are these being advertised?

ANSWER

Forestry Corporation does not directly employ staff involved in planting. Forestry Corporation awards contracts to third party organisations who engage a workforce to carry out replanting work.

State Forest Infrastructure Damage

22. On page 62 of the uncorrected transcript Mr Roberts said, “In terms of softwoods, I think we have lost five or six bridges that were destroyed and there are areas of road network which have been damaged to some extent.”
- (a) Please advise the number and name of the bridges that were destroyed by the recent fires in the State Forests?
 - (b) What were these bridges constructed of?
 - (c) Will they be rebuilt using the same material?
 - (d) How long will it take to repair or rebuild these bridges?
 - (e) What temporary measure have been taken since they were damaged?
 - (f) How much funding will be required to complete construction of these bridges?
 - (g) When will the full extent of the road damage be known?
 - i. Can you provide an estimate of the road damage?

ANSWER

- (a) This information is not yet available as assessments are still being conducted. In some areas the damage is so extensive that access is still not possible to undertake assessments.
- (b) The bridges were generally made of timber.
- (c) This will be considered on a case-by-case basis. As part of the re-building program, Forestry Corporation intends to use more fire resistant materials on key access routes.
- (d) This will be determined once assessments have been completed.
- (e) Forests have been closed to protect members of the public. Temporary crossings have been used for emergency access. Signage and barricades continue to be installed.
- (f) This information is not yet available as assessments are still being conducted.
- (g) This information is not yet available as assessments are still being conducted.

\$46 million injection and equity into Forestry Corporation

23. What will the \$46 million injection and equity into Forestry Corporation be spent on?

(a) How much of this injection will be in job retention?

i. Job Creation?

ANSWER:

This funding will go towards the early replanting of plantations, expanding nursery capacity to help grow the seedlings needed over the next decade to fully restock the plantations and repair of some fire-damaged infrastructure like roads and bridges in State forests required to gain access and harvest.

(a) The capital works and replanting programs listed above will contribute to job retention and creation.

24. Please advise what the 'fine print' is that the Minister is referring to on page 63 of the transcript?

(a) Does this money have to be paid back?

(b) How will the efficiency dividends impact upon this injection?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Treasurer.

Industry Package

25. On page 64 of the uncorrected transcript the Minister advised there is going to be an industry package delivered later in the year?

(a) When will this be announced?

(b) What metrics will the Department use to evaluate industry needs?

(c) Will any funding have to be paid back?

(d) Where will the money come from?

ANSWER:

The NSW Government has announced a \$140 million Bushfire Industry Recovery Package. This package includes support for the forestry, horticulture and agriculture industries. Details of funding criteria will be made available with the release of the program guidelines shortly.

The government remains committed to rebuilding communities and supporting industries devastated by the recent bushfires. The Boston Consulting Group is assisting the NSW Government to assess and understand the economic impacts of bushfires and this work is continuing.

Job Analysis

26. When will the recent job analysis undertaken as part of the industry plans and the regional economic development strategies be available to the public?
- (a) Where will this be available?
 - (b) Who is conducted the review?
 - (c) Are any consultants or contractors involved in the analysis? If yes, who?
 - (d) What will this analysis be used for?

ANSWER:

The Office of the Coordinator-General, supported by Boston Consulting Group, is completing the analysis of bushfire's impacts on the Regional Economic Development Strategies (REDS). This analysis will be used to establish an early understanding of the impact of the bushfires on industries, employment and local economies, to guide future strategic directions for local recovery and economic development and provide a consistent approach to assistance measures.

These will be used to create a REDS bushfire addenda, which will be made public once finalised.

Exclusion Fencing

27. How much money from the \$250 million package of infrastructure programs (page 69) has been set aside for Crown Lands fencing?
- (a) Are private land owners able to apply for fencing from this program?
 - (b) Will private landholders who share a boundary with Crown Lands be able to participate or decide what type of fencing will be constructed?
 - (c) Will they be able to choose exclusion fencing?

ANSWER:

The government has set aside \$209 million as a co-contribution towards rebuilding fences along Crown lands boundaries that were damaged during the 2019/20 bushfire season.

- a) Owners of rural holdings (as defined by Local Government) will be able to apply for funding under the scheme.
- b) Owners of rural holdings who share a boundary with Crown lands will be able to participate and negotiate what type of fence will be constructed as long as it is a permanent stock proof fence.
- c) Yes. However the funding contribution will be capped at \$5,000 per km.

Departmental Budget Cuts

28. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment have been forced to find \$81.4 million worth of cuts this financial year due to the 2019/2020 budget. The Secretary, Jim Betts has reported roughly \$45 million worth of cuts have been made as of January 2020, with \$36.4 million still to come.

- (a) How many jobs have been cut as a result of these cuts?
- (b) How is the Department going to find \$36 million worth of cuts in the next 4 months?
- (c) Considering the devastating recent bushfire season, will the government cancel its plans to rip a further \$36 million dollars out of DPIE?

ANSWER:

a) The Department has reduced its expenditure on staffing through a number of means including delaying non-essential recruitment, a reduction in backfilling vacant roles, and reducing its use of contractors and consultants. The department was also tasked with reducing its senior executive expenditure which has contributed to the overall savings. To date, 55 senior executives have left the organisation as a result of the machinery of government changes and subsequent restructures.

b) The Department's guiding principle has been to reduce our non-staff operating costs (including travel, office rent, advertising and the use of consultants) wherever practicable in order to meet the savings targets. The remaining savings have been found through:

- Re-evaluation of current and planned projects to identify less strategic or urgent projects that may be postponed or cancelled;
- Less backfilling – when a staff member leaves their position, only recruit to replace them when there is a critical need to do so;

- Cutting back further on consultants and contractors – beyond the cutbacks already made on our use of contractors and consultants (by bringing roles in-house and using our existing people wherever possible), many more contractors have recently not had their contracts extended.

c) There has been no decision by Government to reverse efficiency dividends or savings.

29. What additional funds have been provided by the Government to support the drought response activities?

ANSWER:

This year (2019/20), the NSW Government has allocated over half a billion dollars to drought programs:

Water Security	\$72.78m for critical water infrastructure \$58.26m recurrent for critical water programs \$29.5m capital for critical water infrastructure projects in 2019-20 Total: \$160.54m (2019-20)
Business and communities	\$170m drought stimulus package
On-farm support	\$175m to extend existing programs \$36m to continue Drought Transport Subsidies Total: \$211m (2019-20)
TOTAL	\$541.54m

30. The Deputy Secretary of RIAR has stated that those additional funds do not close the gap in their budget. What's the size of the budget black hole?

ANSWER:

The net impact of savings for the RIAR group arising as part of the FY19-20 budget is less than 1 per cent.

31. Are Regions, Industry, Agriculture and Resource immune from the DPIE staffing freeze?

- (a) What roles will not be backfilled as a result of the staffing freeze?

ANSWER:

There is no staffing freeze at DPIE.

32. What services to Farmers, Landholders and the wider community will no longer be provided as a result of the savings plan and associated staffing freeze?

ANSWER:

There is no staffing freeze at DPIE. The savings targets imposed on the Planning, Industry & Environment Cluster as a result of the 19-20 budget process are being managed to minimise any impact to services provided directly to the public. Savings have been found from non-staff operating costs (including travel, office rent, advertising and the use of consultants) wherever practicable to reduce the impact on both staff and services provided directly to the citizens of NSW.

33. What resources and work programs will no longer be delivered to regional communities as a results of the budget cuts?

ANSWER:

The savings targets imposed on the Planning, Industry & Environment Cluster as a result of the 19-20 budget process are being managed to minimise any impact to services provided directly to the public. Savings have been found from non-staff operating costs (including travel, office rent, advertising and the use of consultants) wherever practicable to reduce the impact on both staff and services provided directly to the citizens of NSW.

34. Can the Government guarantee that no jobs in the regions will be downgraded or reclassified to a lower graded, and lower paid, role, as a result of these budget cuts?

ANSWER:

Normal industrial processes will be followed for any changes required to be made throughout the Department and Cluster. The Department is constantly reviewing the mix of staff and capabilities required to ensure required service levels and value to the citizens of NSW, regardless of staff locations.

35. How does the non-back filling of roles reconcile with the government's commitment to no job losses in the regions?

ANSWER:

Each role requiring backfilling is critically assessed on a case-by-case basis. When someone chooses to leave a role the role's merit, whether it is critically required and the impact of the role's functions on other staff are considered. We also consider continuity of service at the required levels and best value to the citizens of NSW.

36. How many jobs will need to be cut across Regions, Industry, Agriculture and Resources due to the 12% efficiency dividend contained within the Governments budget? (3% per year over 4 years)

ANSWER:

We are unaware of a 12% efficiency dividend contained 2019-20 budget and the Department considered the regional staffing profile in determining the net allocation of any savings across the cluster. The Department's guiding principle has been to reduce our non-staff operating costs (including travel, office rent, advertising and the use of consultants) wherever practicable in order to meet the savings targets.

37. What is the approximate cost to NSW farmers of replacing fencing damaged by the recent bushfires?

ANSWER:

NSW DPI have estimated the average cost of replacement of boundary fences to be approximately \$10,000 per km

38. Considering this cost, shouldn't extra resources and funding be set aside for Government agencies such as NPWS and LLS to assist in rebuilding those fences?

ANSWER:

The Boundary Fences Reconstruction Program provides for additional resources to ensure the program is as efficient and effective as possible.

Forestry Corporation

39. How many representations from MP's has Forestry Corporation or the Minister received with respect of replacement fencing on behalf of private landholders adjoining Forestry Corporation land?

ANSWER:

In the financial year to 25 March 2020, Forestry Corporation or the Minister received ten representations from MPs relating to replacement fencing on behalf of private landholders adjoining Forestry Corporation land.

40. Has a salvage harvesting protocol been established for wildlife in the Coastal IFOA?

ANSWER:

The Coastal IFOA is available on the EPA website. Measures to protect wildlife habitat are detailed in both the Coastal IFOA Conditions and Coastal IFOA Protocols. Additional site-specific conditions have been and continue to be developed for selected fire-affected areas and these conditions are also published on the EPA's website.

41. The Daily Telegraph reported on 22 February 2020 that 20 burnt sites have been identified as suitable for harvesting on the north and south coast – can the details of each site be provided?

(a) Are these the only sites that have been approved?

(b) If not, how many sites have been improved in total and can the location and harvesting details for each site be provided?

ANSWER:

Approvals are granted by the EPA and these questions should be addressed to that authority.

42. Has Forestry Corporation considered or developed a public education campaign to outline why salvage harvesting may have to take place?

ANSWER:

Information about harvesting in fire-affected forests is provided to neighbours and published on Forestry Corporation's website.

43. Is any or all of the remaining amount of the \$24 million equity injection being used for the purchase of private plantation areas to expand Forestry Corporation's plantation estate? If not, what is the remaining amount of the equity injection being used for?

ANSWER:

Approximately \$1.5 million of the \$24 million equity fund has been utilised to purchase privately-owned land for the purposes of expanding the plantation estate. Given the impact of bushfires on the plantations, NSW Treasury is considering redirecting the equity fund to assist with replanting.

44. How much of the \$24 million equity injection has been spent? How many hectares of plantation estate has been purchased to date? What is the mix of purchases between hardwood and softwood?

ANSWER:

To date, Forestry Corporation has spent approximately \$1.5 million of the \$24 million. Approximately 630 hectares, comprising approximately 437 hectares of plantable area has been purchased. All land purchased is for addition to the softwood plantation estate.

45. Has Forestry Corporation or the department undertaken an assessment of the level of support required to keep timber industry workers employed once the salvage harvesting has been completed? If so, what is the current assessment and to whom is this information being provided and for what purpose? If not, will this assessment be undertaken?

ANSWER:

Regular consultation with the industry including the Australian Forest Contractors Association (AFCA) is ongoing.

46. Does Forestry Corporation use any indigenous cool burning practices as part of its land management strategies? If so, how widely used are these practices?

ANSWER:

Yes, cultural burning is a part of Forestry Corporation's fuel management strategy and has been employed in burns on both the north and south coast in recent years

47. Does Forestry Corporation consider the communications and other arrangements between organisations involved in firefighting to be adequate? If not, what needs to be improved?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation has a close working relationship with the Rural Fire Service and other firefighting agencies and carries out after action reviews following each firefighting campaign to identify and address issues as they arise and ensure continuous improvement.

48. Is Forestry Corporation examining the need to increase its firefighting capacity? If so, what matters or approaches are being considered?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation continually assesses its firefighting capability, in consultation with the RFS, to ensure it is appropriate. Forestry Corporation maintains an agreed level of firefighters in each of its forest protection areas, pre-emptively deploys staff from other areas, and engages seasonal, casual, on call and contract firefighters to bolster capability as required.

49. Did Forestry Corporation conduct any hazard reduction activities prior to the current fire season? If so, what was the size of the area treated and in what locations? Does Forestry Corporation believe that this reduced the impact of fires in those areas?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation has an annual hazard reduction burning program that is developed in collaboration with the Rural Fire Service, other land managers and local communities through Bushfire Management Committees. Data about the area treated by hazard reduction burning is published annually in Forestry Corporation's Sustainability Report.

Regular fire and grazing across many State forests reduced fuel loads in strategic areas.

50. Did Forestry Corporation provide any advice, assistance or support to any of the properties it neighbours to reduce fuel loads prior to the current fire season? If so, what support was provided and how did Forestry Corporation determine which neighbours to support?

ANSWER:

Fire management across the landscape and on private properties is the responsibility of the RFS. Forestry Corporation does provide support and assistance to neighbours in joint burning operations on a tenure blind basis where it provides mutual benefit or protection.

51. Has Forestry Corporation been able to supply timber for power pole replacements damaged by the 2019-20 bushfires?

ANSWER:

Yes.

52. How many poles were damaged across NSW in the 2019-10 bushfires?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

53. How many timber poles have been replaced to date?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

54. Has NSW had to source supply for timber poles from interstate?

(a) If so, how many poles were sourced from interstate?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

55. What was the cost of the interstate supply?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

56. How many vehicles are currently owned or leased by Forestry Corporation?

ANSWER:

387.

57. How many of the vehicles owned or leased by Forestry Corporation general purpose passenger vehicles?

ANSWER:

None. These vehicles are all light utility vehicles and SUVs expressly for managing planning and operations along with fire mitigation and suppression.

58. How many of Forestry Corporation's general purpose passenger vehicles are electric or hybrid vehicles?

ANSWER:

N/A.

59. Is Forestry Corporation subject to the NSW Government's Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Plan? If not, why not?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation's light vehicle fleet is not maintained for general purpose passenger transport. The technical specifications of electric and hybrid vehicles available on the market do not meet Forestry Corporation's light vehicle requirements.

60. Will Forestry Corporation meet the NSW Government's target of 10 per cent of new general purposed passenger fleet cars being either electric or hybrid by 2020/21? If not, what is the primary reason for Forestry Corporation being unable to meet this target? What steps are being taken to address this problem?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation's light vehicle fleet is not maintained for general purpose passenger transport. The technical specifications of electric and hybrid vehicles available on the market do not meet requirements.

Forestry Corporation has had discussions with preferred suppliers about whether they have plans to develop hybrid vehicles that meet Forestry Corporation's technical specifications but has been advised there is no timeline for developing such vehicles.

61. Has Forestry Corporation installed any electric vehicle charging facilities in any of the forests that are open to the public? If so, how many and in which locations? If not, does Forestry Corporation have any plans to install electric vehicle charging facilities in the camping, recreation or other facilities that it manages?

ANSWER:

No. Forestry Corporation does not offer power at camping sites.

62. How many of the field-based staff have qualifications in the following:
- (a) Forestry management
 - (b) Ecology
 - (c) Conservation and land management
 - (d) Science
 - (e) Forest growing and management
 - (f) Habitat assessment

ANSWER:

This information cannot be compiled. All Forestry Corporation staff have qualifications that are suitable for the role they are employed to do.

63. How many of the office based staff have qualifications in the following:
- (a) Forestry management
 - (b) Ecology

- (c) Conservation and land management
- (d) Science
- (e) Forest growing and management
- (f) Habitat assessment

ANSWER:

This information cannot be compiled. All Forestry Corporation staff have qualifications that are suitable for the role they are employed to do.

64. For each of the last three years, how much did Forestry Corporation spend on weed management?

ANSWER:

This information is published in Forestry Corporation's annual Sustainability Report.

65. How much is Forestry Corporation forecast to spend on weed management in 2020/21?

ANSWER:

Approximately \$714,000, excluding post-establishment competition control.

66. For each of the last three years, how much did Forestry Corporation spend on pest control?

ANSWER:

This information is published in Forestry Corporation's annual Sustainability Report.

67. How much is Forestry Corporation forecast to spend on pest control in 2020/21?

ANSWER:

Approximately \$914,000.

68. Has Forestry Corporation approached nurseries in other states to supply the expected shortfall in seedlings needed to re-establish the softwood plantations damaged in the bushfires?

ANSWER:

Yes.

69. What is the estimated cost per hectare of replanting softwood plantations, including the cost ground preparation, seedlings, transport and labour costs associated with replanting?

ANSWER:

Average plantation re-establishment cost per hectare is published in Forestry Corporation's Sustainability Report.

70. How many staff will need to be employed to undertake the replanting of the softwood plantations, when will these staff be engaged and how long will they be engaged for?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation does not directly employ staff involved in planting. Forestry Corporation awards contracts to third party organisations who engage a workforce to carry out replanting work.

71. When will ground preparations commence in the softwood plantation areas to prepare the ground for replanting? Will additional equipment need to be purchased, hired or leased for the preparation? What is the expected cost of this additional equipment?

ANSWER:

Site preparations commenced immediately following fires and sites are continually prepared for replanting progressively as fire-affected timber is harvested and removed. Forestry Corporation has contracts for site preparation with third party organisations who engage the equipment they require directly.

72. How long will it take to prepare the ground in the softwood plantations for replanting?

ANSWER:

Ground preparation and replanting is carried out on a continuous annual cycle. Generally, Forestry Corporation carries out ground preparation for sites harvested in the previous year progressively from

September to the end of February, followed by weed treatment between March and May and planting from late May until mid-September.

73. In evidence to the Committee Forestry Corporation noted that it intended to replant the softwood plantations at 10,000 hectares a year. How was this area determined to be the optimum amount? How many years will it take to replant the softwood plantations at a rate of 10,000 hectares a year?

ANSWER:

The planting program continues to be refined. It is currently estimated that Forestry Corporation's Softwood Plantations Division will carry out an annual state-wide planting program of around 11,000 hectares a year, which comprises 10,000 hectares of Radiata pine including the Tumut resource.

This was determined based on capacity for seedling production and site preparation. This is a 10-year replanting schedule, which is operating at a rate around 60 per cent higher than normal each year throughout the ten-year period.

74. What is the incremental cost per hectare of replanting the softwood plantations?

ANSWER:

This will be site dependent but up to \$1,000 extra per hectare.

Resources for Regions

75. Will the guidelines for the new round include the implementation of all the recommendations of the review? If not, which ones will it include?

ANSWER:

All recommendations of the strategic review will be considered in the development of new program guidelines.

76. Has the formula for the calculation of the mining employment Location Quotient been finalised? If so, how is it calculated?

ANSWER:

The Location Quotient is a ratio that compares the relative size of an industry within a region to the relative size of that industry within a larger geographical area, such as the state or the whole nation.

The Location Quotient is based on Australian Bureau of Statistics Census data – Place of Work. Typically, location quotients are calculated as a region’s industry employment as a proportion of the region’s total employment. This is then calculated as a ratio of the industry to total employment in the region divided by the same ratio for the larger geographical area (in this case, the state).

77. The summary report (page 2) notes that review included a recommendation that “There should be flexibility around the requirements of a co-contribution and threshold of Benefit Cost Ratio of above 1.0” – but the listed recommendations make no mention of a change to the Benefit Cost Ratio except for having the program funded from the consolidated fund (rather than Restart) – will the government be changing the requirement with respect of the Benefit Cost Ratio?
- (a) If not, given the review notes that one of the issues of the program is “an increase in failures of applications due to applicant inability to meet the Benefit Cost Ratio requirements” – why will the government continue to require a BCR of 1.0 or greater?

ANSWER:

All recommendations of the strategic review will be considered in the development of new program guidelines.

78. Will the guidelines be expanded to include non-infrastructure programs that will support the economic development of mining-impacted areas?

ANSWER:

All recommendations of the strategic review will be considered in the development of new program guidelines.

79. Which three projects from Round 6 have yet to have their funding agreements finalised and projects commenced?

ANSWER:

All projects funded under Round 6 now have active funding deeds in place. These projects can now commence.

80. Has the Department entered into discussions with Treasury about the allocation under the program for the 2020/21 financial year? Has Treasury expressed any concerns about the level of funding allocated to the program given that, to date, around half of the funding this financial year remains unallocated?

ANSWER:

Program funding allocations are considered in the Government budget process.

Port Kembla Community Investment Fund

81. Will there be a funding round offered under the Port Kembla Community Investment Fund before the end of the 2019/20 financial year?

ANSWER:

The Port Kembla Community Investment Fund is an ongoing program. The timing of future funding rounds and key dates is at the discretion of the NSW Government.

82. Will there be a funding round offered and announced under the Port Kembla Community Investment fund before 31 December 2020?

ANSWER:

Refer to previous answer.

83. When will the next round of applications be sought under the Port Kembla Community Investment Fund?

ANSWER:

Refer to previous answer.

84. How long will applications be open for under the next round of the Port Kembla Community Investment Fund?

ANSWER:

Refer to previous answer.

85. Has the review of the Port Kembla Community Investment Fund been completed? If so, on what date was it provided to the Minister or the Minister's office?

ANSWER:

The Review of the Fund was completed and recommendations endorsed by the Deputy Premier in 2019.

86. How many submissions from previous grant recipients, organisations in Port Kembla, unsuccessful grant recipients or others were received as part of the review?

ANSWER:

I am advised by the Department that one written submission was received. The Review involved an on-line survey of previous grant recipients and interviews with key local stakeholder groups.

87. What were the main conclusions of the review in terms of the Fund's suitability, projects funded and operation to date?

ANSWER:

The Review found the Fund has been delivered in an effective manner with appropriate levels of probity applied to key processes.

88. What were the recommendations of the review?

ANSWER:

The recommendations of the Review included:

- Extend the geographical scope of the Fund to include adjoining suburbs;
- Consider private sector business investment projects; and
- Allow at least two months for the application period.

89. Has the Government accepted all of the recommendations of the review?

ANSWER:

Yes.

90. Will the review report and its recommendations be made public? If so, when? If it contains commercial-in-confidence material has consideration been given to publicly releasing a redacted version of the report or a summary report?

ANSWER:

The review report will be made public before the next Round of the program is opened.

91. Please provide a complete list of stakeholders consulted as part of the review and the dates on which discussions with these stakeholders took place or dates when written contributions from these stakeholders selected by the reviewers for consultation were received.

ANSWER:

42 stakeholders were consulted as part of the review process.

- 32 previous applicants responded to an on-line survey
- 7 Evaluation Panel members were interviewed
- The President of the Port Kembla Chamber of Commerce and Industry was interviewed
- A representative of NSW Ports was interviewed
- The Member for Wollongong made a written submission

92. What is the total amount of funding that will be available through the next round of the Port Kembla Community Investment Fund?

ANSWER:

A decision has not been made about the funding for the next round.

93. How many projects have not been completed from (a) Round 1, (b) Round 2 and (c) Round 3? Which projects have not been completed in each of the above and when will they be completed?

ANSWER:

As of 3 April 2020: All Round 1 projects are complete. Eight of the eleven Round 2 projects are complete with the remaining three projects expected to be complete by the 30 June 2020. Six of the seventeen Round 3 projects are complete. All Round 3 projects are expected to be complete by 30 June 2021. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic might delay delivery of some projects.

94. Will the Port Kembla Surplus Industrial Lands Activation project report funded under Round 2 of the PKCIF be made public? If not, why not? If it contains commercial-in-confidence material

has consideration been given to publicly releasing a redacted version of the report or a summary report?

ANSWER:

Key stakeholders need be consulted ahead of any public release of the Port Kembla Surplus Industrial Lands Activation project report.

95. Will the Tourism Development Plan for Port Kembla project report funded under Round 2 of the PKCIF be made public to guide future project applications? If not, why not? If it contains commercial-in-confidence material has consideration been given to publicly releasing a redacted version of the report or a summary report?

ANSWER:

Key stakeholders need be consulted ahead of any public release of the Port Kembla Tourism Development Plan report.

96. Will the Port Kembla Community Campus Masterplan funded under Round 3 of the PKCIF be made public? If not, why not? If it contains commercial-in-confidence material has consideration been given to publicly releasing a redacted version of the report or a summary report?

ANSWER:

The Community Industry Group has approved the public release of the Port Kembla Community Campus Masterplan.

97. Why is the Port Kembla Wetlands Rehabilitation Stage 2 project listed as “Withdrawn”? Was the funding for this project withdrawn by the department? If so, why? Or was this project withdrawn by the applicant? If so, why? Will the \$47,667 allocated to this project be returned to the funding pool for future rounds? If not, why not?

ANSWER:

The applicant advised that they were no longer able to deliver the project. Funding for the project will be returned to the funding pool for future rounds.

98. Will the assessment of future rounds of the program include community choice modelling used as part of the assessment of projects considered for funding in Round 3 of the program? If not, why not?

ANSWER:

A decision has not been made about the assessment process for future rounds.

99. Is it a requirement of projects to demonstrate a benefit-cost ratio greater than or equal to 1 as part of the application or assessment process? If not, why not?

ANSWER:

No. A benefit to cost ratio is not commonly used as an assessment tool for community-based projects. Given the relatively small grants available under this the Fund, the information and cost required to undertake a cost-benefit analysis is not considered justified.

100. Has the department or the program reviewers undertaken an assessment of the effectiveness of various forms of community notification that project applications have opened? If so, what advertising medium was found to be most effective and which to be least effective in raising awareness of a funding round? How much was spent on advertising the request for applications under the last round of the program?

ANSWER:

No program funds have been spent on advertising in previous rounds. Notification that the fund is open has been through existing networks and key stakeholder organisations. An information night for prospective applicants is held each round. The Program Review found this approach to be adequate.

Australia-United States Critical Minerals Hub

101. What role does the NSW Government have in implementing the Australia-United States Critical Minerals Hub agreement signed between Geoscience Australia and the US Geological Survey?

ANSWER:

The NSW Government does not have a direct role in the implementation of the Australia-United States Critical Minerals Hub agreement signed between Geoscience Australia and the US Geological Survey. The NSW Government is a participant in the Commonwealth's Critical Minerals Work Program.

Blue Ridge Hardwoods

102. Has information now been provided to Blue Ridge Hardwoods workers about their eligibility for the income support payment package announced by the Member for Bega on 21 February 2019?

(a) How was this information provided to the workers?

(b) Who provided this information to the workers?

ANSWER:

Yes.

The Deputy Premier visited the workers at Blue Ridge Hardwoods on 28 February 2020, with the Member for Bega. The purpose of the meeting was to advise the workers that a support package would be extended to affected workers.

Following this meeting, departmental representatives met with the workers at Blue Ridge Hardwoods on 6 March 2020 to outline the support package that would be made available to affected workers. Steve Orr, Executive Director Regional NSW, Department Planning, Industry and Environment attended this meeting.

103. Was the relevant trade union(s) involved in the provision of this information to workers?

(a) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

No. The provision of this support sits outside of the industrial instrument for these workers.

104. Does the income support payment package still include a \$150,000 income support payment per employee?

(a) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

Employees who receive a valid redundancy notice are entitled to the \$150,000 payment and will receive the payment so long as they are not engaged in ongoing full-time employment at the end of the eligibility period. The payment is pro rata for part time employees.

105. Of the workers notified of their redundancy on 26 February 2020, how many are entitled to the \$150,000 income support payment?

(a) If any are not entitled to this income support payment, why are they not entitled?

ANSWER:

The number of eligible employees at the meeting was not determined at the meeting.

106. Is the Department aware of further planned redundancies of the Blue Ridge Hardwood workforce?

ANSWER:

It is understood that there will be further redundancies at Blue Ridge Hardwoods.

107. Has information on the income support package been provided to them, or is the Government awaiting information on the notice of redundancy for these workers?

ANSWER:

See answer to Question 102.

All workers irrespective of whether they had received a redundancy notice or not were invited to attend this meeting.

108. Is Blue Ridge Hardwoods in receipt of any funding assistance from the NSW Government and bushfire recovery assistance?

(a) If so, what is the nature and total amount of assistance provided?

ANSWER:

No.

Chief Scientist report on carbon emissions

109. Has the Department of Industry and Trade been consulted by the Chief Scientist in relation to the preparation of the blueprint commissioned by the Minister for Energy and Environment?

(a) If so, on what date and how were the consultations conducted?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

110. What advice was provided to the Chief Scientist by the Department of Industry and Trade?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment

111. Has the Department provided advice on the Chief Scientist's interim report to the Deputy Premier and Minister for Industry and Trade, which according to media reports was completed in January 2020?

(a) If not, has advice been requested by the Deputy Premier or his office?

(b) If so, what was the nature of this advice?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment

112. Is the Chief Scientist's interim report publicly available?

(a) If not, when is it expected to be made public?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment

Coal supply to Mt Piper Power Station

113. What does the undertaking to remove barriers to coal supply to the Mt Piper power Station involve?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

114. What is the nature of "barriers" currently in place for the coal supply to Mt Piper power station?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

115. How does the NSW Government intend to remove these barriers?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

116. What is the timeframe for the removal of these barriers?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

117. What is the cost of removing these barriers?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

118. Who will meet these costs?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

New Frontiers Cooperative Drilling Program

119. How many applications have been received under round 3 of the New Frontiers Cooperative Drilling program?

ANSWER:

A total of 63 applications were received under round 3 of the New Frontiers Cooperative Drilling program.

120. What was the total value of applications sought under round 3 of the New Frontiers Cooperative Drilling program?

ANSWER:

The total value of applications sought under round 3 of the New Frontier Cooperative Drilling program was \$6,095,761.

121. Have successful applicants been announced? If not, why not?

ANSWER:

Yes, the successful applicants were announced by the Deputy Premier on 1 April 2020.

122. What are the details of each grant recipient, grant amount and purpose of exploration of the successful grant recipients under round 3 of the program?

ANSWER:**Cooperative Drilling grants program round 3 approved applications**

Company	Prospect/Project Name	Location	Target commodity	Funds awarded
EMMERSON RESOURCES	Kadungle	60km NW of Parkes	Copper-Gold	\$101,000
TRK RESOURCES	Nangus Road and Riversdale	Nangus	Copper-Gold	\$84,000
PEEL MINING	Double Peak / Siegals	12km N of Mt Hope	Copper-Lead-Zinc-Gold-Silver	\$200,000
BOWDENS SILVER	Bowdens Silver regional drilling	27 km east of Mudgee	Gold-Silver-Copper-Lead-Zinc	\$200,000
IMPACT MINERALS	Little Broken Hill Gabbro	30km S of Broken Hill	Nickel-Copper-Platinum Group Elements	\$75,000
EMMERSON RESOURCES	Kiola	10km N of Cowra	Copper-Gold	\$82,750
ARGENT MINERALS	Loch Lilly Netley	90km S Cobar	Copper-Gold	\$55,000
SCORPIO RESOURCES	Gemini / Blue Mountain	30km NW of Mt Hope	Zinc-Lead-Copper-Gold	\$200,000
MAGMATIC RESOURCES	Pattons	25km NE of Condobolin	Copper-Gold-Silver	\$36,000
INFLECTION RESOURCES	Branglebar	40km NE of Coolabah	Copper-Gold-Platinum Group Elements	\$20,605
CORAZON MINING LIMITED	Gordonbrook Hill	25km NW Grafton	Copper-Gold-Cobalt	\$66,700
MAGMATIC RESOURCES	Lady Ilse	12km N of Wellington	Copper-Gold	\$35,250
HILGROVE MINES PTY LTD	Currys	22km E of Armidale	Gold-Antimony-Tungsten	\$44,170
INFLECTION RESOURCES	Blackwater	9km W of Narromine	Copper-Gold	\$85,085
MONZONITE METALS	Mendooran	40km NE of Dubbo	Copper-Zinc-Lead-Silver-Gold	\$200,000
NEW SOUTH RESOURCES	Wisemans Creek	25km NW of Oberon	Gold-Copper-Zinc-Lead-Silver	\$81,375

THOMSON RESOURCES	Wilgaroon	60km N of Cobar	Tin-Tungsten	\$45,500
THOMSON RESOURCES	Wilga Downs	80km N of Cobar	Copper-Zinc-Lead-Silver-Gold	\$45,500
INFLECTION RESOURCES	Brewarrina East	30km SE of Brewarrina	Copper-Gold	\$33,995
ARGENT MINERALS	West Wyalong	12km SE West Wyalong	Copper-Gold	\$200,000
HERON RESOURCES	Peelwood Project	90km N of Woodlawn	Copper-Zinc-Lead-Silver-Gold	\$131,250
FREEPORT-MCMORAN EXPLORATION AUSTRALIA	Bakers Swamp	30km N of Molong	Copper-Gold	\$163,605
			TOTAL	\$2,186,785

123. The first two rounds provided up to 100 per cent of drilling metre-rate costs but round 3 provides up to 50 per cent – what is the reason for the change?

ANSWER:

Like round 3, round 1 of the Cooperative Drilling grants program provided up to 50 per cent of direct per metre drilling costs and offered grants to 23 projects. In response to mineral exploration industry feedback, round 2 of the program provided up to 100 per cent of direct per metre drilling costs. This complicated the project assessment process and meant that it was only possible to offer grants to 15 projects.

In order to simplify the assessment process and provide support to the maximum number of projects, the decision was reached to offer up to 50 per cent of direct per metre drilling costs under round 3 of the program, which allowed 22 projects to be supported.

124. Can a full list of grant recipients, grant amounts and purpose of exploration for rounds 1 and 2 of the program be provided.

ANSWER:

Cooperative Drilling grants program round 1 approved applications

Company	Prospect/Project Name	Location	Target commodity	Funds awarded
HILGROVE MINES	Metz	50 km east of Armidale	Gold-Tungsten	\$81,150
PEELMINING LTD	Orana Project	27 km NW of Ivanhoe near BH	Lead-Zinc	\$54,000
AUSMON RESOURCES	Nuntherungie Silver	150 km NE of BH near White Cliffs	Silver-Copper-Lead-Gold-Molybdenum	\$38,750
PEELMINING LTD	Mundoe Project	160 km SE of Cobar	Copper-Lead-Zinc	\$72,250

PEELMINING LTD	Sandy Creek Project	90 km SE of Cobar	Lead-Zinc-Copper-Silver-Gold	\$67,250
THOMSON RESOURCES	Mt Jacob	40 km west of Kempsey	Gold	\$35,000
THOMSON RESOURCES	Cuttaburra A or Cut A	32 km N of Tilpa (NW of Cobar)	Gold	\$25,550
THOMSON RESOURCES	Cuttaburra B	32 km N of Tilpa (NW of Cobar)	Gold	\$26,750
GFM EXPLORATION	Paupong	25 km SE of Jindabyne	Gold-Silver-Copper	\$200,000
CULLEN EXPLORATION	Minter - Doyanwae	15 km ESE of Lake Cargellico	Tungsten-Tin	\$36,250
CLAYMOR	Dandaloo	34 km E of Tottenham (W of Narromine)	Gold-Copper	\$63,650
ARGENT MINERALS	Kempfield	7 km west of Trunkey Ck (SW of Orange)	Lead-Zinc	\$158,400
IMPACT MINERALS LTD	Red Hill	15 km SE of Broken Hill	PGE- Nickel-Copper-Gold	\$121,500
PLATINA RESOURCES LIMITED	Montana	8 km North of Fifield (NE of Condobolin)	Gold	\$12,500
SANDFIRE RES	Wingrunner	30 km SW of Narromine	Copper-Gold	\$46,850
PMR1	Halls Peak	70 km SE of Armidale	Copper-Lead-Zinc-Silver	\$90,100
COBAR MANAGEMENT PTY LTD	Shuttleton	70 km S of Cobar, 40km west of Nymagee	Copper	\$96,000
RIMFIRE PACIFIC MINING NL	Sorpresa	1 km west of Fifield (NE of Condobolin)	Gold-Copper-Lead-Zinc	\$175,375
CLANCY EXPLORATION	Fairholme Project	14 km NE of Bircher (E of Condobolin)	Copper-Gold	\$198,750
WHITE ROCK	Mt Carrington	4 km N of Drake, New England	Copper-Gold	\$200,000
WCB RESOURCES	Red Hill (Yass)	20 km NE of Yass	Copper-Gold	\$18,000
BIACIL HOLDINGS PTY LTD	Frasers Find - Diggers Shaft	8 km west of Uralla (SW of Armidale)	Gold	\$65,000
ANCHOR RESOURCES	Birdwood North	50 km west of Port Macquarie	Copper	\$101,750
			TOTAL	\$1,984,825

125. Is the data from the aerial electromagnetic survey of NSW completed in 2019 been released to the public?

ANSWER:

The data from the Cobar airborne electromagnetic survey will be publicly released at the end of April 2020 as a report and data package. It will be accessible via the MinView online data portal (<https://minview.geoscience.nsw.gov.au>).

126. What was the total cost of the aerial electromagnetic survey?

ANSWER:

The total cost of the survey was \$513,358, comprising acquisition costs of \$485,958 and operational expenditure of \$27,400 on community consultation and safety audits.

127. Does the Government have plans to conduct aerial electromagnetic surveys across other parts of NSW? If so, where and when?

ANSWER:

As part of its \$16 million commitment to the MinEx CRC, the NSW Government plans to fly airborne electromagnetic surveys over Mundi (northwest of Broken Hill) in 2021; Forbes in 2022; and Dubbo in 2023.

NSW Apiarist's Association

128. Has the President of the NSW Apiarist's Association made representations to the Government to allow beekeepers access to national parks and state conservation areas unaffected by bushfires?

(a) Has the Government responded to this representation?

ANSWER:

Questions about the national park estate should be directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment

129. Has the Deputy Premier discussed the request with the Minister for Energy and Environment in relation to the use of national parks and state conservation areas?

(a) Is so, what has been the response of the Minister?

ANSWER:

Discussions between the offices on a range of forestry-related matters are ongoing.

130. Which national parks, Forestry Corporation forests and state conservation areas have been given access to beekeepers?

ANSWER:

Beekeeping with a permit is allowed in over 90% of the State Forest estate. Access is restricted in areas with conflicting uses such as Aboriginal sites, high density of public activity or high value conservation areas.

Questions about the national park estate should be directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment.

131. What legislative and regulatory arrangements underpin this access if it has been agreed by the Government?

- (a) Is there a timeframe in relation to this access?
- (b) If so, what is this timeframe?

ANSWER:

Questions about the national park estate should be directed to the Minister for Energy and Environment.

Strategic Statement on NSW Coal

132. Has the NSW Government undertaken an (a) internal or (b) independent review of the Strategic Statement since it was published in August 2014?

- (a) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

The government has not reviewed the Strategic Statement on NSW Coal as:

- the objectives and outcomes of co-existence, transparency, sustainability, safety, best practice and leading technologies, achieving value for the economy and adequate taxpayer returns, and regional economic development continue to be relevant for NSW.
- the actions to achieve these objectives have been completed or are ongoing commitments.

The government regularly reviews information about the coal industry from a range of sources and considers this information in light of its ongoing policy commitments.

133. Have any of the decisions the Commonwealth and NSW Governments have made, or are under consideration in relation to climate change and reducing carbon emissions, affected the future of coal in NSW, and the objectives and outcomes in the Strategic Statement on NSW Coal published in August 2014?

ANSWER:

The NSW Government remains committed to promoting the adoption of best practices and world leading technologies in the coal sector.

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Territorial Limits) Bill 2019 seeks to clarify that the NSW planning framework does not regulate greenhouse gas emissions that occur overseas.

The Bill has not affected the objectives and outcomes in the Strategic Statement on NSW Coal.

134. Has the Department conducted any research on the market analysis of projected demand for (a) thermal coal and (b) metallurgical coal produced in NSW, including the industry's economic impact and job opportunities for 2020, 2030, 2040 and 2050?

(a) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

The Department has reviewed a range of market analyses for projected demand of global thermal coal up to 2050, and for metallurgical coal up to 2025. The data for projected metallurgical coal beyond 2025 is not available.

135. Will the Government consider undertaking this research in (151)?

(a) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

See answer to Question 134.

136. Does the Government have a view on the public statements of Energy Security Board Chair, Ms Kerry Schott, as reported in the Australian on 12 March 2020, that "Coal-fired generators will be retiring at times we didn't expect and people in coal mines and their communities are going to be heavily impacted...and we don't have any plans for this."

(a) If so, does the Government agree with Ms Schott?

(b) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

The government regularly reviews information about the coal industry from a range of sources and considers this information in light of its ongoing policy commitments.

137. What plans are in place in NSW for the retirement of coal-fired power stations and the impact on coal mines and their communities?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

138. Does the Government agree with the public statement of Energy Australia's customer head, Mr Mark Collette, who told the Australian on 12 March 2020, "You've got some signals that coal itself is coming under pressure and might only be there for eight years and we're relying on the coal fleet being there for 20 or 25 years still and maybe 30 years on occasion...?"

(a) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

The government regularly reviews information about the coal industry from a range of sources and considers this information in light of its ongoing policy commitments.

Resources Regulator

139. How many vehicles are currently owned or leased by the Resources Regulator?

ANSWER:

As at 23 March 2020, 58 vehicles.

140. How many of the vehicles owned or leased by the Resources Regulator are general purpose passenger vehicles?

ANSWER:

As at 23 March 2020, 36 vehicles (Excludes utes, vans & 4WDs).

141. How many of the Resources Regulator's general purpose passenger vehicles are electric or hybrid vehicles?

ANSWER:

As at 23 March 2020, 6 vehicles.

142. Is the Resources Regulator subject to the NSW Government's Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Plan? If not, why not?

ANSWER:

Yes.

143. Will the Resources Regulator meet the NSW Government's target of 10 per cent of new general purposed passenger fleet cars being either electric or hybrid by 2020/21? If not, what is the primary reason for the Resources Regulator being unable to meet this target? What steps are being taken to address this problem?

ANSWER:

Yes.

144. What is the reason for the increase in assessments during quarter 2 in financial year 2020?

ANSWER:

It is assumed this question is in relation to the same quarter year on year. The approach to targeted assessment and planned inspection programs has been reviewed and modified to increase focus on the physical implementation of critical risk controls and reduce the amount of time spent reviewing documentation.

Separate programs for planned inspections and targeted assessments have been merged into single programs, utilising the same approach. These changes have generated efficiencies in terms of time per assessment, allowing more inspections to be carried out.

145. Why did planned inspections reduce from 94 to 57 between quarter 1 and quarter 2 in financial year 2020?

ANSWER:

There is a typically a decrease in inspections during Q2 each year due to the Resources Regulator's focus on industry engagement during this period. This includes the small mines roadshows and the Mining, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering forums.

There is also a reduction in operational tempo at the end of this quarter each year due to increased leave over the government shutdown period.

146. How many planned inspections will take place in financial year 2020?

ANSWER:

The Resources Regulator conducted 819 planned inspections in Q1-Q3 of this Financial Year. As of 1 April 2020, 294 are planned for Q4 for a total of 1113 for FY2020 – however this will be affected by COVID-19 pandemic.

147. How many planned inspections took place in financial year 2019?

ANSWER:

In FY 2019 the Resources Regulator conducted 1,138 planned inspections.

148. What explanation can be provided for the difference between the number of inspections undertaken in financial year 2019 and the number expected to be undertaken in financial year 2020?

ANSWER:

The final number for FY2020 will be affected by the current COVID-19 situation. Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak the Resources Regulator was on track to achieve a similar number of inspections with a higher portion assessing prescribed hazards. This increased proportion was due to a change to a critical control model of assessment.

149. Please provide a categorisation of the 108 “Work Environment” incidents notifications received by the coal sector between October 2019 and December 2019 by the nature of the incident. Is the number of notifications higher or lower than the same period in 2018? If so, by how many?

ANSWER:

Classification	Number of incidents
Being Hit by Moving Objects ¹	21
Biological Factors	1
Body Stressing ²	37
Chemicals and Other Substances	1
Falls, Trips and Slips ³	23
Heat, Electricity and Other Environmental Factors	6
Hitting Objects with a Part of the Body ⁴	18
Mental Stress	1
Grand Total	108

¹ includes workers dropping object on themselves

² predominately Repetitive Strain Injuries

³ falls not from heights

⁴ includes standing up and striking heads in confined spaces

Comparative data between 2019 and 2018 is not available due to the introduction of a new incident classification system by the Resources Regulator in late 2018.

150. Please provide a categorisation of the 78 “Key system failure” incidents notifications received by the coal sector between October 2019 and December 2019 by the nature of the incident. Is the number of notifications higher or lower than the same period in 2018? If so, by how many?

ANSWER:

Classification	Number of incidents
Explosion Protection Failure	65
Other System Failure	6
Site Power Failure	3
Ventilation System Failure	2
Winder Failure	1
Not recorded	1
Grand Total	78

Comparative data between October - December 2019 and the same period in 2018 is not available due to the introduction of a new incident classification system by the Resources Regulator in late 2018.

151. Please provide the details of the location and nature of each of the 23 air quality incidents notified by the coal sector between October 2018 and December 2019 as reported in the Quarterly Safety Report (Oct-Dec 2019). Is the number of notifications higher or lower than the same period in 2018? If so, by how many?

ANSWER:

Incident type	Incident subtype	Location	FY 2020 Q2
Air Quality	Dust Exceedance	Clarence Colliery	1
		Hunter Valley Operations	1
		Moolarben Coal Operations - Open Cut	1
		Moolarben Coal Operations - Underground	2
		Narrabri Colliery	1
		Tahmoor Colliery	2
		Total	8
	Gas exceedance	Appin Colliery	2
		Integra Underground	7
		Metropolitan Colliery	1
		Newstan Colliery	4
		Total	14
	Other Emissions	Ashton Coal Mine (Underground)	1
		Total	1
	Grand total		

Dust exceedances only became a notifiable incident in Q4 2019 and therefore were not notified prior to this date.

Comparative data between October-December 2019 and the same period in 2018 is not available due to the introduction of a new incident classification system by the Resources Regulator in late 2018.

Resources and Geoscience

152. How many vehicles are currently owned or leased by Resources and Geoscience?

ANSWER:

There are five vehicles leased by the Division of Resources and Geoscience. The vehicles are all Toyota Prados custom-fitted for remote fieldwork. Four Prados are managed by the Geological Survey of NSW Branch and one by the Legacy Mines unit within the Resources Policy, Planning and Programs Branch.

153. How many of the vehicles owned or leased by Resources and Geoscience are general purpose passenger vehicles?

ANSWER:

None of the vehicles owned or leased by the Division of Resources and Geoscience are general-purpose passenger vehicles.

154. How many of Resources and Geoscience's general purpose passenger vehicles are electric or hybrid vehicles?

ANSWER:

The Division of Resources and Geoscience does not own or lease any general-passenger vehicles.

155. Is Resources and Geoscience subject to the NSW Government's Electric and Hybrid Vehicle Plan? If not, why not?

ANSWER:

The vehicles leased by the Division of Resources and Geoscience are custom fitted for remote fieldwork, including long range fuel tanks. There are currently no hybrid or electric vehicles that are suitable for remote fieldwork.

156. Will Resources and Geoscience meet the NSW Government's target of 10 per cent of new general purposed passenger fleet cars being either electric or hybrid by 2020/21? If not, what is the primary reason for Resources and Geoscience being unable to meet this target? What steps are being taken to address this problem?

ANSWER:

The Division of Resources and Geoscience will meet the NSW Government's target of 10 per cent of new general purposed passenger fleet cars being either electric or hybrid by 2020/21 as users of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment's fleet for general purposed passenger vehicles. The Department is currently at around 18 per cent in terms of alternative fuel vehicles in this category, surpassing the 10 per cent target.

157. As of 19 March 2020 how many times has the Resources and Geoscience Online Prospectus been accessed?

ANSWER:

The Resources and Geoscience Online Prospectus was launched in October 2019. As of 19 March 2020, the Online Prospectus had been accessed by 2,524 unique logins.

158. How much of the \$16 million committed to the National Drilling Initiative is proposed to be spent each financial year of the 10 year commitment to the program?

ANSWER:

The NSW Government's 10-year commitment to the MinEx CRC National Drilling Initiative comprises:

- \$4.4 million to fund drilling programs in NSW.
- \$4.4 million of new geophysical and geochemical data to be collected by the Geological Survey of NSW (GSNSW) over the life of the CRC.
- \$2.2 million in-kind, representing the value of data currently held by GSNSW.
- \$5 million staff in-kind over the life of the CRC.

Over the forward estimates, GSNSW will contribute \$440,000 per year cash and \$500,000 per year staff in-kind to MinEx CRC. The exact sum expended on new data acquisition each year will average \$440,000 per year over the life of the CRC.

159. Will each of the five areas identified be explored simultaneously or will they be prioritised? If they are to be prioritised, what is the current prioritisation of locations?

ANSWER:

The legacy data is being assessed in all five areas simultaneously.

However, new data acquisition and drilling will be undertaken sequentially across South Cobar, North Cobar, Mundi (northwest of Broken Hill), Forbes, then Dubbo. A summary of planned activities can be found on the Division of Resources and Geoscience website at <https://www.resourcesandgeoscience.nsw.gov.au/minexcrc>.

160. What is the current program of community consultation to be undertaken as part of the National Drilling Initiative, when and where will it commence? Over how many weeks will the community consultation be undertaken?

ANSWER:

The Division's communication strategy for the MinEx CRC National Drilling Initiative in NSW is tied directly to individual on-ground activities and aims to improve local community awareness of the program of work and its benefits.

Community engagement related to the Cobar airborne electromagnetic survey (AEM) and hydrogeochemistry project began in February 2019. Activities undertaken to date include face-to-face meetings, information nights and drop-in sessions in Cobar and Lake Cargelligo. The Division has released local newspaper advertisements, information videos, online and printed flyers, targeted social media posts, direct mailouts, and has developed an internet information hub.

Following completion of specific activities, the Division will also undertake information sessions to disseminate the results and will directly provide written feedback and reporting to stakeholders where appropriate. For example, all landholders whose water bores were sampled as part of the Cobar hydrogeochemistry project are being sent written water quality and chemistry reports. Community meetings planned for early June in Cobar and Lake Cargelligo to communicate the AEM and hydrogeochemistry results have been postponed indefinitely, due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ministerial responsibility

The Deputy Premier told the Committee on 17 March 2020, "For me, I have really set aside a lot of my other ministerial responsibilities just to focus on the recovery." In light of this statement:

161. Which ministerial responsibilities has he set aside?

162. Who now is responsible for exercising those ministerial responsibilities he has set aside?

163. How long does he anticipate setting aside these ministerial responsibilities for?

164. When will he resume these set aside ministerial responsibilities?

165. Has the department provided any official advice to the Deputy Premier on the administration of these set aside ministerial responsibilities?

(a) If not, why not?

(b) If so, on what date was it provided?

(c) If so, will it be made public?

(d) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

For questions 161 to 165 inclusive:

As Minister responsible for Disaster Recovery, addressing the challenges faced by bushfire-affected communities has been my priority. In particular, I committed to communities affected by bushfires that the majority of properties will be substantially cleared by 30 June 2020. The work is well-underway and has been prioritised to ensure communities can get back on their feet as soon as possible.

The Department of Regional NSW has now been established to better coordinate support for communities, businesses and farmers in the bush that have endured drought, bushfires and floods, and now face the impact of COVID-19.

I have primary responsibility for this agency as Minister for Regional NSW, in addition to being Minister for Industry and Trade, and Deputy Premier.

Unproclaimed Acts NSW

166. What are the reasons for not proclaiming the following provisions of Acts:

- (a) Section 51 and Schedule 1.7[10] except to the extent it repeals Section 70(2) of the Gas Industry Restructuring Act 1986.
- (b) Coal Acquisition Legislation Repeal Act 2007 No 62, Section 4.
- (c) Forestry Legislation Amendment Act 2018 No 40, Section 3.7[1].

ANSWER:

a) This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

b) The Coal Acquisition Legislation Repeal Act 2007 provides for the amendment, and eventual repeal, of the Coal Acquisition Act 1981, the Coal Ownership (Restitution) Act 1990 and certain other legislation relating to the acquisition and restitution of rights with respect to privately owned coal.

Provisions to abolish the New South Wales Coal Compensation Board and the New South Wales Coal Compensation Review Tribunal commenced on assent.

Sections 4 (a) and (c) provide for the repeal of the Coal Acquisition Act 1981 (and associated arrangements and orders) and the Coal Ownership (Restitution) Act 1990 on a date appointed by proclamation. The intention was to do this once all claims and appeals under that legislation had been finalised and disposed of.

While there are no outstanding claims or appeals, questions have subsequently emerged about whether the commencement of the remaining provisions could have unintended consequences, including creating uncertainty over coal ownership in the state. The government will not decide whether to commence, amend or repeal these provisions until review of any potential unintended consequences has been completed. The Department of Planning, Industry and Environment intends to complete this review by the end of 2020.

c) The uncommenced amendment in the Forestry Legislation Amendment Act 2018 relates to clause 108(2)(d) of the Local Land Services Regulation 2014. This clause has since been repealed through subsequent amendments to the Regulation that updated the categorisation of land subject to a private native forestry (PNF) plan. Accordingly, the uncommenced amendments in the Forestry Legislation Amendment Act 2018 are no longer necessary.

Renewable energy revenue

167. Has the Department undertaken any research to determine what revenue sources will be necessary from the increase of renewable energy investment?

- (a) If not, why not?
- (b) If so, what are the conclusions from this research?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

168. Has any advice been provided to the Government on this matter?

- (a) If so, on what date was it provided?
- (b) If not, will it provide such advice to the Government?
- (c) If so, when does it expect to do so?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

169. Does the Department foresee a change in mining royalty revenue from renewable energy investment?

- (a) If so, what conclusions has it made?

ANSWER:

As the domestic thermal coal consumption decreases due to the scheduled closure of NSW's coal-fired power plants, there will be some impacts on the amount of mining royalty collected. However, the contribution of the domestic thermal coal is small, accounting for less than 6% of the total mining royalty collected in 2018-19. This impact will not be observed until the closure of the Liddell power plant in 2023, and the impacts will be gradual over time.

Future of NSW coal fired power generation

170. Have stages 3 and 4 of the Future NSW Coal Fired Electricity Generation Industry Study been completed?

- (a) If so, has the entire study now been completed?
- (b) If not, what stage is the study at?
- (c) If so, on what date was it completed?
- (d) If so, is the study public?
- (e) If not, why not?

ANSWER:

(a) Yes, Stages 3 and 4 of the study have been completed.

(b) N/A.

(c) A final report for review was submitted by Frontier Economics on 16 November 2018. Stages 3 and 4 were accepted by the Coal Innovation Ministerial Advisory Council on 21 January 2019.

(d) Not yet.

(e) The report will be published on the Department's website in due course.

Coal Innovation NSW (Ministerial Advisory Council)

171. Has the *Coal Innovation Administration Act 2008* (the Act) been reviewed since 2008?

- (a) If so, what did the review find?

(b) If not, when will it be reviewed?

ANSWER:

A statutory review of the Coal Innovation Administration Act 2008 was completed in 2014. The review confirmed the policy objectives of the Act remain valid and that the terms of the Act remain appropriate for securing those objectives. On that basis, no changes to the Act were proposed.

172. Who are the current members of the CINSW Ministerial Advisory Council?

ANSWER:

Pending ratification of a new Chair and member by Cabinet, the CINSW Ministerial Advisory Council will comprise:

- Professor Michael Dureau (Chair) - Executive Director, Warren Centre for Advanced Engineering, University of Sydney, Deputy Chairperson of the Council
- Mr James Hay - Deputy Secretary Energy, Climate Change & Sustainability, Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
- Dr Chris Yeats - Executive Director, Geological Survey NSW
- Mr Michael Buffier - Group Executive - Corporate Affairs, Government and Industry Relations and Sustainable Development, Xstrata Coal
- Mr John Richards - Managing Director / CEO, Bloomfield Group
- Professor Dianne Wiley - Head of School of Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, University of Sydney
- Mr Greg Everett - Managing Director, Sunset Power International (Delta)
- Dr Noel Simento - Manager Director, ANLEC R&D

Retirements at the end of calendar year 2019 were:

- Professor Jim Galvin - Galvin & Associates
- Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte - NSW Chief Scientist and Engineer

173. How often does the Council meet?

ANSWER:

Meetings are typically convened on a quarterly basis or as determined by the Council. There is no annual minimum requirement or fixed timetable for Council meetings.

174. Are its agenda, minutes and decisions publicly available?

ANSWER:

No.

175. Are its members paid in any form?

(a) If so, what is the payment?

ANSWER:

Members are eligible to be remunerated for their services in a manner consistent with the Public Service Commission's Classification and Remuneration Framework for NSW Government Boards and Committees – Guidelines. The Council is classified as a Group C Level 3 based on their roles and responsibilities.

The Chair can receive an annual payment of \$20,000 and ordinary members can receive a payment of \$220 per half day meeting. Most members do not claim the available remuneration.

Coal Innovation Program

176. How much is the NSW Government investing in the Coal Innovation Program?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

177. What will be the focus of the Coal Innovation Program?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

178. Which department will administer the program?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

179. How much will the Commonwealth invest in the Program?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

180. How much will the coal industry invest in the program?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

181. When does the program commence?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

182. Will legislation and regulations be required to implement the program?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister for Energy and Environment.

Liddell Taskforce

183. Is the department represented on the Liddell Taskforce?

(a) If not, which department or agency is?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

184. How often does the Liddell Taskforce meet?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

185. Who are the members of the Liddell Taskforce?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

186. Does the Liddell Taskforce report to the Commonwealth Government primarily?

(a) If so, what reports are provided to the NSW Government?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

187. What consultations has the Liddell Taskforce had with the Port Macquarie workforce and community?

(a) What has been the progress on these consultations?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

188. Has there been an extension on the estimated closing date of the Liddell Power Station?

ANSWER:

This is a matter for the Minister of Energy and Environment.

INDUSTRY

Questions from Mr Justin Field MLC

Hazard reduction burning in state forests

189. For each of the last five calendar years:

(a) What have been the hazard reduction burning targets for State Forests (as a percentage of State Forest estate and in total hectares of burning)?

(b) How many hectares of hazard reduction burning occurred in State Forests?

ANSWER:

This information is published in Forestry Corporation's annual Sustainability Report.

190. Is burning following harvesting operations considered hazard reduction burning?

ANSWER:

Post-harvest burning is not included in Forestry Corporation's hazard reduction targets but it is a fuel reduction activity.

191. Is logging considered mechanical hazard reduction?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation's timber harvesting activities are carried out with the objective of timber production and are not hazard reduction activities.

Fire impacts on state forests

192. For each of the five years, FY 14/15, FY15/16, FY 16/17, FY 17/18, and FY 18/19, as at July 1:

- (a) what was the total size in hectares of the state forest estate managed by Forestry Corporation of NSW;
- (b) how many hectares were harvestable native forests
- (c) how many hectares were hardwood plantation
- (d) how many hectares were softwood plantation

ANSWER:

This information is published in Forestry Corporation's annual Sustainability Report.

193. How many hectares of the following were burnt in the 2019-20 bushfires?

- (a) Non harvestable native forests
- (b) harvestable native forests

- (c) softwood plantations
- (d) hardwood plantations?

ANSWER:

This information is published on Forestry Corporation's website.

194. Approximately how many kilometres of fencing between State Forests and private land has been burnt?

- (a) How many kilometres of fencing between State Forests and other public land has been burnt?

ANSWER:

Approximately 3,530 kilometres of fences between State forests and private property have been affected by fire.

- (a) This has not been assessed.

195. In reference to evidence given in the hearing by Mr Roberts on page 40 of the transcript where he refers to situation reports, or 'sitrep' reports:

- (a) How many of the 1,100 fires referenced started in state forests?
- (b) Will these 'sitrep' reports be made public when finalised?
- (c) Was a 'sitrep' report conducted for the Badja Forest Road fire that started in Badja State Forest?
 - i. If so, can this be provided to the Committee?

ANSWER:

This information is held by the Rural Fire Service.

196. In reference to evidence given in the hearing by Mr Roberts on page 40 of the transcript where he describes internal and external after action reviews:

- (a) How will these reviews impact logging operations?
- (b) Do these reviews consider impacts on threatened species and habitat from the fires?

- i. If so, in what way?
- ii. If not, how is Forestry Corporation of NSW considering the impacts of the fires on threatened species and habitat when it comes to planned harvesting?

ANSWER:

After-action reviews look at the actions taken during the management of a fire and review the firefighting experiences, what went well, areas for improvement and lessons learnt.

(a-b) After-action reviews following fires focus on firefighting activities.

ii Forestry Corporation's operations are regulated by Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals or the Plantations and Reafforestation Act and Code Regulation, which establish robust measures for the protection of threatened species habitat across the landscape. Forestry Corporation works in line with these regulations or, where they have been issued, site-specific conditions developed by the EPA for selective harvesting in fire-affected forests.

197. Is the Forestry Corporation of NSW engaged in any surveys after the fires?

- (a) What is the extent of this work?
- (b) Does it involve sampling or comprehensive surveys?
- (c) Are surveys ground surveys or using satellite imagery?
 - i. If satellite or aerial surveys, how are the impacts on the understory being captured and assessed?
- (d) How will these surveys inform logging operations?
 - i. Will there be any reassessment of wood supply agreements as a result of habitat and species loss?

ANSWER:

(a-b) Forestry Corporation carries out surveys and ongoing monitoring in State forests on an ongoing basis. Following fires, Forestry Corporation has engaged with the EPA and other government agencies to determine requirements for harvesting in unburnt forests. Where deemed appropriate this has included desktop analysis of flora and fauna records and on ground surveys for wildlife that may have been affected by the fires. Results of these surveys have been provided to EPA as part of this process.

In all areas subject to harvesting, Forestry Corporation has continued to carry out pre-harvest surveys as required under the IFOA. In some areas these surveys have been altered due to the effects of the fire

in relation to site access and safety. Any altered survey requirements are outlined in the site-specific conditions that have been published on the EPA's website for each relevant plan.

Following fires, Forestry Corporation has engaged with other government agencies, including the Department of Planning Industry and Environment, Environment, Energy and Science and local National Parks and Wildlife Services to coordinate programs across the landscape.

Surveys are also occurring for a variety of species post fire as part of ongoing monitoring and additional surveys are being undertaken prior to any harvesting operations in fire affected areas – additional spotlight, targeted species surveys for flora and fauna species, including cameras and UAVS (drones) with colour and thermal sensors, with results guiding conditions for harvesting operations.

Forestry Corporation's long-term monitoring programs are continuing and teams are carrying out post-fire surveys for a range of species. Work programs are being developed and will be ongoing, but some work has already been carried out repeating surveys post-fires and comparing with old records in specific areas.

Forestry Corporation is continuing to engage with other agencies to develop broader programs across the landscape.

(c) Satellite data has been used to generate mapping for fire severity only. This mapping has been field validated by collection of thousands of geo-referenced photos.

Other surveys have been undertaken using various methodologies including walking where it is safe to do so and using unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and vehicles where it is unsafe.

(d) Forestry Corporation routinely carries out surveys to ensure wildlife habitat is identified and protected and in line with the requirements of the IFOAs. There may also be additional requirements imposed through site specific conditions which the EPA publishes on its website.

i. Forestry Corporation will review its sustainable yield models to take into account the impact of this season's fires and the outcome of that assessment will inform future planning.

Forestry industry impacts

198. Has any work been done on a forestry industry assistance package after the fires?

(a) Please provide details on where money was directed and how much.

ANSWER:

The NSW Government has announced a \$140 million Bushfire Industry Recovery Package. This package includes support for the forestry, horticulture and agriculture industries. Details of funding criteria will be made available with the release of the program guidelines shortly.

The NSW Government has previously announced \$46 million for Forestry Corporation NSW to assist with critical infrastructure repairs, nursery expansion and replanting efforts. This assistance is aimed at ensuring the forestry sector can recover as quickly as possible from the devastating fires of this summer.

The NSW Government's priority has been on re-establishing timber supply to the industry, which is the fastest track to recovery. Selective harvesting in fire-affected areas of native State forest has begun on the north coast and the south coast with the establishment of specific rules to protect the natural environment and to ensure the industry can operate safely. Harvesting bushfire-affected timber will ensure ongoing wood supply will help to maintain local jobs and meet critical timber supply needed for rebuilding local communities, ensure forestry jobs are maintained and impacted communities continue to benefit from recovery efforts.

A range of other assistance measures may also be available to eligible forestry businesses including:

- Small Business Bushfire Recovery Grant up to \$50,000
- Primary Producer Bushfire Recovery Grant of up to \$75,000
- Small Business Bushfire Support Grant of \$10,000
- Disaster Relief Loan of up to \$130,000
- Bushfire Special Disaster Loan of up to \$50,000 for working capital and \$500,000 for replacing or repairing damaged assets and infrastructure

The NSW Government also provides concessional loans through the NSW Forest Industries Innovation Fund a \$34 million loan scheme that provides long-term low-interest loans to projects that contribute to supporting industry innovation and the exploration of new markets for forest products.

Active harvest plans

199. In each of the following forestry regions how many harvest plans are active (noting this information is not up to date in the Plan Portal):

- (a) Upper North East
- (b) Lower North East

- (c) Southern
- (d) Eden

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation's Plan Portal is updated regularly - this information is available there.

200. How many cubic metres of wood has been, or is expected to be, hauled from each of the following forestry regions from January 2020 to July 2020:

- (a) Upper North East
- (b) Lower North East
- (c) Southern
- (d) Eden

ANSWER:

- (a) Estimated 78,500 tonnes, depending on available plans and weather
- (b) Estimated 127,300 tonnes, depending on available plans and weather
- (c) Forestry Corporation cannot forecast how many cubic metres of wood will be hauled from Southern Region at this stage as the harvest schedule is not compiled to support ongoing harvesting operations.
- (d) Forestry Corporation cannot forecast how many cubic metres of wood will be hauled from Eden Region at this stage as the harvest schedule is not compiled to support ongoing harvesting operations.

201. In reference to the evidence given by the Minister on page 48 of the transcript where he says that logging in Port Macquarie was halted after the fires on the 'discretion of Forestry Corporation':

- (a) How many other state forests was this discretion applied to where planned logging was cancelled as a result of the fires? Please name each state forest.

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation's harvest schedules change regularly as Forestry Corporation maintains the discretion to schedule operations based on a range of conditions including weather, markets and logistics.

Immediately following fires, Forestry Corporation made the decision to move 70 per cent of harvesting operations on the north coast into hardwood plantations to reduce operations in native forests impacted by fire in the short term.

202. In regards to the Wild Cattle Creek state forest:

- (a) How many cubic metres of wood is scheduled or planned to be hauled over the next 6 months?
- (b) Is there identified Koala habitat in this state forest?
- (c) Will any intensive harvesting occur in this state forest in the next 6 months?
- (d) What kind of assessment or survey has been, or will be conducted, before logging commences that will look at impacts of fire?
- (e) Has there been any assessment or survey beyond that required under the IFOA? If so, please provide details.

ANSWER:

(a) There is one native forest harvesting operation scheduled within Wild Cattle Creek over the next 6 months, which is expected to be finished by 17 April. This operation is estimated to yield less than 600m³ between 7 April to 17 April. There are no native forest operations scheduled within Wild Cattle Creek over the next 6 months. The schedule is currently very fluid as it relies on salvage post-fire selective harvesting and approval of associated site specific conditions, is significantly affected by recent wet weather, and scheduling options are limited by protocol 40 approvals. The schedule changes regularly in line with a range of factors including weather, markets and logistical considerations.

(b) All forested land on the north coast is modelled koala habitat under the habitat model published by the Department of Primary Industries, but the quality of the habitat is variable. Under the habitat models, forested land can be categorised as very high, high, moderate or low quality koala habitat.

(c) No intensive harvesting of native forest will occur in Wild Cattle Creek within the next 6 months. There are a number of eucalypt plantation operations within Wild Cattle Creek State Forest, however these operations are not authorised under the CIFOA.

(d) Assessments and surveys for planned operations are carried out in line with the requirements of the CIFOA and, where relevant, site-specific conditions developed by the Environment Protection Authority. No operations are planned to be conducted within burnt native forest in Wild Cattle Creek in the next 6 months (note that this is contingent on approval of salvage post-fire selective harvesting

and associated site specific conditions for other harvesting units to be approved by the EPA). Fortunately, a large proportion of Wild Cattle Creek State Forest was not burnt during the recent wildfires due to the successful implementation of comprehensive containment strategies enacted by RFS and FCNSW.

(e) No

203. In regards to the Kalateenee state forest:

- (a) How many cubic metres of wood is scheduled or planned to be hauled over the next 6 months?
- (b) Is there identified Koala habitat in this state forest?
- (c) Will any intensive harvesting occur in this state forest in the next 6 months?
- (d) What kind of assessment or survey has been, or will be conducted, before logging commences that will look at impacts of fire?
- (e) Has there been any assessment or survey beyond that required under the IFOA? If so, please provide details.

ANSWER:

(a) There is one harvesting operation planned to commence within Kalateenee State Forest within the next 6 months. This operation will be conducted within compartments KAL001, KAL002, KAL003, and KAL006. Yield estimates for this operation are published in the approved harvest plan, however a breakdown for the volume harvested over the next six months cannot be provided, as the commencement time is variable due to a range of factors including weather, markets and logistical considerations.

(b) All forested land on the north coast is modelled koala habitat under the habitat model published by the Department of Primary Industries, but the quality of the habitat is variable. Under the habitat models, forested land can be categorised as very high, high, moderate or low quality koala habitat.

(c) No intensive harvesting of native forest will occur in Kalateenee State Forest within the next 6 months.

(d) Assessments and surveys are carried out in line with the requirements of the CIFOA. Please note that Kalateenee State Forest was not burnt during the recent wildfires.

(e) No

204. In regards to the Cowarra state forest:

- (a) How many cubic metres of wood is scheduled or planned to be hauled over the next 6 months?
- (b) Is there identified Koala habitat in this state forest?
- (c) Will any intensive harvesting occur in this state forest in the next 6 months?
- (d) What kind of assessment or survey has been, or will be conducted, before logging commences that will look at impacts of fire?
- (e) Has there been any assessment or survey beyond that required under the IFOA? If so, please provide details.

ANSWER:

(a) There is one harvesting operation planned to commence within Cowarra State Forest within the next 6 months. This operation will be conducted within compartments COW001, COW002, and COW003. Yield estimates for this operation are published in the approved harvest plan, however a breakdown for the volume harvested over the next six months cannot be provided, as the commencement time is variable due to a range of factors including weather, markets and logistical considerations.

(b) All forested land on the north coast is modelled koala habitat under the habitat model published by the Department of Primary Industries, but the quality of the habitat is variable. Under the habitat models, forested land can be categorised as very high, high, moderate or low quality koala habitat.

(c) No intensive harvesting of native forest will occur in Cowarra State Forest within the next 6 months.

(d) Assessments and surveys are carried out in line with the requirements of the CIFOA. Please note that Cowarra State Forest was not burnt during the recent wildfires.

(e) No

205. In regards to the Lower Bucca state forest:

- (a) How many cubic metres of wood is scheduled or planned to be hauled over the next 6 months?
- (b) Is there identified Koala habitat in this state forest?

- (c) Will any intensive harvesting occur in this state forest in the next 6 months?
- (d) What kind of assessment or survey has been, or will be conducted, before logging commences that will look at impacts of fire?
- (e) Has there been any assessment or survey beyond that required under the IFOA? If so, please provide details.

ANSWER:

- (a) There is one harvesting operation planned to commence within Lower Bucca State Forest within the next 6 months. This operation will be conducted within compartments LBU007, LBU008, LBU009, LBU010, KBU011, LBU012, LBU013, LBU014, and ORE001. Yield estimates for this operation are published in the approved harvest plan, however a breakdown for the volume harvested over the next six months cannot be provided, as the commencement time is variable due to a range of factors including weather, markets and logistical considerations.
- (b) All forested land on the north coast is modelled koala habitat under the habitat model published by the Department of Primary Industries, but the quality of the habitat is variable. Under the habitat models, forested land can be categorised as very high, high, moderate or low quality koala habitat.
- (c) No intensive harvesting of native forest will occur in Lower Bucca State Forest within the next 6 months.
- (d) Assessments and surveys are carried out in line with the requirements of the CIFOA. Please note that Lower Bucca State Forest was not burnt during the recent wildfires.
- (e) No

Site specific operating conditions

206. As a result of the fires, how many new site specific operating conditions have been finalised, i.e. are there more than what is currently listed on the EPA website at <https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/bushfire-affected-forestry-operations?>

- (a) How many other site specific operations conditions are in the process of being developed?

ANSWER:

All locations where site-specific conditions have been approved for harvesting in fire-affected forests have been published on the EPA website.

- (a) Site-specific conditions are developed by the EPA and this question should be directed to that agency.

207. For each state forest with new site specific operating conditions:

- (a) How many of these have had active logging in the past 3 months?
(b) How many of these will continue to be logged as part of their approved harvest plans?

ANSWER:

Site-specific conditions have been developed for some areas of some State forests that have been affected by fire. The initial harvesting area subject to site specific conditions began in March. At 25 March, active harvesting is taking place in three locations where site-specific conditions have been developed. Forestry Corporation has amended the harvest plans for these locations to incorporate the site-specific conditions. Information regarding each of these areas including commenced dates and plan documents amended to include site specific conditions can be found on Forestry Corporation's Plan Portal.

208. For each state forest with new site specific conditions, will the Government commit to cease logging in the unburnt areas of these state forests while the site specific conditions are in operation?

ANSWER:

No. Site specific conditions only apply to limited areas within some state forests where fire impacts were significant. Forestry Corporation's operations take place in about 0.1 per cent of NSW's forests each year. Currently, Forestry Corporation is prioritising work in timber plantations where this is feasible, and in forests affected by fire where site-specific conditions have been developed by the EPA. As forests regenerate over the coming months, operations will return to normal and be regulated by the conditions of the relevant IFOA.

209. For each state forest with new site specific conditions, listing separately:

- (a) How many cubic metres of wood is expected to be logged over the next 6 months?
(b) How many cubic metres of wood is expected to be logged while the site specific conditions are in place?

ANSWER:

(a) A breakdown of the volume to be harvested for the next six months cannot be provided, as there remains significant uncertainty regarding approvals of harvesting units where site specific conditions are to be imposed, the site specific conditions remove a significant and yet to be defined volume from being available, and many of the approved harvesting units are not operationally suitable due to wet weather.

(b) In addition to the limitations to providing volume estimations mention above, the duration of the term of site specific conditions is not defined (as the duration may be agreed to be less than 12 months).

210. What is meant by 'selective harvesting' within the new site specific operating conditions?

(a) Please define and explain how this will be applied and monitored.

ANSWER:

The site-specific conditions are published in full on the EPA website.

211. In regards to section 23.4 of the IFOA, there is a requirement for Forestry Corporation of NSW to submit a report to the EPA before that provision is triggered:

(a) Was a report submitted for all 250 compartments initially proposed by the Forestry Corporation of NSW?

(b) How many reports were submitted and for which state forests? Will these be made public?

(c) What are other examples of section 23.4 being applied in the past? Has it ever been applied across the state as it is now?

ANSWER:

(a-b) Reports have been submitted for those compartments that have been approved to proceed. Details of these compartments are on the EPA's website. Reports in relation to this section of the IFOA are not routinely published.

(c) The condition is used routinely as site-specific conditions are often necessary to facilitate forestry operations under the CIFOA. A common example of the use of this condition would be in instances or sites where Forestry Corporation requires access to a track that traverses a mapped exclusion area.

It has not been used for post-fire harvesting before as the need has not arisen since the CIFOA was brought into place in November 2018.

212. Has any legal advice been provided on the application of the new site specific operating conditions? If yes, can this be provided to the Committee?

ANSWER:

Legal advice has been provided but this is privileged legal advice and therefore cannot be provided to the Committee.

213. The new site specific operating conditions appear to have a different compartment numbering system, why?

- (a) Has Forestry Corporation of NSW introduced a new compartment numbering system across its operations?
- (b) When was this done?
- (c) Were stakeholders informed? If so, who?

ANSWER:

- (a) Yes.
- (b) It is being implemented to harvest areas on a plan by plan basis for the CIFOA.
- (c) Stakeholders are able to access Forestry Corporation planning information through the Forestry Corporation Plan Portal, which contains maps and documents for all Forestry Corporation Harvest Plans. The Plan Portal is freely available to all stakeholders via Forestry Corporation's website.

Hardwood profitability and sustainability

214. For the FY18-18, the Forestry Corporation of NSW Hardwood Division reported a revenue of \$123 million and normalised earnings of \$1.1 million.

- (a) What was the revenue for hardwood plantations?
- (b) What was the normalised earnings for hardwood plantations?
- (c) What was the revenue for native forests?

(d) What was the normalised earnings for native forests?

ANSWER:

This information is not reported separately.

215. Why has there been a drop in normalised earnings each year since FY16-17, when revenue has increased?

ANSWER:

The FY16-17 results include significant one-off items detailed in the annual report, including a \$2 million payment from the Roads and Maritime Service to manage biodiversity offsets associated with the Pacific Highway upgrade and close to \$1 million in asset sales income from the former Coffs Harbour office. Timber production in FY16-17 on the north coast was better than budget and overhead expenditure was favourable. FY18-19 did not include any income from the RMS and fire management costs were higher than budget.

Force majeure

216. In regards to evidence given by Mr Roberts on page 51 of the transcript in relation for force majeure being applied to wood supply contracts after the bushfires:

- (a) Has this been triggered in all wood supply agreements on the North Coast (Lower North East and Upper North East forestry regions)
 - i. How is this being triggered, i.e. is it a cut across all contracts, are there species specific provisions, etc?
- (b) How many wood supply agreements on the South Coast (Eden and Southern forestry regions) have had force majeure provisions triggered?
 - i. Which contracts?
 - ii. How is this being triggered, i.e. is it a cut across all contracts, are there species specific provisions, etc?

ANSWER:

Forestry Corporation has declared a force majeure event in relation to all customers and contracts on the north and south coast due to the impacts of fire and advised customers and contractors that it may not be able to meet some of its contractual commitments in fire-affected areas.

Forestry Corporation is working with customers to determine what this will mean in terms of individual contracts and wood supply agreements for the rest of the year and over the remaining years of each contract.

217. Has the Forestry Corporation or DPIE sought any legal advice on applying force majeure provisions after the bushfires?

ANSWER:

Yes.

Wood supply forecasts and auditing

218. In relation to evidence given by Mr Hansen on page 58 of the transcript in relation to wood supply projections:

- (a) The last review of the forestry resource and management evaluation system (FRAMES) was in 2017. When will the next review commence and can it be brought forward considering the changes to wood supply after the fires?
- (b) When will the next Commonwealth audit of the Regional Forest Agreements commence and are these made public?

ANSWER:

- (a) Forestry Corporation will review the FRAMES models for each of the Regional Forest Agreement regions following recent fires and expect to deliver this within the next six months.
- (b) 2023. Yes.