



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

## **BUDGET ESTIMATES 2020-2021 Supplementary Questions**

**Portfolio Committee No. 7 Planning and Environment**

### **ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT**

Hearing: Tuesday 2 March 2021

**Answers due by: 26 March 2021**

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## ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

### Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

#### Air pollution

1. As the NSW load-based licencing fee for sulphur dioxide pollution covers only 2% of the health costs created by that pollution, will the NSW Government adjust the load-based licencing fee in line with the scale of the resulting health damage?
2. What position is the NSW Government taking to the revision of the National Environment Protection (Ambient Air) air quality standards?
3. The current annual standard for nitrogen dioxide is 30 parts per billion (ppb), but the Australian Child Health and Air Pollution study of 2400 children in Australian schools found substantial effects on childhood asthma at average exposure levels of 8.8 ppb. Will NSW support a new science based national annual standard for nitrogen dioxide of 9ppb that is being called for by health experts?

#### QLD-Hunter Gas Pipeline

4. Does the pathway of the Qld-Hunter gas pipeline travel through offset sites in the Hunter Valley, set aside to offset the biodiversity impacts of coal mines and other developments?
5. Will the NSW Government give the public and affected landholders the opportunity to comment on a draft Authority to Survey for the Qld-Hunter gas pipeline, as it did for APA's Western Slopes pipeline?

### Questions from the Hon Mark Banasiak MLC

#### Aerial Shooting in National Parks

On 25 February 2021 the Sydney Morning Herald published an article on the new wildlife plan for New South Wales. The article stated Parks staff carried out 2000 hours of aerial shooting in 83 national parks in the year to January 2021.

6. What was the total cost for the 2000 hours of aerial shooting?
  - (a) What was the cost per hour for operating the helicopters?
  - (b) What was the total fuel cost?
  - (c) What was the total labour cost?
  - (d) What were the total travel and accommodation costs?
  - (e) What was the total cost of ammunition?

7. How many animals of each targeted species (deer, pigs, goats) were shot?
  - (a) What became of the animals that were shot – were they utilised or disposed of in any way?
8. Were any other pest species targeted?
  - (a) How many of each species were shot?
9. Has a review of aerial pest control ever been undertaken to assess whether private contractors may offer better efficiencies and cost savings than NPWS?
10. Has a review of ground based pest control in national parks, looking at effectiveness, costs and efficiencies, ever been undertaken?
  - (a) Is a report available?
  - (b) Does NPWS tender out pest control within national parks to private contractors?
  - (c) If so, where are the tender notices published?
11. What firearms are used by NPWS for aerial pest control?
  - (a) What are the makes, models and calibres of Category D firearms used?
  - (b) In what year were the Category D firearms used by NPWS purchased?
  - (c) In what year were the Category D firearms used by NPWS manufactured?
  - (d) How many Category D firearms does NPWS own?

### **Aerial Shooting on Private Land**

12. Does NPWS conduct aerial shooting on private land?
  - (a) If so, how many property owners have given permission for NPWS to conduct aerial shooting on their property in 2019, 2020, 2021?

### **Questions regarding- The Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia Inc.**

The Canary and Cage Bird Federation of Australia Inc. (CCBFA) represents some 250 bird keeping clubs nationally, with around 100 throughout NSW. CCBFA is a member of Animal Care Australia (ACA) representing hundreds of thousands of animal keepers including bird and reptile keepers. December 2014 saw the release of the Final Report of the Independent Biodiversity Legislation Review Panel led by Dr Neil Byron.

The coalition government accepted all recommendations, including “Adoption of a tiered and risk-based approach to the regulation of wildlife management in NSW” (Recommendation 27).

CCBFA and other stakeholders (animal keeping associations) have been consulting, meeting, advising, assisting and negotiating with OEHL and NPWS for six years; working to successfully develop a reform package to implement their part of the above-mentioned report. Hundreds of hours of work for volunteers, department staff and contractors - millions of dollars of taxpayer’s money, yet still no implementation.

13. The final proposal of the consultation process led by contractor Robert Oliver's team remains under lock and key we believe in Executive Director, Atticus Flemings' office. Minister, why hasn't this proposal been released, and will you release it now?
- (a) Your office facilitated a meeting with Atticus Fleming in June 2020 with Animal Care Australia and CCBFA representatives. A simplified proposal for bird keepers mirroring recently implemented systems in Queensland was put to the Executive Director. He is yet to respond despite numerous promises. Minister, please explain why your Executive Director is not keeping his promise to ACA, CCBFA and for that matter why he has delayed the progress of this proposal and the recommendations made by Mr Oliver's team?
  - (b) ACA and CCBFA have asked to meet with you on numerous occasions to explain and resolve the matter. This matter affects tens of thousands of NSW animal keepers. Will you commit to meet with ACA and CCBFA?

## ENERGY

### Questions from Mr David Shoebridge MLC

#### Electricity bill progress

14. How much of the \$50 million allocated for green hydrogen in the electricity bill has been allocated? What is the process for this? What applications have been received to date?
15. What work has been done working with First Nations communities in the renewable energy zones?
16. Was the Department involved in the development of the new scheme (given we heard from those working on REZs that they appeared to have no idea what was happening)

#### Biomass

17. Will you consider amending the definitions applicable to ensure that “biomass” is not considered a renewable energy source?
18. What has been the growth in the last 5 years of the use of biomass as an energy source?
19. What is driving this?
20. Can you guarantee public native forests are not being used in any of these facilities?
21. Are there any facilities that turn logged native forest into wood pellets for burning in NSW?
22. Are there Government subsidies that should be removed or reconsidered for biomass in light of the harm it causes and the community concern about it?

#### Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro

23. What measures are in place to protect the adjoining National Park from impact by the Oven Mountain Pumped Hydro project?
24. What consultation and agreement is there with local Dunghutti people for the project?
25. What protection are in place to protect environmental water flows, especially during drought?

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

#### Funding

26. Will the Minister intervene and thoroughly investigate what is actually required to service and maintain an Electricity Network so it can provide safe and reliable electricity to customers without the draconian cuts to their operating budgets by the AER which serve nothing more than impact jobs, which in turn affects service delivery to customers?
27. What proportion of the funding that network operators get goes back into funding Operational and Capital expenditure rather than as dividends to majority shareholders?
28. Is the Minister satisfied that the current regulatory regime is working to maximise efficient delivery of electricity without compromising service delivery?

29. Is the Minister satisfied that the published regulatory reliability index measures of SAIFI and SAIDI give a clear and unambiguous picture of the degree of reliability provided by NSW Electricity providers?

### **Electricity prices**

30. Is the Minister satisfied that consumers are benefiting from the maximum possible reduction in electricity prices achievable under the current regulatory regime which is characterised by an unregulated oligopoly in the retail market?

### **Climate change effect**

31. Given recent blackout events in Texas and the increasing frequency of climate change induced significant weather events, is the Minister comfortable with the fact that the AER regulatory regime makes no allowance for the effects of climate change in its provision for Network funding?
- (a) Have you made any representations to the Federal Government or the AER regarding this defect in the funding arrangement?

### **State Government support with AER determinations**

32. Will the Government support NSW network providers with their submissions to the AER in 2023 and 2024, with a view to ending the continued de-funding of NSW energy providers?

### **Essential Energy Operating Expenditure**

33. After several years of consecutive reductions in funding to Essential Energy which severely impacts service delivery and costs jobs in rural and regional areas, the customer is only going to save around \$56 per year from what they paid in 2008. This saving is contingent on the retailers passing on the savings to customers which is not guaranteed given they are unregulated. Given this small and uncertain saving why are the Network Providers so heavily impacted on the Opex and Capex budgets?

### **Job security**

34. As a 49% shareholder in Ausgrid, what is the government doing to reduce the impacts of the proposed redundancies on Ausgrid workers?
- (a) Does the Government have any position on whether or not Ausgrid has been proactive enough in contestable markets which could create rather than destroy jobs in that entity?
35. The job protection measures which were built into the sales Act legislation expired in June last year. As the Minister responsible for the Electricity sector, what is your plan for jobs growth in that sector as opposed to the job destruction we have witnessed since privatisation?
36. An undertaking was given that there would be no regional job losses up to August 2021. Will Essential Energy restart job reductions during the life of the next Enterprise Agreement?
37. Will you commit to no forced redundancies at Essential Energy?

38. Is the Government aware that Ausgrid has resisted attempts by Unions to bring an expression of interest process into the Ausgrid enterprise agreement in order to reduce the impacts of forced redundancy? Such a process would minimise the negative effects on those employees who wished to stay and provide a mechanism to reduce staff numbers.
39. Ausgrid has made clear their intention to reduce numbers by 300-500 before 2023. They have not given the workforce any indication as to when exactly these losses will come into effect, creating an environment of uncertainty, panic, and fear within the company. Further Ausgrid has in the past misrepresented to Unions on the areas, and types of employee, that will be targeted for redundancy. Can the Minister state clearly when Ausgrid intends to make 500 people redundant, and who specifically will be targeted for losses?

### **Switchboards**

40. Is the Minister aware of potential breaches of the Home Building Act and the Gas and Electricity Consumer Safety Act whereby NSW Electricity Distributors are directing unqualified workers to perform electrical wiring work in customer switch boards, and not completing the safety and compliance regime mandated by the Gas and Electricity Consumer Safety Act (CCEW)?

### **Wallsend Administration Building**

41. Is there any intention by Ausgrid to lease, sell or partly sell off the Wallsend Administration building?

### **Charity left out of pocket**

42. The Government is the overall owner of Endeavour Energy (with a current lease) and currently maintains a 49.6 per cent stake in the energy provider, as the Minister for Energy, do you think it is fair that a charity, called Our Lady of Consolation Aged Care and Services in Rooty Hill is being left out of pocket close to \$15,000 (\$14,916.80) to pay for generators to keep life support, medical equipment, nursing call systems and cooling systems going due to Endeavour Energy needing to replace a power pole in a near-by street and refusing to pay for the total cost of keeping the power on for the outage period?
- (a) What action will the Minister take regarding this issue?

43. Minister, in questions taken on notice in the 2019-2020 Budget Estimates hearing on 13 September 2019, answered on 15 October, at page 68 of the annotated transcript, the following answer was given:

**ANSWER:**  
I am advised:

- There has been no increase in the value of the rebates for the Low Income Household Rebate, Family Energy Rebate, Gas Rebate, Life Support Rebate, Medical Energy Rebate or Energy Accounts Payment Assistance Scheme in the 2019-20 budget.
- Data on the number of households receiving rebates between July 2018 and December 2018 is publicly available in the July to December 2018 report at [www.energy.nsw.gov.au/government-and-regulation/legislative-and-regulatory-requirements/social-programs-energy-code](http://www.energy.nsw.gov.au/government-and-regulation/legislative-and-regulatory-requirements/social-programs-energy-code). Full year rebate data for 2018-19 continues to be processed and will be published once available. For EAPA, approximately 55,900 households received EAPA support in 2018-19.
- The disaggregated budget allocations for the energy rebates and EAPA in the 2018-19 and 2019-20 budgets are as follows:

Energy Social Program Name	Budget allocation 2018-19	Budget allocation 2019-20
Low Income Household Rebate	\$239,222,000	\$239,222,000
NSW Gas Rebate	\$29,060,000	\$29,060,000
Family Energy Rebate	\$8,618,000	\$8,618,000
Life Support Rebate	\$12,577,000	\$12,577,000
Medical Energy Rebate	\$3,000,000	\$3,000,000
Seniors Energy Rebate	<i>n/a – commenced in 2019-20</i>	\$10,400,000
Energy Accounts Payment Assistance (EAPA) Scheme	\$19,837,000	\$19,837,000

- What was the actual amount paid for each energy social program in 2018-2019?
- What was the actual amount paid for each energy social program in 2019-2020?
- How many households received assistance under each energy social program in 2018-2019?
- How many households received assistance under each energy social program in 2019-2020?
- What is the proposed expenditure for each energy social program for the 2020-2021 financial year?
- How many households are expected to be assisted under each energy social program for the 2020-2021 financial year?



44. Priority No.2 from the Net Zero Plan Stage 1: 2020-2030 says the NSW government will help consumers by publishing the emissions performance of energy retailers on the EnergySwitch website. Has this commitment been abandoned along with the EnergySwitch website?
- (a) Has the government attained data the emissions performance of each energy retailer and can you provide that data to the committee?
  - (b) If the government does not yet have this data, how do you intend to source it?
  - (c) Have all energy retailers committed to providing this information?
  - (d) How will the government fulfil its commitment to make emissions performance transparent if a retailer refuses to provide its emissions intensity to government?

## Employees

45. This question relates to an issue Mr Betts took on notice. These supplementary questions are intended to clarify the request for information and assist in the provision of the information sought in the hearing. At page 74 of the transcript of the hearing on 2 March 2021, this exchange occurred.

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**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** I have got some questions for Mr Cleland, who will need some time to come in. So while Mr Cleland is coming in I have got a question for Mr Betts about the gender pay gap. Mr Betts, are you the cluster secretary for Planning, Industry and Environment?

**Mr BETTS:** Yes.

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** I know this is the estimates for Energy and Environment, but my question is this: If you can, for the cluster what is the current pay equity gap?

**Mr BETTS:** I do not have that information for the cluster. I have got it for executive grades and I will source that information now, if I can.

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** Okay.

**Mr BETTS:** The picture there is across different executive bands. Broadly speaking, band 3, which is the most senior band, there is a small, on average, higher salary for female band 3s than there is for males; it is about \$1,000, \$2,000. The picture is different at band 2, where there is quite a significant gap between male and female averages and—

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** Mr Betts, I do not wish to interrupt but maybe you could take this on notice because we have only got a short time. What I would really like to know is for the cluster, by division or by agency—whatever is best—what is the gap overall and what is the gap by senior executive band [SEB] grade or its equivalent, both by division and across the whole of the cluster. I would also like to know what is the top and bottom pay for a male and a female in each of those grades, just so we can get the averages—obviously, it will be different at different parts of the organisation.

**Mr BETTS:** The top and bottom pay for each grade? I just want to make sure I understand the question.

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** If you have got SEB band 2, band 3, band 4 or band equivalents, if you have got a number of male and female employees at that level, obviously the highest paid male and the bottom paid male, the highest paid female and the bottom paid female in each of those grades.

**Mr BETTS:** Okay.

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** And also, if you can, the number of average direct reports? Because, not so much for your organisation but for different parts of the public service, I am getting reports of people ostensibly at the same grade, not only at different parts of the grade in terms of the pay, but having vastly differential reporting numbers of staff to them.

**Mr BETTS:** That would be right. Some grades are heavily operational, others are not.

**The Hon. ADAM SEARLE:** Understood. Happy for you to table it.

**Mr BETTS:** That might be quite onerous but we will see. We will get you the best information we can.

Mr Betts, the Secretary of the Cluster and the Secretary of the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment:

- (a) What is the gender pay gap in the Planning, Industry and Environment Cluster, both generally and across those employees in SEB or SEB-equivalent bands?
- (b) What is the highest remuneration for female employees– both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees? Please provide this information by band or band equivalent and by department, agency or State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (c) What is the lowest pay received by female employees – both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees? Please provide this information by band or band equivalent and by department, agency or State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (d) What is the average remuneration received by female employees – both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees? Please provide this information by band or band equivalent and by department, agency or State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (e) What is the highest remuneration for male employees in the Cluster – both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees? Please provide this information by band or band equivalent and by department, agency or State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (f) What is the lowest pay received by male employees in the Cluster– both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees? Please provide this information by band or band equivalent and by department, agency or State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster
- (g) What is the average remuneration received by male employees in the Cluster– both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees? Please provide this information by each band or band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (h) How many female and how many male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees are there across the Cluster? Please provide this information by each band or band equivalent and by each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (i) What is the highest number of direct reports to female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by

department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.

- (j) What is the lowest number of direct reports to female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (k) What is the average number of direct reports to female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (l) What is the highest number of direct reports to male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (m) What is the lowest number of direct reports to male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (n) What is the average number of direct reports to male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (o) What is the highest number of staff managed by female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (p) What is the lowest number of number of staff managed by female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (q) What is the average number of number of staff managed by female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent

and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.

- (r) What is the highest number of staff managed by male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (s) What is the lowest number of number of staff managed by male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (t) What is the average number of number of staff managed by male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees across the Cluster? Please provide this information by band/band equivalent and by department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body and each division of those bodies, if any, across the Cluster.
- (u) What steps are you taking to eliminate the gender pay gap across the Cluster and within each department, agency, corporation or other body in the Cluster?
- (v) What timeframe have you set to eliminate the gender pay gap across the Cluster and within each department, agency, corporation or other body in the Cluster?

46. Minister, for each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio:

- (a) What is the gender pay gap, both generally and across those employees in SEB or SEB-equivalent bands?
- (b) What is the highest remuneration for female employees— both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees?
- (c) What is the lowest pay received by female employees – both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees?
- (d) What is the average remuneration received by female employees – both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees?
- (e) What is the highest remuneration for male employees— both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees?

- (f) What is the lowest pay received by male employees – both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees?
- (g) What is the average remuneration received by male employees – both generally and for SEB/SEB-equivalent employees?
- (h) How many female and how many male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees are there?
- (i) What is the highest number of direct reports to female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (j) What is the lowest number of direct reports to female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (k) What is the average number of direct reports to female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (l) What is the highest number of direct reports to male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (m) What is the lowest number of direct reports to male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (n) What is the average number of direct reports to male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (o) What is the highest number of staff managed by female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (p) What is the lowest number of number of staff managed by female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (q) What is the average number of number of staff managed by female SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (r) What is the highest number of staff managed by male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (s) What is the lowest number of number of staff managed by male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (t) What is the average number of number of staff managed by male SEB or SEB-equivalent employees?
- (u) In providing answers to questions (a) to (t) please provide the information for each SEB band or band equivalent.
- (v) What steps are you taking to eliminate the gender pay gap?
- (w) What timeframe have you set to eliminate the gender pay gap?

## Questions from Mr Justin Field MLC

### Redbank Power Station

47. Is Verdant Technology's (formerly Hunter Energy) Redbank Biomass project eligible for subsidies under the NSW Electricity Infrastructure Investment Act 2020?
  - (a) If so, is it currently being considered?
48. Is this project eligible for funding under the NSW Emerging Energy Program?
  - (a) If so, is it currently being considered?
49. Would Verdant's Redbank Biomass project be eligible under any other NSW Government programs for subsidies?
50. Are any activities that burn native forest biomaterial for energy eligible under the abovementioned initiatives for funding?
  - (a) If so, are any currently being considered? Please name and provide details of the proposal.

## ENVIRONMENT

### Questions from Mr David Shoebridge MLC

#### EPA prosecutions

51. We are aware of a number of well documented cases of hazardous waste being illegally dumped on private land and properties in the Western Suburbs in 2019 and 2020 which were reported to the EPA, can you advise why these were not prosecuted?
52. What percentage of hazardous waste matters referred to the EPA each year are investigated? Of this how many are prosecuted? How many of these prosecutions are successful?

#### 55 Coonara Avenue, West Pennant Hills

53. Given that there are large areas of critically endangered ecological communities of Blue Gum High Forest and Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest on the Mirvac site at 55 Coonara Ave, West Pennant Hills, why didn't your department insist on getting a survey of the trees within the development area, when it now turns out there are over 450 trees within the demolition footprint alone?

#### Clean Air Strategy

54. Can the Minister explain how the health of Sydney residents will be protected when the 4 waste incinerators currently under consideration for construction in the Sydney basin burn more than 1.5 million tonnes of waste in the Sydney basin per year?
55. Can the Minister confirm what air quality modelling has been done to verify this?

### Questions from Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC

#### Ammonia Nitrate

56. What reviews or regulatory changes have been made regarding the storage of Ammonia Nitrate in response to the tragic explosion at Port of Beirut?
57. What other cities in the world permit up to 12,000 tonnes of Ammonium Nitrate stockpiles stored less than 800m from residents, as is permitted in Newcastle?
  - (a) What other ports permit 12,000 tonnes of Ammonia Nitrate stockpiles within their vicinity?
58. What is the annual tonnage of Ammonium Nitrate hauled via trucks in NSW?
  - (a) How many truck movements does that equate to?
59. What proportion of road-based Ammonium nitrate haulage is undertaken by independent contractors/sole traders?

60. How are the transport of dangerous goods requirements enforced for contractors and sole traders transporting ammonium nitrate?
  - (a) What monitoring is undertaken?
61. What is the tonnage of Ammonia Nitrate transported by rail in NSW?
  - (a) Is this transported on lines shared by passenger trains?
  - (b) Is this transported through tunnels? What special safety measures are in place for the haulage of AN on trains?
62. What is the estimated blast radius of an Ammonium Nitrate explosion if there was an accident at the Port of Newcastle?
63. Would the RAAF Base at Williamtown be within that blast radius?
64. How has the security risk associated with the stockpile of ammonium nitrate in a strategic port adjacent to strategic military facilities been assessed?

### **Native Vegetation Management Compliance**

65. How many active investigations into breaches under part 4 of the Local Land Services Act 2013 are there?
66. What is the number of active investigations into breaches under the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974?
67. What is the number of active investigations into breaches under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016?
68. How many FTE compliance officers were employed by the department in;
  - (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
69. How many new investigations were launched into breaches under part 4 of the Local Land Services Act 2013 in;
  - (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
70. How many investigations into breaches under part 4 of the Local Land Services Act 2013 were resolved in;



- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
71. How many charges were brought for breaches under part 4 of the Local Land Services Act 2013 were resolved in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
72. How many cases of unexplained clearing were discovered in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
73. How many hectares of unexplained clearing were discovered in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
74. How many new investigations were launched into breaches of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
75. How many investigations into breaches of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 were resolved in;
- (a) 2020?

- (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
76. How many charges were brought for breaches of the National Parks and Wildlife Act 1974 were resolved in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
77. How many new investigations were launched into breaches of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
78. How many investigations into breaches of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 were resolved in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?
79. How many charges were brought for breaches of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016 were resolved in;
- (a) 2020?
  - (b) 2019?
  - (c) 2018?
  - (d) 2017?

## **Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997**

80. What budget has been allocated to revise the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997?
81. When will any planned revision of the Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997 be completed by?

## **Narrabri Gas Project Legacy GHG Emissions**

82. Has the NSW government taken into consideration the need to measure and monitor fugitive GHG emissions from project wells after each well has been abandoned ?
83. Has the NSW government taken into consideration the need to measure and monitor GHG emissions over the entire area of the NGP after the 25 year project has ended ? (Such GHG measurement and monitoring would be required to determine if post-project GHG emissions over the project area are above pre-project GHG base level/s).
84. What carbon offset requirements will the NSW government impose on Santos for any GHG emissions from project wells that occur after those wells have been abandoned ?
85. What carbon offset requirements will the NSW government impose on Santos for any GHG emissions caused by the project that occur after the 25 year project has ended ?

## **Snowy 2.0**

86. What Biodiversity offsets and species credits are able to be realised if there are no equivalent ecosystem areas to purchase and bring into the conservation network?

<b>Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)</b>
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## **Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy**

87. In relation to the review of environmental factors on the proposed mountain bike network between Mount Keira and Mount Kembla;
  - (a) Will the REF be completed by the end of June 2021?
  - (b) Is the REF process fully funded?
  - (c) If the REF is not completed by end of June 2021, will funding be made available in the 2021-2022 budget?
  - (d) Has the community consultation process commenced? What will the community consultation process consist of?

(e) When will the Draft Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Strategy be finalised?

88. In relation to the construction of the Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Network;
- (a) How much will the construction of the mountain bike network cost?
  - (b) When will the government provide funding for the construction of the Illawarra Escarpment Mountain Bike Network?

**Bush fire preparation in the Illawarra Escarpment**

89. How much of the \$125.9 million commitment over 4 years announced by the Government in June 2019 to upgrade and maintain the fire trail network in NSW national parks, has been allocated to the Illawarra in this 2020/21 budget?
90. How much of these funds have been spent on maintaining fire trails in the Illawarra?
91. What are the details of these activities?
92. What hazard reduction activities have been/will be conducted in the Illawarra Escarpment this financial year in preparation for the 2021 bush fire season?
93. How much has/will the government spent on bush fire preparation in the Illawarra Escarpment this financial year?

**Walking tracks in the Illawarra Escarpment State Conservation Area**

94. How much of the \$149.5 million investment over four years announced by the Government in June 2019 for improving NSW National parks has been allocated to national parks and walking trails the Illawarra in this 2020/21 budget?
95. How much has/will the Government spent on maintaining, upgrading and improving walking trails and visitor facilities in the Illawarra this financial year?
96. What are the details of these activities?

**National Parks and Wildlife Service**

97. On Monday 1 February 2021, the National Parks and Wildlife Service Director of Visitor Experience stated that visitation across the State had increased 150 per cent over Summer 2020/21.
- (a) What are the most recent visitation metrics for national parks visitation, particularly regarding increased visitation in 2020/21?
98. How many vacant positions existed within the NPWS as at 2 March 2021?

99. How many vacant positions within the NPWS have been vacant for more than three months?
100. How many vacant positions within the NPWS have been vacant for more than six months?
101. How many vacant positions within the NPWS have been vacant for more than twelve months?
102. How many vacant positions within the NPWS have been vacant for more than eighteen months?
103. How many vacant positions within the NPWS have been vacant for more than twenty-four months?
104. What is the current full time salary range of Field Officer General Operations positions?
105. What is the average full time salary for Field Officer General Operations positions?
106. Are national parks staff prevented from publicly commenting on their work or responsibilities without prior approval?
107. How many media or communications staff are currently employed by the NPWS?
108. Is it true that the media guidelines within the NPWS only permit the minister or their spokesperson to comment on or engage media?
109. What was the cost for a one year All Parks Pass (including Kosciuszko) in:
  - (a) 2015
  - (b) 2016
  - (c) 2017
  - (d) 2018
  - (e) 2019
  - (f) 2020
  - (g) 2021
110. What was the cost of a one year Multi Park Pass in:
  - (a) 2015
  - (b) 2016
  - (c) 2017
  - (d) 2018

- (e) 2019
- (f) 2020
- (g) 2021

111. What was the cost of a one year Country Parks Pass in:

- (a) 2015
- (b) 2016
- (c) 2017
- (d) 2018
- (e) 2019
- (f) 2020
- (g) 2021

112. What was the average cost for overnight camping in a NSW National Park in:

- (a) 2014
- (b) 2015
- (c) 2016
- (d) 2017
- (e) 2018
- (f) 2019
- (g) 2020
- (h) 2021

113. What was the seniors concession for overnight camping in a NSW National Park in:

- (a) 2014
- (b) 2015
- (c) 2016
- (d) 2017
- (e) 2018
- (f) 2019

(g) 2020

(h) 2021

### **Kosciuszko National Park**

114. When is the new horse management plan for Kosciuszko National Park due to be publicly released for public comment?

115. When will the new horse management plan be implemented?

116. Is the Minister aware of allegations made by former Nationals MP Peter Cochrane accusing NPWS staff of poisoning feral horses?

(a) Has that allegation been investigated?

(b) What was the outcome of that investigation?

(c) Was that allegation publicly refuted by the NPWS?

117. What penalties exist if a person releases animals without authorisation into a national park?

118. Is the NPWS aware of the unauthorised release of animals into Kosciuszko National Park?

(a) If yes, what animals have been released?

(b) Have any actions been taken against people releasing animals into Kosciuszko National Park?

119. What is the expected feral horse population in Kosciuszko National Park in:

(a) 2022?

(b) 2025?

(c) 2030?

120. Was the Minister aware that of 343 feral horses removed from Kosciuszko National Park, 169 were released back into the Park?

121. Was the 2016 Draft Wild Horse Management Plan ever adopted or implemented?

122. How many feral horses would the Environment Minister like to see in Kosciuszko National Park?

### **Save Our Species**

123. What are the current funding arrangements for the Save Our Species program?

124. Has the Government committed to further funding beyond 2020/21?

125. How many temporary or non-permanent staff are employed under the Save Our Species program?
126. Will the Government commit to transferring temporary staff employed under the Save Our Species program to permanent positions?
  - (a) If not, why are these workers and their conservation outcomes considered temporary and not permanent?
127. Will any staff employed under the Save Our Species program lose their jobs in the next six months?
128. Will the Government guarantee that no jobs employed under the Save Our Species program will be cut?

### **Royal Botanic Gardens**

129. How many apprentices are currently employed at the Royal Botanic Gardens?
130. How many apprentice positions are currently vacant at the Royal Botanic Gardens?
131. Are these vacant apprentice positions unfilled because of budgetary constraints?
132. Will the Government provide additional funding to the Royal Botanic Gardens to fill these vacant positions?

### **Agnes Place Mine Extension**

133. The Shadow Minister for Environment has been advised that Centennial Coal's Angus Place Mine Extension project will result in roughly half of the endangered Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps being destroyed. How does the Government intend on protecting the remaining endangered communities?
134. Have offset arrangements been entered into regarding the destruction of 300 hectares of the endangered Newnes Plateau Shrub Swamps?
  - (a) If yes, how have offsets been granted regarding this unique endangered ecosystem, and in what location do those offsets exist?

### **Colebee Reserve**

135. When will Colebee Reserve be transferred to the National Parks and Wildlife Service?
136. In 2017, an ecologist was contracted by OEHL to do surveys on Colebee Reserve. The Shadow Minister for Environment was advised that the ecologist found the site was infested with weeds and feral animals and the ecological conditions were deteriorating. What steps has the Government taken to improve the situation following this report?



137. If the Colebee Reserve was determined to be an offset, why has its biodiversity values been allowed to deteriorate to such a degree that it cannot be transferred to the NPWS?

### **Land Management Framework**

138. Has the Government conducted its promised review of the land management framework, which was due within three years of implementation?
- (a) If yes, what were the terms of reference, and will the review be published?
- (b) If not, why has the review not been conducted?

### **Zero Interest Loans for Solar and Batteries**

139. How many zero interest loans for solar and batteries has the Government granted in the last two years?
140. Please list the number of zero interest loans granted to each postcode.
141. When will the program move from pilot stage to full implementation?

### **Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan**

142. Is it true that the draft Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan allows the destruction of more than ten per cent of the critically endangered Cumberland Woodland and only protects one of the six east-west movement corridors recommended in the Chief Scientist Koala Report?
143. Does the Minister intend on signing off the biodiversity certification for the Cumberland Plain Conservation Plan given these issues?

### **Snowy 2.0**

144. What exemptions have been granted, or will be granted, to Snowy Hydro with respect to the Plan of Management for Kosciuszko National Park?
145. Does the Minister support the Snowy 2.0 project being connected to the grid via underground cables instead of overhead transmission wires?
146. The current proposal is to clear an 8k track through Kosciuszko National Park to make way for overhead transmission wires, with an easement of at least 120m-wide along the length of the transmission wires. Is the Minister concerned with the level of habitat destruction through a national park, and what is the Minister doing to limit that destruction?
147. What specific actions has the Minister undertaken to investigate the underground option? How has the Minister satisfied himself that alternative, less destructive options, have been appropriately explored?

148. The Environmental Impact Statement seems to suggest that the initial clearing needed to bury an underground cable would have the same, or similar, environmental impact as a permanent 8km-long, 120m-wide easement. Does the Minister accept that the overhead option is not only unsightly, but locks in permanent habitat destruction underneath the transmission wires?
149. Does the Minister believe that underground cables would have less environmental impact on the Kosciuszko National Park compared with overhead transmission wires?

### **Koalas**

150. The Government 'noted' recommendation 41 of the Parliamentary inquiry into koala populations and their habitat in NSW, relating to the investigation of the establishment of the Great Koala National Park. The government response states: "The Government will continue to work with local communities, councils and industry to investigate a range of options and measures for koala habitat protection across NSW. Has the government conducted with the Wanggaan (Southern) Gumbaynggirr Nation Aboriginal Corporation, which holds native title on behalf of the Gumbaynggirr People whose lands lie within the proposed GKNP?
- (a) If not, will the government consult with the Gumbaynggirr People?
151. The government's response to the Parliamentary inquiry into koalas notes the reversion to operations under SEPP 44 while a new policy 'to protect koalas and the interest of farmers' is being developed. Which local communities, organisations, Councils and industry groups has the government consulted to develop its new policy?
152. Which local communities, organisations, Councils and industry groups will the government consult to develop its new policy?
153. Will the new policy be released for community consultation prior to it being given effect?
154. What is the current timeline for release and implementation of the new policy?
155. Will the new policy be implemented by way of a planning instrument, regulation or legislation?

### **Biodiversity Offset Scheme**

156. When will the government review the Biodiversity Offset Scheme?
157. How long will the review take, and what process will be undertaken?
158. Under the Biodiversity Offset Scheme:
- (a) Can high quality koala habitat be cleared and offset?

- (b) For developments involving the clearing of high quality koala habitat, can developers pay for credits instead of identifying and purchasing land to be offset?
- (c) Can offsets be delayed until the completion of the development?

### **Clean Air Strategy**

- 159. Has the Minister or the Government ever taken a decision to abandon the standalone clean air strategy and instead, fold those issues into other programs and plans?
- 160. When will the Clean Air Strategy be publicly released?
- 161. When will the Clean Air Strategy be implemented?
- 162. The process to create the clean air strategy began in 2016. At the time, the EPA described it as a 10-year-plan. Five years later, the plan has not been released or implemented. Will the Clean Air Strategy still be a 10-year-plan?

### **Load Based Licencing Review**

- 163. In 2016, the Government commenced a review into the Load Based Licencing Scheme. 52 submissions were received, and in 2017, the EPA was supposed to prepare a proposal paper. Has the EPA ever prepared a proposal paper?
- 164. Has the Minister seen this proposal paper?
- 165. When will the Load Based Licencing Scheme review be completed?

### **Truegain**

- 166. In what year did the EPA first issue a fine, notice or begin any regulatory action against the Truegain facility in Rutherford?
- 167. How many regulatory actions have been taken against Truegain, including formal warnings, fines, notices, prosecutions?
- 168. Aggregated into each year of Truegain's licence, how many regulatory actions have been taken against Truegain each year?
- 169. How much money has the EPA received from fines issued against Truegain?
- 170. Has the EPA's June 2017 clean up notice against Truegain yet been complied with?
- 171. Has any internal review been conducted in relation to the EPA's investigations into Truegain, and in which year did that review begin?

## **Millers Forest Asbestos Dumping**

172. Following the case of asbestos dumping at a property in Millers Forest where a Sydney-based waste company admitted to transporting fill to that property, and given that fill had allegedly tested positive for asbestos prior to its transportation, has that Sydney-based waste company been subject to any regulatory action as a result of that investigation?
- (a) If so, what is that regulatory action?
  - (b) How many other regulatory actions have been taken against that particular waste company in the past five years?
  - (c) Has the waste company previously been the subject of regulatory action relating to asbestos waste?

## **Questions from Mr Justin Field MLC**

### **EPA: PNF reporting and information sharing**

173. For each of the Private Native Forestry (PNF) Code areas, how many PNF annual report (as per Sect 2.2 of PNF Codes) were received for the reporting years ending:
- (a) 31 March 2018
  - (b) 31 March 2019
  - (c) 31 March 2020
174. For each of the PNF Code areas, how many PNF annual reports have been received for the reporting year ending 31 March 2021, as at 4 March 2021.
175. For each of the PNF Code areas, what was the total volume of timber products harvested as reporting in annual reports for the reporting years ending:
- (a) 31 March 2018
  - (b) 31 March 2019
  - (c) 31 March 2020
176. For each of the PNF Code areas, what was the total volume of timber products harvested, as reported in annual reports for the reporting year ending 31 March 2021, as at 4 March 2021.
177. For each of the PNF Code areas, what was the total area of land on which PNF forest operations occurred, as reported in annual reports, for the reporting years ending:
- (a) 31 March 2018

- (b) 31 March 2019
  - (c) 31 March 2020
178. For each of the PNF Code areas, what was the total area of land on which PNF operations occurred, as reported in annual reports for the reporting year ending 31 March 2021, as at 4 March 2021?
179. How many complaints/reports did the EPA receive in each of the following years that related to PNF operations:
- (a) FY18/19
  - (b) FY19/20
180. How many complaints/reports have the EPA received relating to PNF operations in FY20/21 as at 4 March 2021?
181. How many PNF operations were inspected by the EPA in each of the following years:
- (a) FY18/19
  - (b) FY19/20
182. How many PNF operations were inspected by the EPA in FY20/21 as at 4 March 2021?
183. What regulatory actions (ie. cautions/fines/prosecutions etc) have the EPA taken in regards to PNF operations in each of the following years:
- (a) FY18/19
  - (b) FY19/20
184. What regulatory actions (ie. cautions/fines/prosecutions etc) have the EPA taken in regards to PNF operations in FY20/21 as at 4 March 2021?
185. What information/data about PNF operations does the EPA currently provide to the following organisations? (please provide information about the nature of the data/information provided, how that information is provided and the timing/regularity of reporting - for example is it routine on a specific timeline or as requested):
- (a) Department of Primary Industries
  - (b) Local Land Services
  - (c) Environment, Energy and Science
  - (d) Other
186. What information/data about PNF operations does the EPA currently receive from the following organisations? (please provide information about the nature of the data/information

provided, how that information is provided and the timing/regularity of reporting - for example is it routine on a specific timeline or as requested):

- (a) Department of Primary Industries
- (b) Local Land Services
- (c) Environment, Energy and Science
- (d) Other

187. When will the Forestry Snapshot 2019/20 be published?

**EPA: post-fire logging consultant**

188. What is the role of Wall Consulting Group in post-fire logging negotiations?

- (a) How much have they been paid to date?
- (b) Are they still being contracted?
  - i. If so, when is the contract expected to expire?

**EPA: transitional arrangements under the previous IFOA**

189. Please explain what the transitional arrangements are for logging under the previous IFOA

190. What is the time limit to extending these transitional arrangements?

191. Is the Forestry Corporation complying with requirements surrounding these transitional arrangements?

- (a) If not, how?

**EPA: salvage logging**

192. Has salvage logging occurred before in the types of forest that occur in the Southern and Eden Forestry Regions?

193. What research or evidence was relied upon to permit salvage logging of Southern and Eden Forestry Regions after the bushfires?

**EPBC independent review**

194. Professor Graeme Samuel AC provided the Final Report of the Independent Review of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999 (EPBC Act) in January 2021 (found at <https://epbcactreview.environment.gov.au/resources/final-report>). Recommendation 15 of the report provided that states should immediately ensure that Regional Forest Agreements (RFAs) are consistent with the National Environmental Standards. As a party to the Regional

Forest Agreements, has the NSW Government considered the implications of this recommendation?

### **Koala strategy research sites**

195. Were any research sites that were a part of the Government's Koala Strategy burnt since the bushfires? If so:
- (a) Which sites?
  - (b) What is the degree of burn/loss in these sites?
  - (c) Has research at any of these sites been terminated?
196. Since the bushfires, have any research sites that were a part of the Government's Koala Strategy been logged by Forestry Corporation? If so:
- (a) Which state forests were logged?
  - (b) When were they logged?
  - (c) Has research at any of these sites been terminated?

### **Land clearing**

197. Which agency is required to enforce set asides required under the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018?
198. Since the introduction of the Land Management (Native Vegetation) Code 2018 how many non-compliances in regards to required set asides have been:
- (a) Investigated? Please list how many in specific LGAs.
  - (b) Prosecuted? Please list how many in specific LGAs.
  - (c) Subject to other enforcement actions? Please list what action and how many apply to specific LGAs.

### **Implementation of the ICAC recommendations into Water Management**

199. Regarding recommendation 11 of the November 2020 ICAC report into water management that reads: "That the DPIE formalises communication, information-sharing and consultation protocols with officers performing the functions of the Environment, Energy and Science Group", are there currently formalised communication, information-sharing and consultation protocols between officers at DPIE(Water) and EES?
- (a) If yes,
    - i. in what form do these protocols take?

- ii. how are they communicated to staff?
  - iii. how are they implemented?
- (b) If no, what is the nature of any informal communication, information-sharing and consultation processes that operate between EES and DPIE(Water) officials in relation to water issues where the Environment Minister has concurrence powers?
- (c) What action, if any, has been taken since the ICAC report to implement this recommendation?

### **National parks closing after fires**

200. Which National Parks are currently fully closed or partially closed, as a result of the Black Summer bushfires?
201. For those partially closed, what areas of those parks are closed (please specify the trails, campaign, or other park areas that remain closed)?
202. For each of the National Parks fully or partially closed, can the Minister provide the following information:
- (a) what is the reason for those closures (eg. at risk trees, damage to trails, damage to access roads/infrastructure)?
  - (b) what work is being done or is scheduled to be done to rectify the issues that have resulted in closure?
  - (c) what is the anticipated cost of the work to be done?
  - (d) when are the parks or park areas expected to be opened?

### **Wildlife response by NPWS**

203. In the January 2020 Wildlife and Conservation Bushfire Recovery Immediate Response, Appendix 1 listed detailed impacts on threatened species. The same information has not been provided in the Medium-term response plan or supporting documentation. Is there an update to the information in Appendix 1 and will this be made publicly available?



## Questions from the Hon Mark Pearson MLC

### Dingoes

204. Can the Minister confirm that after thousands of years of habitation in Australia, dingoes are:
- (a) a native animal
  - (b) not afforded the same legal protections as other native animals
  - (c) declared a wild dog pest that can be controlled to the point of local extinction by lethal means including
    - i. 1080 baiting and
    - ii. Shooting
205. What is the objective of dingo/wild dog management programs in NSW National Parks?
206. How has scientific evidence highlighting the role of dingoes in the ecosystem informed dingo management policy in National Parks across NSW?
207. Is the Minister aware of a study in 2019 by Cairns et al. “Geographic hot spots of dingo genetic ancestry in south-eastern Australia despite hybridisation with domestic dogs” February 2020 Conservation Genetics 22(1):77-90 which reported:
- (a) the results of DNA testing finding that:
    - i. nearly 25% of the animals were pure dingoes
    - ii. dingo hotspots at Myall Lakes, north of Port Macquarie and Washpool National Park?
  - (b) What actions have been taken to conserve these South-Eastern Australia dingo populations?
  - (c) Were these dingo populations subjected to aerial or ground 1080 baiting in 2019 or 2020?
208. Can the Minister provide the following details about the National Parks dingo/wild dog 1080 aerial or ground baiting programs?
- (a) How many dingo/wild dog 1080 baits were deployed in NSW across National Parks during 2020?
  - (b) How many dingo/wild dog 1080 baits are planned to be deployed in NSW National Parks during 2021?
  - (c) Who funds dingo/wild dog 1080 baiting programs in NSW National Parks, including in-kind contributions?
  - (d) What was the cost of 1080 baiting programs targeting dingoes/wild dogs in NSW National Parks during 2020?
209. How many hectares of public land in NSW was 1080 baited (ground or aerial) for dingo/wild dog management during 2020?

210. What was the per-capita farmed animal deaths due to dingo/wild dog predation for 2018, 2019 and 2020?

### **Biomass and Native Forests**

211. Can the Minister confirm that all NSW native forests, including NSW Forestry Corp, private landholder and native timber plantations are prohibited from harvesting trees specifically for sale to power generators as biomass?

212. Can the Minister confirm that 'offcuts' from native forests cannot be supplied to power generators without a "resource recovery order" and that to date, none have been applied for or granted?

### **Wildlife and Exclusion Fencing**

213. Can the Minister advise if your department has raised concerns with you about Local Land Service's promotion of private landholder exclusion fencing that restricts the free movement of wildlife?

214. Is the Minister aware

- (a) that your department has a Kangaroo Management Program representative on the Western Region Local Land Services' Kangaroo Management Taskforce?
- (b) that the KMT released the report: "Options for integrated kangaroo management in the Western region" \* which recommended water point closure
  - i) as a supplementary control
  - ii) to reduce impact on spelled areas
  - iii) even if an exclusion fence is in place.
- (c) of any reports of native animals such as emus, kangaroos and echidnas dying of dehydration under such circumstances?

\* [https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1253705/Integrated-Kangaroo-Management\\_web.pdf](https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1253705/Integrated-Kangaroo-Management_web.pdf) Taskforce at p22

216. Is the Minister able to advise how many licences to harm have been issued to kill kangaroos trapped inside landholder exclusion fencing?

217. Does the Minister support the complete exclusion of all native animals from vast tracts of private land in NSW given that page 2 of the "Options for integrated kangaroo management in the Western region" report states that "exclusion of all unmanaged herbivores to permit the periodic resting of native pastures is an essential component of improving rangeland grazing systems and regenerative management?"

218. Can the Minister advise whether his department has

- (a) concerns about the Gilgunnia Cluster Fence Project\* cluster of 22 landholders extending over 210 kms covering 177,000 hectares in regards to responsible kangaroo management?

- (b) been asked to advise on the impact of excluding or entrapping native animals in a 210 kilometre area covering 177,000 hectares?
- (c) aside from the immediate welfare concerns of death by starvation, dehydration and stress myopathy caused by being trapped, is the Minister concerned about interruptions to migration patterns of kangaroos being impeded by the fencing?

[\\*https://www.westernmagazine.com.au/story/4894443/biggest-exclusion-fence-in-nsw-stops-pests-in-their-tracks/](https://www.westernmagazine.com.au/story/4894443/biggest-exclusion-fence-in-nsw-stops-pests-in-their-tracks/)

## **Kangaroo Management Plan**

### **Calculation errors**

219. Is the Minister aware of the following calculation errors made in the Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management plan 2017-2021 version 1? \*

- (a) population densities for wallaroos in the Northern tablelands were incorrectly calculated.
- (b) the Upper Hunter the density was calculated at 9.2 when in actual fact the correct density was 3.03.
- (c) the 2017 estimate for the wallaroo population cited four different figures (at page 6) until such time as my office recently advised the department of the calculation errors where upon it was changed in the second edition?

\* see Appendix 'A' for Top table from Commercial Kangaroo Harvest management plan 2017-2021 (first edition (190709))

220. Is the Minister aware that in the 2019 quota report after 'applying the correction factor', the density decreased from 2.83 to 2.03 which cannot be mathematically correct? \*

\* see Appendix 'A' for Bottom table from Commercial Kangaroo Harvest management plan 2017-2021 (second edition (200485))

221. Can the Minister explain how these above-cited reports can contain so many calculation errors?

222. Can the Minister explain how according to the Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2017-2021 (first edition (190709)) page 29, the Western Grey Kangaroo population;

- (a) increased by 72% in 2012 2 and
- (b) increased by a further 116% in 2013 which is
  - (i) well in excess of expected natural population increases
  - (ii) inexplicable even if there was an end to the drought during this time.

223. Can the Minister explain how the kangaroo population more than doubled between 2000 and 2001 from 7,689,100 to 13,915,500 according to the Red and Grey Kangaroos Annual Population Estimates – Annual Quotas – Annual Cull Figures and Relative Percentages\* given that the accepted annual population growth rate of macropods is between 8-10%?

\* <https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Wildlife-management/Kangaroo-management/red-grey-kangaroo-annual-population-estimates.pdf?la=en&hash=044527042E38335F9B3ACFAB355AA89500ADB309>

## Correction Factor

224. Is the Minister aware that in 1997 a study was done by Clancy et al, which

- (a) compared aerial surveys with land surveys
  - (i) at 5 sites for kangaroos and wallaroos
  - (ii) with four of those conducted during winter and summer and
  - (ii) one conducted during Autumn.
- (b) found no significant difference in population estimates between the two methods in Summer and Winter for either kangaroos or wallaroos and that
  - (i) the only site study which investigated population estimates during autumn found that aerial surveys during this one and only season were approximately 50% lower than the ground estimates.

225. Does the Minister agree that it is well past time for the estimation of kangaroo populations to be made transparent and subject to independent review by international experts given that the Clancy 1997 study is the authoritative published peer-reviewed article which Cairns references and yet,

- (a) DPI continues to apply a correction factor of 1.85 on the Wallaroo population estimates at all times of the year?
- (b) DPI continually recalculates changes in population estimates proposed for wallaroo?.
- (c) the public are expected to have confidence that wallaroo populations has increased by 269% over 3 years in the drought-affected Upper Hunter, given that
  - (i) this level of growth would only be possible if the population was entirely comprised of adult females of reproducing age,
  - (ii) all could give birth by parthenogenesis,
  - (iii) and no individuals ever died.
  - (iv) scientific studies of rates of growth suggest annual values around 8-10%. \*

\* Appendix 'A' Bottom table from Commercial Kangaroo Harvest management plan 2017-2021 (second edition (200485))

226. Can the Minister explain

- (a) how DPI's estimated population growth rate for Upper Hunter wallaroos was possible and
- (b) why the population estimates and quota projections do not use any drought measures in their estimates such as the SPEI, The Standardised Precipitation-Evapo-transpiration Index which is globally recognised as an indicator for drought.

227. Can the Minister

- a) explain why the wallaroo population densities and abundances (along with their associated statistics) were determined using bootstrapping techniques? \*
- b) provide the mathematical modelling and variables used, i.e. analysis output to numerically justify how the sighting Wallaroo total for 2020 \*\*was 208 yet the

population estimate was 296555? Statistically, even using bootstrapping techniques and the “concerning correction factor of 1.85” this number seems implausible?

\*This method takes from one sample, and re-samples with replacement from that sample to gain an “estimate” from all the estimates? If the locations of the transects are reflective of the entire zone, and sufficient animals were seen bootstrapping techniques would not be needed as accurate estimates would have been achieved through the aerial surveys.

\*\*A report to the Biodiversity and Conservation Division, New South Wales Department of Planning, Industry and Environment on the consultancy: “Design and analysis of helicopter surveys of the kangaroo populations of the Northern Tablelands kangaroo management zones, 2019.” The number 208 was also from the above report page 18: Sixty-four transects comprising 480.0 km of survey effort were flown across the two survey strata of the Glen Innes kangaroo management zone (Zone 13, Fig. 1). A total of 1,861 eastern grey kangaroos were counted on these transects, along with 208 common wallaroos. DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING, INDUSTRY & ENVIRONMENT 2021 Quota Report New South Wales Commercial Kangaroo Harvest Management Plan 2017–2021

228. Can the Minister advise

- (a) what role, if any, the University of New England had in the design and analysis of helicopter surveys undertaken for the “Kangaroo populations of the Northern Tablelands Kangaroo Management Zones 2019 report
  - i) given that one of the listed authors Dr S.C. Cairn and
  - (ii) publisher G.E. & S.C Cairns Consulting Pty. Ltd
  - (iii) lists his University of New England email and University of New England Armidale campus address in the report.

### **Transparency**

229. Can the Minister explain why it took until a request from the Animal Justice Party in February 2021 for the 2019 Northern Tablelands Kangaroo Management Zones report to be published on your department’s website?

230. Can the Minister explain why your department

- (a) publishes the three yearly reports for the Northern Tablelands, Central Tablelands, and South East NSW but
- (b) the only information published for the Western Plains, which makes up the remaining 9 zones, is a table which shows the population count for Red and Grey Kangaroos?

231. Can the Minister advise why the transect reports for the Western Plains are not available on your department’s website?

232. Can the Minister assist me in accessing the following statistical information that should be publicly available on your website under the topic of kangaroo management zones;

- (a) the tab labelled ‘more information’ lists the SEED Commercial kangaroo management harvest zone is inactive.
- (b) when you click into this portal, none of the links to the data set downloads were operational.

233. Can the Minister furnish the information requested and explain why

- (a) the above-mentioned data is not publicly accessible and why our biostatistical, Claire Galea’s initial request in December to repair the tabs has been ignored?

- (b) on your website under the commercial takes tab - the tab says summary of commercial takes from 1973 to 2017, however the table only includes data to 2001.

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/-/media/OEH/Corporate-Site/Documents/Animals-and-plants/Wildlife-management/Kangaroo-management/red-grey-kangaroo-annual-population-estimates.pdf?la=en&hash=044527042E38335F9B3ACFAB355AA89500ADB309>

### **Kangaroo Management Plan Panel**

234. Is the Minister aware that

- (a) the last published minutes of the panel are from 27 November 2019?
- (b) my office sent a letter in December 2020 requesting that the KMP minutes from 2020 be published on the department's website?

235. Can the Minister explain why the Kangaroo Management Plan Panel Minutes from 2020 have not been published on the department's website?

236. Can the Minister advise as to

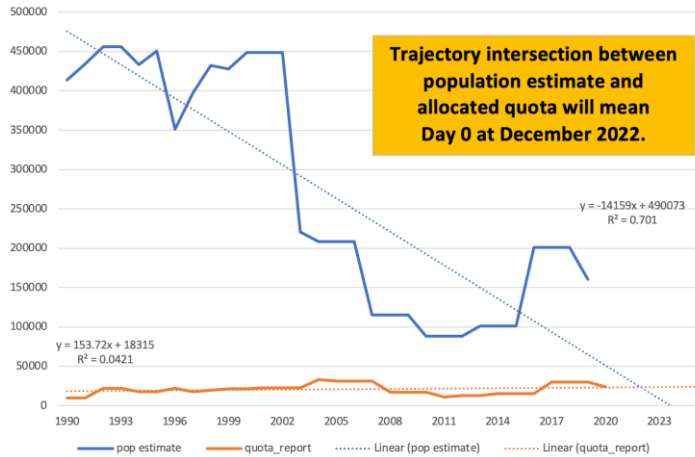
- (a) why Dr Robert Mulley from Western Sydney University was appointed to represent 'Research Institutions' on the KMP panel despite his apparent lack of credential regarding macropod research?
- (b) the criteria for selection onto the KMP panel to represent research institutions given that Dr Mulley is the Chair of the Game and Pest Animal Advisory Board which represents the interests of licensed hunters in matters arising under the Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002?
- (c) whether there is a conflict of interest regarding Dr Mulley given that he is on the panel representing research institutions as well as representing licensed hunters as Chair of the Game and Pest Animal Advisory Board?

# Appendix "A"



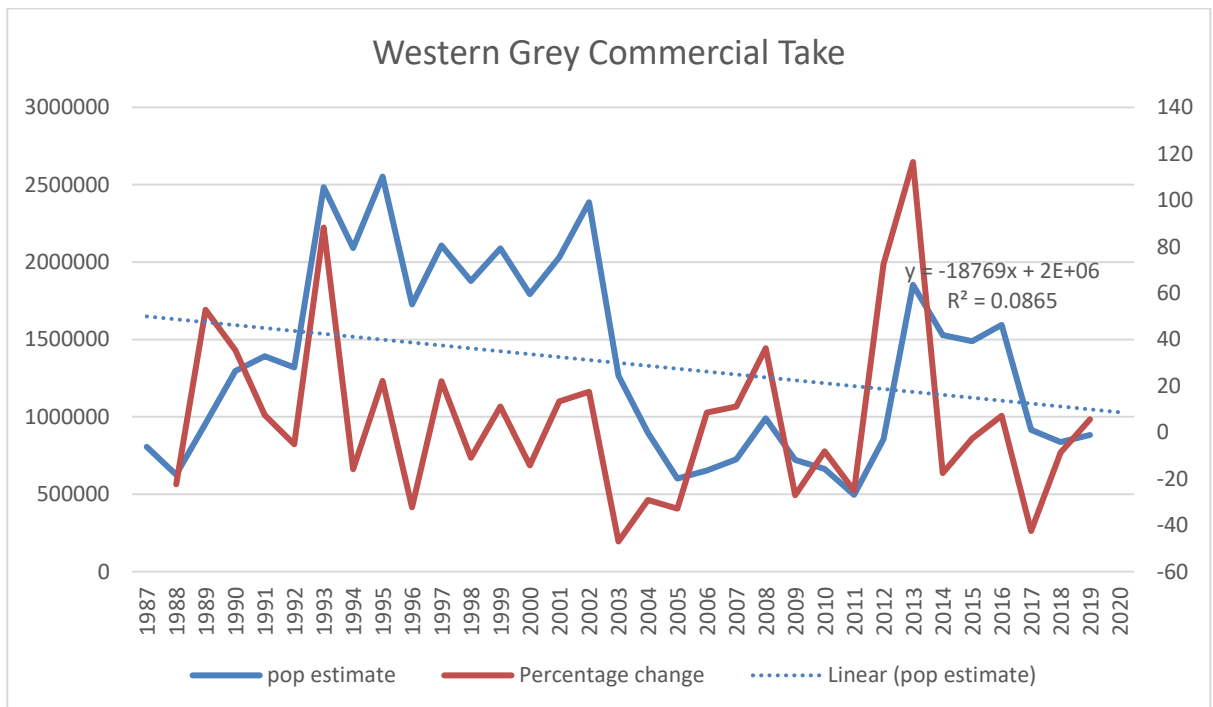
## 3a. Trends and predictions– Wallaroo Northern Tablelands

Table A21: Commercial take Wallaroo Northern Tablelands (prior to updated correction factor)



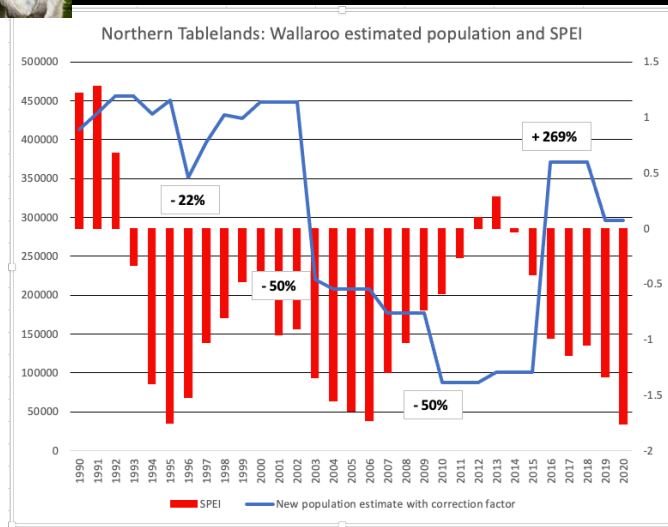
**Blue**  
Population estimate over time  
**Negative gradient**

**Orange**  
Quota estimate over time  
**Positive gradient**





## 2b. Percentage Changes – Wallaroo Northern Tablelands



**RED**  
The standardized  
Precipitation-  
Evapotranspiration  
Index.  
A multiscalar drought  
index based on climatic  
data.

**BLUE**  
Percentage change over  
time: 269% increase  
during drought?