



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2020-2021
Answers to Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 7 Planning and Environment

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Hearing: Thursday 11 March 2021

Answers due by: 6 April 2021

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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

Councils in administration

1. Do you expect the administration period on Central Darling Shire will cease before the expected 2024 date?
 - a) Do you anticipate the administration period will need to be extended beyond 2024?
 - b) Can you describe what support has been specifically offered to Central Darling Shire Council by your office of the Office of Local Government to specifically address the issues that saw the council placed into administration?
 - c) When was the last time you personally visited the Central Darling Shire?
 - d) Has the current financial state of Central Darling Shire Council improved since the council was placed into administration in 2014?
 - i. Can you describe what process are in place by your office or the OLG to monitor/assess the financial situation of Central Darling Shire Council?
 - ii. How often are you presented with formal reports/summaries regarding the situation in Central Darling Shire?
 - iii. Can you describe what support has specifically been offered to ratepayers of Central Darling Shire during the administration period?
 - iv. Can you describe what ongoing support has specifically been offered to ratepayers in Central Darling Shire will the administration period continue?

Answer

The administration period will expire in September 2024.

My Department continue to engage with and support the administrator throughout this time and regularly visit the council.

The Office of Local Government (OLG) reviews Council's quarterly budget review statements as well as its Financial Statements when received.

Support and assistance is provided to Council to allow Council to appropriately support ratepayers and their communities.

2. What additional financial assistance did the OLG offer Central Coast Council prior to it being placed in administration?
- a) Did the OLG offer any additional resources to help Central Coast Council prior to it being placed in administration?

Answer

Yes. OLG was in contact with Central Coast Council prior to it being in Administration. The focus of this contact was seeking to establish what Council was doing about its financial situation, noting this issue was primarily the responsibility of Council to manage. When Council requested financial support, OLG facilitated the provision of financial assistance on 6 October 2020.

- b) Have any specific reports been conducted into Central Coast Council to measure whether the mergers of Gosford and Wyong have been successful?
- i. If so, will you make those reports public?
- ii. Who conducted the report?
- iii. If not, will you instruct the OLG to do so?
- iv. And if so, when will that occur and will the report be made public?

Answer

The interim administrator handed down his 30 day interim report on 2 December 2020

https://cdn.centralcoast.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/Administrator/Administrators_30_Day_Interim_Report_-_2_December_2020.pdf

The interim administrator will hand down his final report on 29 April 2021.

- c) Will the government commit to covering all the financial costs incurred by Central Coast Council as a result of the merger?

Answer

The NSW Government provided Central Coast Council with more than \$25.5 million to assist with setting up the new council.

- d) Will the government allow and facilitate a public inquiry into Gosford and Wyong councils merger?

Answer

Please refer to answer provided to 2 (b)

- e) Will you allow ratepayers on the Central Coast to hold a referendum regarding a possible of the council?

Answer

This is a matter for council.

Demergers

- 3. When will you make a decision regarding the Local Government Boundaries Commission's findings into the possible demerger of Snowy Valleys Council?
 - a) When will you make a decision regarding the Local Government Boundaries Commission's findings into the possible demerger of Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council?
 - b) When will you make the commission's findings into Snowy Valleys public?
 - c) When will you make the commission's findings into Cootamundra Gundagai Regional Council public?

Answer

As is required under the *Local Government Act 1993*, the reports must be given due consideration before making a decision on either proposal.

- d) Will you order the OLG to facilitate and assist both councils in holding a referendum regarding a possible demerger?

Answer

Please refer to answer provided to 2 (e)

- e) If you receive any other proposal to demerge a council, will you refer the proposal to the Local Government Boundaries Commission?

Answer

Any future boundary amendment proposals will be assessed on their merits at the time.

- 4. Have you had any discussions with any ministerial colleagues or the OLG about the creation of a new council or councils in Western Sydney to facilitate the forecast growth around the aerotropolis?
 - a) If so, can you describe who those discussions were with and when?
 - b) If not, do you expect a new council or councils will be created to deal with the growing population in the aerotropolis?

- c) Do you think Camden Council is equipped to deal with the forecast growth in population in the aerotropolis?
- d) Do you think Campbelltown Council is equipped to deal with the forecast growth in population in the aerotropolis?
- e) Do you think Liverpool Council is equipped to deal with the forecast growth in population in the aerotropolis?
- f) Do you think Penrith Council is equipped to deal with the forecast growth in population in the aerotropolis?

Answer

The NSW Government has recently released modelling to assist growing local government areas deal with the demands of population growth. This can be accessed via - <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CIE-Briefing-Rate-Revenue-Projections-24032021.pdf>

Coastal and Estuary Grants Program

5. Can you provide a list of the successful applicants under the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program, how much they applied for, how much they received, and whether they
- a) Can you provide a list of the unsuccessful applicants under the Coast and Estuary Grants Program, how much they applied for, what the project to be funded was and why it was unsuccessful?

Answer

All coastal and estuary management funding grants and project summaries can be found on the department's website:

<https://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/water/coasts/coastal-and-estuary-grants/grants-awarded>

6. What will happen to any surplus funds in the Coastal and Estuary Grants Program funding pool once it expired at the end of this financial year?

Answer

Funds will be carried forward to future financial years to allow councils to apply for further grants and complete projects already underway.

Code of Conduct

7. How many staff in the OLG are dedicated to investigating Code of Conduct complaints every year?
- a) What is the average time it takes to complete a Code of Conduct complaint made to the OLG in the past three financial years?
- b) What resources are offered to OLG staff who investigate Code of Conduct complaints?

Answer

The OLG Investigations Team comprises one full-time Manager, five ongoing and one temporary full-time Principal Investigator roles and one full-time Senior Investigator – Legal role.

Misconduct matters dealt with by OLG and timeframes by year:

Year	Number of matters finalised by OLG	Timeframe to complete – median	Timeframe to complete – average
2017/18	53	100 days/14 weeks	107 days/15 weeks
2018/19	75	102 days/14 weeks	136 days/19 weeks
2019/20	96	92 days/13 weeks	129 days/18 weeks

OLG staff have access to transcription services, property and company searches, OLG vehicles, technical equipment such as recording devices and laptops, legal advice and administrative assistance.

Employees

8. 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?

Answer

Please refer to the answer provided by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, the Hon. Rob Stokes MP.

9. Cluster Secretary- for each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your Cluster:
- 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?
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- 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?

Answer

See response to question 8.