

# **PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - CUSTOMER SERVICE AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

**Monday 7 March 2022**

**Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area**

## **CUSTOMER SERVICE AND DIGITAL GOVERNMENT**

**The Committee met at 09:45**

**UNCORRECTED**

### **MEMBERS**

The Hon. Mark Banasiak(Chair)

Ms Abigail Boyd

The Hon. Emma Hurst

The Hon. Taylor Martin

The Hon. Daniel Mookhey

The Hon. Peter Poulos

The Hon. Peter Primrose

### **VIA VIDEOCONFERENCE**

The Hon. Anthony D'Adam

### **PRESENT**

**The Hon. Victor Dominello, *Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government***

\* Please note:

[inaudible] is used when audio words cannot be deciphered.

[audio malfunction] is used when words are lost due to a technical malfunction.

[disorder] is used when members or witnesses speak over one another.

## **CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS**

**Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:**

**Budget Estimates secretariat  
Room 812  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000**



**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the additional public hearing of the inquiry into budget estimates 2021-22 of Portfolio Committee No. 4 - Customer Service and Natural Resources. Before I commence, I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, who are the traditional custodians of this land. I pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging and extend that respect to other Aboriginals present. I welcome Minister Victor Dominello and accompanying officials to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Customer Service and Digital Government.

Before I commence, I make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing. Today's proceedings are being broadcast live via the Parliament's website, and a transcript will be placed on the Committee's website once it becomes available. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, media representatives are reminded that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings.

All witnesses in budget estimates have a right to procedural fairness according to the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House in 2018. There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In those circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide the answer within 21 days. If witnesses wish to hand up documents, they should do so through the Committee staff.

Minister Dominello, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you are free to pass notes and refer directly to your advisers seated at the table behind you. Finally, I remind everybody to turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing. All witnesses will be sworn in prior to giving evidence. Minister Dominello, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament.

**Ms EMMA HOGAN**, Secretary, Department of Customer Service, affirmed and examined

**Mr ADAM DENT**, Chief Executive Officer, State Insurance Regulatory Authority, Department of Customer Service, affirmed and examined

**Mr GREG WELLS**, Deputy Secretary, digital.NSW, Department of Customer Service, sworn and examined

**Mr DAMON REES**, Chief Executive Officer, Service NSW, Department of Customer Service, affirmed and examined

**Ms MANDY YOUNG**, Chief Operating Officer, Department of Customer Service, affirmed and examined

**Mr WILLIAM MURPHY**, Deputy Secretary, Customer, Delivery and Transformation, sworn and examined

**Ms ELIZABETH TYDD**, NSW Information Commissioner, sworn and examined

**Ms LIZ LIVINGSTONE**, Chief Executive Officer, Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal, sworn and examined

**Ms SAMANTHA GAVEL**, NSW Privacy Commissioner, before the Committee via videoconference, sworn and examined

**The CHAIR:** Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.52 a.m. to 12.45 p.m. with the Minister, with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m., and then from 2.00 p.m. to 5.15 p.m. with departmental staff and a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During those sessions there will be questions from Opposition and crossbench members only, but, if required, an additional 15 minutes is allocated at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions for Government questions.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you all for your attendance today. I might start off with the Minister. Can you confirm if any council that adopted the Park'nPay has done so without entering into an agreement with Duncan Solutions?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am not sure. Maybe Greg Wells—I know a number of councils have come on board. Ryde Council, Burwood—a number of them have come on board. But I will check with Mr Wells in relation to the agreement.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The question specifically relates to Duncan Solutions.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**GREG WELLS:** I think it is important to distinguish that Duncan is one of a number of infrastructure providers that Park'nPay uses to accept information to put a single view of parking in front of a customer. We work with any infrastructure provider that is happy to work with us. There are currently eight other infrastructure providers whether they be providing real-time information or they run parking stations. There are eight different providers, Mr D'Adam, that I can list or take on notice and provide to you that we work with in addition to Duncan Solutions.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Wells, I have asked specifically about whether councils who signed up for Park'nPay have not been required to sign on with Duncan Solutions.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, correct, Mr D'Adam. There are a number of councils that do not use Duncan infrastructure.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you name them?

**GREG WELLS:** Northern Beaches and Mosman would be two that I have.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Who are the infrastructure providers for those two?

**GREG WELLS:** Can I take that on notice and come back to you? To list some of the other infrastructure providers: Smart Parking in Mosman, so we have that one sorry; Frogparking in the Central Coast; Chargefox, which provides electronic vehicle charging across Sydney; Parkhound for driveway rentals; Park Agility; and a number of others. I am happy to provide those eight providers to you.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you. Can you restate who the Mosman Council provider is?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. Mosman uses Smart Parking for parking space availability.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you perhaps elaborate on the nature of the service that is being provided in that circumstance? You talked about a number of infrastructure providers. In terms of the Mosman Council, can you perhaps explain what—Smart Park? Is that what you said?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, Smart Parking. Mr D'Adam, it is probably important to distinguish because we have covered this before. We play no part in a council's choice of infrastructure. What Park'nPay does is aggregate information to give a customer a single view of parking. What we use Duncan for is for a payment gateway and an API, a technical interface, to capture that information. That is how we use Duncan Solutions. Councils, as we have talked about previously, conduct their own procurement for parking meter infrastructure, for how they aggregate their own availability and for the sensors they use. All the infrastructure at a council level is for them to procure, and we aggregate that, as I said, into the Park'nPay app.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you elaborate on the relationship between the services provided by Duncan Solutions and how that interfaces with the councils' infrastructure?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. The councils—whoever their infrastructure provider is sends that information, technically, to the payment gateway that we use. That is the way we capture that information. Again, we have designed that to be technically agnostic. Whatever solutions anyone wants to provide, whether that is on-street parking, parking spaces, hospitals, national parks, whatever anyone wants to do in terms of their parking infrastructure, we have designed Park'nPay to be able to capture that information and display it on Park'nPay. It is, for a customer, one place to go, one view of availability and an easy way to pay for that parking.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** For example, commuter car parking in West Ryde, Mr D'Adam—when I was the innovation Minister, I remember talking to people about this. It was a perennial problem, because about 40 per cent, as you know, of traffic is caused by people just going around and around and around like George Costanza waiting for that magic car spot. If they had the visibility in one aggregated app, which is an open-source app, mind you—that is, we open it up like we do with FuelCheck so other people can use it—then we are truly putting the customer first rather than you or I downloading 20 different council apps between Parramatta and the city just to find a parking spot in different locations. It is a data aggregation piece to make sure that we are putting people, the customer, first. I am happy to take any more questions about it. Every time I ask people about this, they are universally wanting this to be adopted right across the board. So far, a number of councils have adopted it.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, can you clarify, every council effectively uses Duncan Solutions because they are all going through that payment gateway?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Not to my knowledge. Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** Again, Mr D'Adam, our solution uses at the moment a Duncan payment gateway, but it is a software solution that is part of our side of the interaction. Again, councils choose their infrastructure, go to market for their infrastructure, their providers, and they do that themselves. We play no part in that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I understand. As you said, Mr Wells, there is a range of infrastructure elements to this equation. One is the payment gateway, and that seems to be exclusively Duncan Solutions. Is that a correct characterisation?

**GREG WELLS:** When we built the park and pay app that is the solution we used for payments.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The reason being because we did a pilot in The Rocks and Duncan Solutions had the meters in The Rocks. That contract will come up in the usual course for tender and it will go through the usual process.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is it not fair to say as you scaled up that Duncan Solutions has become the default as a result of scaling up? There is sort of an element of past dependence there, is there not, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I disagree with that. Mr Wells will answer this as well. We will open that up for tender as we normally would when that contract expires. You have seen my position in relation to interoperability and PEXA and the like. I am all for competition and we will make sure that occurs, and that is why we designed it in this way. But we had to start the ball rolling in The Rocks otherwise we would be in the same old system where people come last and all the parking app providers come first. We are trying to put people first.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But now you have scaled up the provision of Park'nPay, Minister, have you not? It is well beyond The Rocks and so there are a lot more players involved in terms of councils?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Of course. Yes, and I am—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So Duncan Solutions is still there without a proper procurement process. Is this correct, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Well, for the period of their contract. For the period of their contract, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How long is their contract, Minister?

**GREG WELLS:** Mr D'Adam, can I clarify, we did go through a procurement process to procure that procurement gateway. As the Minister said, that is a contract that is in place and it is shortly coming up for renewal, so we will assess our options at that point.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Was that a result of direct dealing?

**GREG WELLS:** It was, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Yes, so it was not a fully open procurement process, was it, Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** It was a procurement process—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is incorrect to characterise it in that way.

**GREG WELLS:** No. It was a procurement process that we have had independent assurance across, which confirmed that we followed all procurement processes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Irrespective of that, the nature of the procurement process that you adopted has put Duncan Solutions in a privileged position in terms of contract renewal, has it not?

**GREG WELLS:** No, I would not characterise it that way.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I ask about the remuneration model under the contract with Duncan Solutions—how does that operate, Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** There is a fixed element which related to building the technical interfaces that I talked about. There is some tiering, based on number of meters adopted, just to make sure that support and technical response can be put in place.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So the more councils, the more meters, then the more lucrative the contract becomes for Duncan Solutions. Is that correct?

**GREG WELLS:** There is a very small tiering based on the number of meters, yes, that are adopted.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Very small? What is very small? How would you characterise that?

**GREG WELLS:** I will get the contract and I am happy to provide that tiering on notice, but I think it is—yes, I will provide that on notice, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you explain to the Committee the arrangements relating to intellectual property? Duncan Solutions have done development work in collaboration with the team in Customer Service. That is correct, is it not?

**GREG WELLS:** Correct.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So there has been a sharing of intellectual property between Customer Service and Duncan Solutions?

**GREG WELLS:** I will take that on notice and come back to you in terms of where that IP sits. The Government's position always is that IP rests with us, because we have built that solution with them. But let me confirm that in this contract specifically and come back on notice.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Right. If you could, on notice, just confirm whether Duncan Solutions has any enduring ownership over any of the IP that has arisen out of the development of the Park'nPay.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, I will do that. Look, and again, to clarify, we have built this technically agnostic, meaning that any provider can plug in, if they have the capability to do so, and that we are able to work with any infrastructure provider across the State.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Just to give you some more context, Mr D'Adam, we have got 100,000 people who have downloaded Park'nPay already, with 93 per cent thumbs up, as you would expect because it is putting people first rather than vested interests first. Then, in relation to the daily use, where we are up to, the daily transactions is 216,000. So you can see that the people of New South Wales are rapidly embracing

this because, again, it puts them first rather than vested interests first. We are trying to work for the public interest, not the vested interests.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** When we turn to the issue of public interest, I mean, there are many dimensions to that, and one is to ensure that particular providers are not given the inside running on what will turn out to be quite a lucrative contract. Is that not the case?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** But, as Mr Wells has said, Mr D'Adam, there has been a probity assurance go over it, there is a contract renewal that is coming up to tender—so that goes to open tender again. We are putting public interest ahead of vested interests in this parking solution and this is a parking solution that, quite frankly, other smart cities around the world have adopted and they have got their same issues. So I just cannot see how anybody in a public interest role would be trying to put the people second and vested interests first.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I might turn to that probity issue, Minister. You say that there was a probity assurance exercise undertaken. Is that the one that was undertaken by O'Connor Marsden?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, correct.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, is it correct that your cousin works for O'Connor Marsden?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have no idea. Who are you talking about?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Beth Dominello?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have no idea where she works.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I put it to you that she works for O'Connor Marsden. Is that something that has been—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I honestly do not know. I would not know.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you think it is a problem that your cousin works for the company that was chosen—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Are you suggesting—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** —to conduct the probity—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I do not—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** No, I am not making any suggestions or imputations, Minister. I am asking you about perceptions—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes. Well, again, (a) I do not know where she works—so if you are telling me she works there, so be it; (b) are you suggesting that they compromised or—I do not even know what position she holds there, if she does work there. Are you saying that she or the company is compromised? Are you suggesting—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** No, I am saying that in terms of engaging a probity adviser, not only do you have to ensure that the exercise is above reproach but you also have to avoid the perception of conflict. Surely, you agree with that, Minister, do you not?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I absolutely agree, but there is zero conflict. There is zero conflict. The only conflict that I see out of all this is you asking questions on behalf of vested interests.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I am not asking questions on behalf of anyone other than the public. I am trying to bring some transparency here, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** But the public—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you not think that is appropriate?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think it is entirely appropriate, but the public interest here is served by putting people first, not corporations first, and that is what we have done with Park'nPay. We are making it simple for people to use. Again, in terms of the probity, Mr Wells indicated there has been a check on that. We are going to open tender when the contract expires. Probity is appointed by the Department of Customer Service, not me. I had no idea—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But is it not fair to say that Duncan Solutions have been given a very advantageous opportunity in relation to the way this Park'nPay process has been scaled up?



**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Somebody had to start the process. We started at The Rocks because that is property that the Government owns and, as it turns out, Duncan Solutions—to the best of my knowledge, or recollection at least—they occupy 70 per cent of the market. We had to start somewhere. Otherwise, Mr D'Adam, we would see people downloading 30 different parking apps just to get around our great State. It is insane. So we had to start somewhere.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Once the trial was done, Minister, shouldn't the procurement process have been opened up at that stage?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Look, those issues are a matter for the agency. I will leave that to Greg Wells. But—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You are the Minister. You should have had some involvement in that process?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Absolutely, yes. My job, fundamentally, is to set the vision as the Minister for Customer Service, and the vision was very clear. As NRMA have indicated, 30 to 40 per cent of traffic congestion in Sydney, which costs, when they did the report, something in the order of \$7 billion—by now it is probably closer to nine. So about \$3 billion a year in traffic congestion is caused by people looking for parking spots.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I do not think there is any contest here, Minister, about the merits of having a parking solution. The question is about the process that has been undertaken by you—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The process—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** —and by the department in terms of constructing this—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr D'Adam, I—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** —offering and the advantages that are conferred on a particular business—namely, Duncan Solutions.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr D'Adam, again, I had no involvement in relation to that. That is arm's length and that is something for the agency to answer, and they have.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Have Duncan Solutions had any contract extensions, Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** No. The original contract is still in place. As I said before, that comes up for renewal soon and so at that point we will consider our options.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So there has been no request and no consideration of contract extensions for Duncan Solutions?

**GREG WELLS:** Not that I am aware of, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I ask, Minister, have you lobbied any mayors or councillors or council officials to adopt Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Publicly. I have gone out there publicly and said, "Please put people first. Please adopt Park'nPay." Absolutely. The beauty with Park'nPay is that we open up the data as well so that, again like FuelCheck, in terms of the data architecture other people can use it. Other startups can use it, absolutely, and I will continue to advocate for it. I actually did a symposium with the Telegraph about it and a number of advocates were backing us in. NRMA backs it in, Mr D'Adam. The council for disabilities backs it in, Mr D'Adam. There is a whole lot of business councils—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What about Ryde council Minister? Did you have any involvement in Ryde council's decision around Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Not directly, other than me urging more broadly and publicly. But I think—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Did you lobby Jordan Lane to move a council motion to adopt Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I would have been very public in my application across the board.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you think it is a problem that Ryde council was considering an alternative proposition and you have lobbied—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think Ryde council adopted it when there was a Labor mayor, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Well, my understanding is that Mr Lane was responsible for leading the motion to adopt it.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** But the Labor mayor—it was a Labor mayor that was in control of the council. My understanding is—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The question is: Has your office—and you in particular—exceeded, I suppose, your proper responsibilities by—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have not shied away in my—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** —trying to interfere in a council's procurement process?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have not shied away in my public advocacy for putting people first, absolutely not.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There are boundaries out there, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Well, Ryde council under a Labor mayor signed off on it, not me; they did. I congratulate them.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But is it appropriate for the Minister to interfere in the procurement processes?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Are you suggesting I interfered in Ryde council's procurement process? Are you seriously suggesting that?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Did you lobby Jordan Lane?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Are you seriously suggesting that?

**The CHAIR:** Mr D'Adam, you will have to pick this up. You may not have heard the bell over Webex. I will have to throw to the deputy chair.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I will pick it up when the Labor time comes back.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Please do. I would like that. Please do.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Ms Hurst.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Good morning, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Good morning.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I understand that you are the Minister responsible for the GIPA Act, together with the Attorney General. Is that correct?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, we share joint responsibility.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Thank you. Are you aware that there was a recommendation in the Select Committee on Animal Cruelty Laws in New South Wales that the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League be made subject to GIPAA requests, given they perform a public function of enforcing animal cruelty laws?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I am not aware, no.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is that an amendment that you would be open to introducing to increase transparency and accountability? I also note that the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League said that they were not opposed to that change.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I would be very sympathetic towards it, but it is something I would have to raise with the Attorney General.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is it something that you are open to meet outside budget estimates to talk about further?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Absolutely, yes.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Thank you. In May 2021 you announced a \$2 million rebuild of the New South Wales companion animal registry. Are you able to provide an update on where this work is up to?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I cannot provide—maybe somebody else can. Can I take that on notice? I am happy to brief you independently outside.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you know anything about that project? Are you aware of what sort of improvements are going to be made on the registry in terms of—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I vaguely remember it, Ms Hurst. There is just so much on the boil at the moment but I do vaguely remember it, and I apologise. It should be front and centre.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Are you aware of the time line around that? Is it up and running? Is it happening now or is it something that is delayed?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I just do not have any detail around that specifically. But I do know—as I said, we have the Digital Restart Fund. I do not recall whether it was part of that first tranche, but there are just so many projects running through that. But I am happy to brief you independently about that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Okay. You would be aware that the Minister for Local Government has announced a review into animal rehoming practices. That obviously ties in with the companion animal registry and any changes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Will you be working closely with the Minister for Local Government on the registry upgrade?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes. Is that what people colloquially refer to as the Pet Registry?

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, definitely. I remember doing a social media post on it about a year ago, so I should find out where that is up to.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** One piece of feedback that I have had strongly from rescue groups—and by "rescue groups", I guess there are sort of two different sets; there is the RSPCA and the Animal Welfare League, who are enforcement agencies, and then you have these smaller rescue organisations like Maggie's Rescue, Monika's DoggieRescue—they would like access to the Pet Registry to check microchip details, update details when animals are being rehomed. Is that something that is being considered or built in as part of the registry update?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am not sure but that makes a lot of sense to me. Again, what I will do, Ms Hurst, is after estimates I will organise a time for you, me and the relevant stakeholders to catch up to find out where it is up to and to make sure that all the questions that you are asking are considered, because they make a lot of sense to me.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Okay. Thank you.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Ms Hurst, I think there is something in the Digital Restart Fund from a while back. So we will have a look at it and come back to you after the break.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Great. Thank you so much for that.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It was one of the first things I remember in the DRF.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you know if any of those rescue groups had been consulted on the redesign at all?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am not aware, sorry, Ms Hurst. There are just so many things on the boil at the moment, but I will find out.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Yes, if you could take that on notice, and then we will continue to talk about it outside of budget estimates.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, 100 per cent. Definitely.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I also understand that the Service NSW facility in Lismore was flooded. How have services been impacted in Lismore? Is there a contingency or recovery plan so that locals are still able to access support through Service NSW?

**DAMON REES:** I will answer this. Service NSW operates four mobile service centres. We had one of those mobile service centres in place in Lismore from Monday. Mobile service centres can conduct the full range

of customer services, albeit not at the volume that Lismore would typically deal with day by day. Service NSW, along with other agencies, are also staffing the various recovery centres that are supporting the northern regions.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Thank you. Minister, what is your advice to locals who have lost everything in the floods? If they have lost identification records like driver licences, birth records, marriage certificates, how can Service NSW assist them going forward?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Firstly, Ms Hurst, I was speaking to the Premier yesterday. It is just—as he said, there are not enough words to describe what is happening up in the Northern Rivers, and my deep sympathies go out to all those affected. The best thing that we can do through Service is obviously try and get people back on their feet as soon as possible, and whether it is a fire that burns things or floods that destroy things, those identity documents are often the things that get destroyed straight away. As Mr Rees has said, we have two mobile buses turning up there I think today, and there are the evacuation centres there.

So we will have staff there—about four to five staff at the two evacuation centres, the main centres, and in the mobile buses. People are encouraged to go there. They can always call Service, 13 77 88, but people at the moment—there are a lot of people there. For example, Ms Cusack called me yesterday and said that telecommunications are down. So their only access point is to go to one of those centres or a mobile bus, and we will have those mobile facilities there.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Just out of curiosity, how many mobile bus units like that are there in New South Wales?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Four.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Four? Thank you. Digital photo ID cards have been on trial since August 2021 in western Sydney and the Blue Mountains. Are there plans to expand that trial to make this available statewide?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Ideally. Maybe, Mr Rees, do you want to give an update where the trials are?

**DAMON REES:** We certainly would like to do that. The feedback from the trial has been excellent. The final issue that we are working through with police and Transport is just how to apply the confiscation element that can typically be done easily with a plastic licence—what is the digital equivalent of that experience? We just need to resolve that between Transport, police and Service NSW to give us a pathway to move forward and make that available for everybody.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do we have a time line for expanding that out?

**DAMON REES:** We will have a time line shortly. We are still finalising the approach with Transport and police. Once that approach is agreed, then we will have a clear time line we can share.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, Service NSW physical offices are open—in light of the average person's working day—extremely limited hours: nine to five on weekdays and 8.30 until 12.00 on Saturdays. Given the number of services that are accessible only by going into a physical location, are there plans for or is there room in the budget to expand Service NSW opening hours?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, absolutely. Our goal is to make it as easy as possible for customers to access those services. We have had to adapt our operating hours over the last couple of years, particularly through COVID. We have tuned operating hours to try to make sure that we have got as many people available to serve customers aligning with the times that demand is strongest for customers. That has seen us, in some cases, reduce operating hours in order to give the overall best level of service we can. We continually review that for changing patterns around customer demand and that is something that we will have to make changes on, if we see that there is a significant misalignment between when customers need us to be available and our current hours.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is there a review happening at the moment?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No. We do not have a specific review in place. We have hours that are established and applied consistently across different categories of service centres, but we do tune hours across different channels on a fairly regular basis. Probably a good example would be the accessibility of our contact centre. The hours of operation through weekends were changed just over the weekend to provide stronger coverage for flood-impacted communities.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Will there be more efforts to put more and more services online so that people do not have to get to a physical location, or have we kind of reached the ceiling on what we can put online?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No. We are continuously moving more services online. Most new things we do are delivered both online and made available for customers that need to access them face to face through our service centres, mobile service centres or by phone. The Government does have a long history of other services. They are progressively being made available online where they are not, currently. Some of those are things we can do quickly and easily. Some have dependencies on aged pieces of technology and different partner agencies, so the time line typically reflects that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Based on what you were sort of saying before, can we expect there to be some changes in the hours going forward for certain service centres?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We do not have any immediate plans to change the hours, but we do review that continuously.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, from 18 February 2020 QR check-ins are no longer required, except in a limited number of venues. Are venues able to continue to use QR codes on a voluntary basis?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Pursuant to public health orders they are not required anymore. I am not sure what the position is in terms of voluntary. They are not required. The solution will still work and support them if they choose to keep it in place.

**The CHAIR:** I will pick up on one of Ms Hurst's questions, particularly around people in Lismore and other areas that have suffered through these floods. Are you prepared to waive fees for those people to recover those documents that may have normally attracted a fee?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We will work with Treasury and the Premier's office in relation to a comprehensive package of what we are doing. Hopefully the Government will have something to say very shortly on that, Chair.

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** Can I add to that, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** In relation to the documents that Ms Hurst referred to—birth certificates, marriage certificates and those sorts of things—NSW Registry of Births, Deaths & Marriages, for which all the services are available via Service NSW, provides recovered documents for no charge. That organisation also works with all Australian States and Territories and New Zealand to recover documents from those jurisdictions. So any customers who have lost those kinds of documents in these floods should contact Service NSW or Births, Deaths & Marriages and can get all of those documents recovered for free.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, that is good information. Minister, I will just turn to your interoperability bill.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is almost as hard to say as Metaverse and non-fungible tokens.

**The CHAIR:** Yes. It is a tongue twister. You talked about increasing competition and obviously competition, I think we can all agree, is good.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes. I love competition.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, why do you support a monopoly in land registry services then, given we have multiple private registry operators in Australia. Why can they not interoperate?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is a question for Treasury. That was a model that was brought in place about two or three years ago. It went through both Houses of Parliament.

**The CHAIR:** But as Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government, you would have no issues with that being moved to a similar model?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Conceptually I can see how that could have been opened up but, again, I was not privy to the discussions at the time in terms of the technology and the systems in place. Obviously, there has been a fair bit of maturity since then.

**The CHAIR:** Sure. Given that we have experienced Commonwealth financial regulators, including Treasury, ACCC, ASIC and the RBA, that have all decided against interoperability for the Australian Stock Exchange—basically saying that it is too risky for shareholders—I am interested in what evidence you have used to determine that it is safe for mum and dad property owners.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** On our side—on the side of the ledger for angels—we have got the ACCC, which is a very big advocate for interoperability and trying to protect mum and dad property owners. We have the lawyers. Again, they are strongly advocating for mum and dad property owners and building competition.



The Australian Banking Association supports it and all other States and Territories—both Labor, Liberal and across the political spectrum—support it. So it is not just a one-man show here in New South Wales. There is broad support for interoperability because it provides more competition and therefore ultimately better service delivery and downward pressure on prices for mums and dads.

**The CHAIR:** We might agree that there is broad support for the concept, but would you agree that there is some concern from some of those groups you mentioned, like the law council and the banking association, in terms of your specific model for interoperability?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No. ARNECC is the peak body basically of registrars that oversee this and they are working through with PEXA in terms of a pathway forward. The concern at the moment, as addressed by the ACCC, is that if PEXA obviously want to back in their vested interest—and, again, this goes to Mr D'Adam's point—my job is not to look after vested interests. My job is to look after the public interest and the public interest here is absolutely served by an interoperable model in the same way that the ACCC and all the other key stakeholders have advocated for. Could you imagine a world where there was only Telstra providing mobile services—no Optus, no Vodafone, nothing else?

**The CHAIR:** Already lived through it.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, and it is not good. So where possible I believe that competition is absolutely the best model forward because when you have healthy competition in a transparent marketplace, which you can get with digital, then you do not need as much regulation.

**The CHAIR:** We talked about vested interests. Minister, are you aware that the other competitor in the market—and they are actually in the market; they are able to perform this role right now without the legislation, let's be clear—are partly owned by the Australian Stock Exchange and another 50 per cent is owned by one of Australia's richest men, whose company dominates property title, reselling and legal practice management software? So one might say that you are actually creating a duopoly like we have in our supermarket system where there is an element of competition but really it is more collusion, to the detriment of the consumer.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** At the moment, Chair, there is an absolute monopoly and in that absolute monopoly the shareholders of that monopoly are getting a very, very good dividend, thank you very much, and the executive of that monopoly get a very good pay packet. What I am trying to do is create a competitive marketplace. Again, I am not Robinson Crusoe in this. I stand on the side of angels with the ACCC. If the ACCC thinks this is the right way forward, then I can sleep very easily at night knowing that we are doing the right thing by the public.

**The CHAIR:** Given that you have had other digital implementation failures, including severe cyber exposures and privacy breaches where thousands of firearm owners' personal details have been made public, what guarantee can you give as Minister that those sorts of details of home owners will not be leaked through this?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, I look at the numerous independent reports that speak to what the Government has achieved over the years in terms of digital. You will be pleased to know—or maybe you will not be pleased to know—that New South Wales is consistently not number two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight or nine; we are number one. We have been number one in terms of digital transformation from at least 2016—number one in the country.

**The CHAIR:** What does that entail? Does that include cybersecurity?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Absolutely.

**The CHAIR:** It does not say much for the other ones in the list, does it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** What it says is that cybersecurity is a really complex, challenging issue with seriously sophisticated actors, both State and otherwise, that are constantly evolving. It is a threat. This is a war, literally, that we are battling behind the scenes 24/7—and it is not just our Government; it is every government. That is why we have had a record investment spend of \$260 million in the first tranche of the Digital Restart Fund and then another \$60 million in the second, so up to \$310-odd million. We are leading the country in terms of spend and capability, and, can I say, we have to. We are so far ahead of the other States and jurisdictions, but we need to be because that is where the real flashpoint is in terms of the dynamics of the world. Make no mistake about it: That is where the constant war is.

**The CHAIR:** The Australian Institute of Conveyancers has foreshadowed a fairly terrifying prospect of homebuyers and sellers being stuck on footpaths with all their belongings waiting for technical fixes between ELNOs and registries to be resolved. What guarantee are you going to give that that will not happen, and what evidence are you basing that on?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, I am not the technical expert—

**The CHAIR:** Is there a technical expert here who has worked on this project who can talk to us?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I will answer it. I am not the technical expert that is part of the working group, which is peaked by ARNECC, that has industry submissions from not just the conveyancers but the lawyers that do the bulk of conveyancing—I used to be a lawyer, and the bulk of conveyancing is done by lawyers; conveyancers do a bit, but lawyers do the bulk—and the banking association and everybody else. Again, if all of these stakeholders—all of them—are lined up saying, "Please introduce competition", it is a pretty compelling argument to do it.

**The CHAIR:** No-one is denying the argument to do it, more the technical security and expertise that we need to work through.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, the ACCC and all the other stakeholders are confident that those technical challenges can be overcome.

**The CHAIR:** I will probably pick this up a bit more, but I will pass to Mr D'Adam. I also note that Mr Primrose has now entered the building.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** On the PEXA question, Minister, did Beth Dominello ever lobby you about the PEXA issue?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, absolutely not.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You have never had a conversation with her about—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Zero. Zero.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You have never had a conversation with her about it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Never. Not even a whisper. Nothing. Zero. Could I be more emphatic? Nada, niente, nothing.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, can I ask you whether the Digital Restart Fund is being used for Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Not to my knowledge. There is so much going through DRF. Greg will know.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. Mr D'Adam, Park'nPay was one of the programs prioritised in the fund. We go through a pretty extensive eligibility and prioritisation process to ensure that projects that are put up—the clusters priority, the whole-of-government priorities—are eligible for the fund. Park'nPay has been one of those programs that has been eligible and, through that process, that has been rigorously signed off by the steering committee and put to Cabinet for endorsement et cetera. So, yes, it is one of those programs.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, given that Park'nPay directly relates to the operation of local government and Park'nPay projects, under your own criteria, are not to apply to local government, how do you reconcile the use of those funds that are clearly contrary to your own guidelines?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Sorry, can you repeat the question?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I am looking at a document from the Customer Service website. It talks about projects that will not be considered for funding under Digital Restart, and one of those is projects that involve local government. Park'nPay involves local government, does it not?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is clearly not eligible, then, for access to funds under Digital Restart. Is that correct?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** There is a Smart Places fund in Digital Restart. I think, from memory, we have allocated \$45 million as part of the \$2.1 billion record investment in digital—about \$45 million in Smart Places—so it is coming out of that. We are trying to make our State smart.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You are aware of the guidelines for the Digital Restart Fund?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, but equally—I have just answered the question. This is coming out of Smart Places, but Mr Wells can answer that.

**GREG WELLS:** The Minister is correct. Out of the \$2.1 billion investment in Digital Restart there are some specific allocations, one for cybersecurity and one for Smart Places. The guidelines that relate to Smart Places, Mr D'Adam, contemplate councils and government and other people working together to produce solutions, and that is exactly where Park'nPay fits.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you table to the Committee the guidelines for both of those programs?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. I think they may be publicly available, Mr D'Adam, but I will check and, if not, we will make them available.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Coming back to Ryde council, Minister—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Isn't it good that we got a good mayor? Aren't you pleased? He loves the metaverse as well—Mr Lane.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you perhaps outline your involvement and your office's involvement in the process of lobbying Ryde council around the adoption of Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** All I can say is I was very shy about this time last year, or maybe 18 months ago. I was very shy, and I tried to make sure that no-one in the public knew about my advocacy of Park'nPay because what I did was I approached the Telegraph and said, "Can we do a symposium?"

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You are under oath, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am being honest. That is what we did.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Using sarcasm is not an appropriate approach to this Committee.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I find it extraordinary—I am here pushing for public interest, not vested interest. Anyway, yes, I have absolutely unashamedly, every time I see a councillor—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** My question relates to Ryde council and specifically the involvement of you and your office in the decision of Ryde council to adopt Park'nPay. Can you please elaborate on your involvement?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have no idea how Ryde council decided upon it. I was not in the chamber. I know that the mayor—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Were there any interactions between you or your office and members of Ryde council in relation to the adoption of Park'nPay by Ryde council?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The only thing I can remember from me is I would have spoken to Jordan and a number of the other councillors saying, "Look, the State Government is doing all these amazing things with technology, whether it is ePlanning, Park'nPay, whatever it is; you should go and agitate for this because that way you are putting people first rather than vested interests first." He put up a motion, as you said. The mayor at the time was a Labor mayor and the motion was approved, and congratulations to the Labor mayor for doing it.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** My question was what role did your office play, and you still have not actually gone into any detail—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have told you what role I played.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Did you speak to Jordan Lane?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, I would have spoken to Jordan Lane, absolutely. I have spoken to a number of councillors and mayors right across the board. I have spoken to Clover Moore, I have spoken to Ned Mannoun, I have spoken to—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you think it is appropriate for you and your office to be involved in the weeds of council-by-council consideration of a procurement decision?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have no concern at all putting public interest ahead of vested interest. I absolutely firmly believe that this is a public interest proposal.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you satisfied with the take-up of Park'nPay by councils, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It has been a slow burn but, as I said, there are a number already on board. So far, Liverpool City Council—and I think there was a Labor mayor at the time and credit to her as she came on board really fast—Hunters Hill Council, Central Coast, Burwood, Mosman and Port Stephens are doing



a great job. You should have a look at the Park'nPay at Port Stephens. They have digitised a lot of stuff—credit to them.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Did councils perhaps need a nudge, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Willoughby—you asked me the question; I am going to answer it.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is that something you are contemplating?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am going to answer it in your world or mine. Willoughby; Central Coast; Northern Beaches; Cumberland; Armidale; the national parks; 18,000 driveway spots via Parkhound, which is great; EV charging, which I assume you like, through Chargebox—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, can I clarify in response—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Transport for NSW; they have got car parks in Ashfield.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** —to the answer that you are giving, that you are satisfied with the progress?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have answered the question. It has been a slow burn, but we are building momentum.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I will move on. Are you considering legislating to force councils to take up Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, we are working with councils to come on board. As I have already indicated, a number of councils—and large councils—have come on board with more in the pipeline. We will continually work with—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you ruling out legislation to force councils to adopt Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am ruling in working constructively with the local government sector to bring more on board and let the momentum continue, and momentum is on our side. Absolutely. It is on the side of the—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You are prepared to be patient rather than force the pace with legislation, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Momentum is on the side of the customer here. It is on the side of the people. This is people power in operation. Again, I back people power over the vested interests every day of the week and twice on Sundays.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Morning, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Good morning, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have a whole range of questions but I am finding this Park'nPay issue very interesting.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am glad you do.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What I would like to do is maybe follow it up with a couple of questions.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, by all means.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thanks to my colleague for raising it. Let us have a look at a specific project funded from your Digital Restart Fund. In a PDF document from [digital.nsw.gov.au](https://digital.nsw.gov.au) titled "Projects that—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I do not like PDF documents.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am sad about that. You should raise it with your department.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I, in fact, love them. "Projects that receive payments—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** But you are the party of the Tcard.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** —from the Digital Restart Fund in financial year 2020-21". The Park'nPay project—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The old RTA and the perspex.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** —is listed as having a total project budget of \$1.8 million. Is that correct?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Can you repeat the question?

**The CHAIR:** He is too busy sledging you.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I was just coughing.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I did not hear the sledging.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I was talking about Park'nPay.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I just heard the disparaging of his department.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I love my department. It is the best department in the country.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In a PDF document from [digital.nsw.gov.au](https://digital.nsw.gov.au) entitled "Projects that received Payments from the Digital Restart Fund in Financial Year 2020-21", the Park'nPay project has a total project budget of \$1.8 million. Is that correct?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** I can confirm that is correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you. Can I also confirm that your department is the responsible agency to deliver this project?

**GREG WELLS:** Correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you. I would also like to confirm that the full \$1.8 million has been released from the fund?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, that is correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you, and that is because the project has been completed.

**GREG WELLS:** Mr Primrose, in terms of the way the Digital Restart Fund works—if I could just explain that quickly—it typically invests in tranches of funding and makes sure that tranches deliver on the outcomes they state from at the outset. That phase of funding for the Park'nPay program, yes, has been completed successfully, and there could be subsequent phases as there could be for all of the programs in this annual report that you are referencing.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. It was completed in September 2021, this budget year?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, can I then ask, if I go through the infrastructure budget papers from this year and last year, I cannot find the project. Can you tell me where it is?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Maybe Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** Can you please clarify infrastructure budget papers? To where are you referring?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is the *Infrastructure Statement, Budget Paper No. 3*. It is part of the budget papers. I am sure you have got copies there on the table, given it is budget estimates. I can give you the reference. It is on page 5-5 and gives a full list of capital infrastructure projects in the Department of Customer Service.

**GREG WELLS:** I will need to confirm and check whether there are thresholds there that make that budget paper or whether digital in general is reflected in those infrastructure budget papers. Could I, if that is okay, take that on notice and work out where that will be listed?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you.

**GREG WELLS:** Mr Primrose, this is our annual report for the Digital Restart Fund, which is, as you said, on our website.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you. I appreciate and I have read it. If you open your budget papers—can I just get you to do that for me? The infrastructure *Budget Paper No. 3*.

**GREG WELLS:** I do not have that with me, sorry.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Sorry?

**GREG WELLS:** If you proceed with the question, I will make sure we can find the answer.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is budget estimates.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We rarely get questions on the budget.

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** That is a very good point.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Very rarely. Well—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have been here for 10 years and I rarely get a question on the budget in budget estimates, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Then obviously you have not appeared before me before, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have about three or four times.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Excellent. You would be well aware that I always ask questions on budgets.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Congratulations.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You have come here to budget estimates without a copy of the budget papers. Is that correct?

**GREG WELLS:** I can access them, so if there is a question I will see if we can answer.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We have internet; we can access it online.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Excellent. *Budget Paper No. 3*—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Internet.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** —page 5-5 lists—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think the metaverse is in the internet.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** —the full list of capital infrastructure projects in the Department of Customer Service. Do you have it?

**GREG WELLS:** I am just waiting for the question.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Do you have it? That is the question.

**GREG WELLS:** We will access it.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Maybe I will come back to this. Maybe your system is a bit slow today.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Can I answer a question previously from Mr D'Adam?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Please. Thank you.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Thank you, Mr Primrose. I appreciate that. Apparently on 27 October 2020 the Labor mayor and the rest of Labor unanimously voted to commend the New South Wales Government on the delivery of Park'nPay and to formally subscribe Ryde council to Park'nPay. That was well before the current mayor's term. It was unanimous.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Mr Primrose, do you want to continue with your question? You have about five minutes left.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I know. Hopefully it will not take five minutes for them to find the budget paper.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Can I show you Park'nPay on my phone while he is getting it? It is really good.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is fantastic. It is seamless.

**The CHAIR:** I think we are right for parking in here, Minister Dominello.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Maybe I should show the Minister a copy of the budget paper.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Why don't you show me?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** They are here, Minister. Maybe I should make a copy available.

**The CHAIR:** Surely there is an app for that, Minister Dominello.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You know how much I love paper.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Let us take it for granted that given that I have copied this—I actually do have a copy of the budget papers that I bring to the budget estimates—what I am trying to work out is, where is this material? Where is this project? I go through there and I cannot find the project.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We can take it on notice, if you want. We could search for it now—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, it is not an unreasonable question.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** And I am saying we can take it on notice, if you want, rather than waste your time. That way you can ask us another 20 questions.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I would like an answer to this one.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We can take it on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Your staff cannot answer in relation to a major project.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I back my staff every time. They are doing fantastic. They are leading the world on so many ways.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Maybe you might need to bring a copy of the budget papers yourself next time.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take that question on notice, Mr Primrose.

**GREG WELLS:** Can I just add, Minister, if that is okay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Unless Mr Wells found it.

**GREG WELLS:** I think in the budget papers we talk about the Digital Restart Fund as a whole. We have the papers, Mr Primrose. There are over 180 projects that have been approved through the fund. I do not think each of those individually are listed. But, again, let me confirm the thresholds that make this particular infrastructure budget paper and how that works.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The threshold is \$250,000?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. So let us confirm whether the Digital Restart Fund in total is listed in the budget papers and that is the way this is accounted for, and then through our annual report, or whether there is a different mechanism. I will confirm that for you.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Since you are taking these on notice, the other question is why does the Park'nPay appear in your cluster funding document and not the budget papers? The second question is can you please confirm, Minister, that Park'nPay did receive Digital Restart Fund payments?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think Mr Wells has already answered that.

**GREG WELLS:** Confirmed, yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr D'Adam may have asked that question.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Excellent.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** He did a good job.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thanks, Minister, I appreciate the feedback.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, I will give you a thumbs up.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I know Mr D'Adam has also got a copy of the budget papers there, so he is doing—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** He is very diligent. He needs a trolley for all those papers.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Mr D'Adam, do you have any further questions on this topic?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Not on this topic, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. Maybe I will move on to another, given that you are unable to answer those questions. It is pointless, Chair, me pursuing them if the Government does not have a copy of the budget papers at budget estimates. Can I move on to the issue of the QR code data breach? I pronounce it as Accellion—is that correct, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You are entitled to pronounce it whichever way you like. It is up to you.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I just want to now have a look at this issue of the QR code data breach. You advised the Legislative Assembly that you were seeking more information on when you were made aware of this privacy breach and what happened next.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Given that you have told the House that is what you would be doing, these questions should be pretty easy for you. On what date were you first made aware of this data breach?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** First, can I take issue with the assertion in your question, because it is false. I know Labor put out a media release about it, saying it is what you suggest, but there was a statement made by the Privacy Commissioner—and I will repeat what I said in the House—that the data set which was published in September 2021 did not involve a compromise of the QR code data set. I repeat, it did not involve a compromise of the QR code data set. So it was very sloppy—very, very sloppy—from Labor to suggest otherwise. It really is poor form. But, anyway, in answer to your question, I did check the details. On 30 September 2021, I was made aware by the Department of Customer Service that sensitive information had inadvertently been published as part of a data set containing the details of registered COVID-safe businesses. Around 1 per cent of the entries in that data set contained sensitive data, such as addresses, which should be withheld.

I was informed that the department had notified the Privacy Commissioner of the incident and had acted immediately to remove the sensitive information from the published data set, and she was satisfied with the actions taken to contain, respond to and remediate the incident. I received further updates on 14 October 2021 and 20 October 2021 on the incident. As part of these, I was informed that every business deemed to have been affected had been contacted by telephone and letter, and, as noted by the Privacy Commissioner, the data set which was published in September 2021 did not involve a compromise of the QR code data set. I am happy to table this letter from the Privacy Commissioner to this Committee. Given that there was no breach of any data set, and the immediate remediation and the satisfaction of the Privacy Commissioner, I did not inform the Premier.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. That is my time. You have answered half of my first question.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** What was the other half?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will come back to the rest.

**The CHAIR:** We now have Ms Gavel joining us via Webex. Given that we are fairly close to 11 o'clock, I am hesitant to go back into questions, so we may break now for our 11 o'clock break. We will return at 11.10.

**(Short adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** The Committee will now recommence. We will now go to questions from the crossbench. I am looking at Ms Hurst to start.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Chair, I do have an answer to Ms Hurst's earlier question, if you would like me to update you? My understanding is that, through Service NSW, we provided some support to creating or updating the way in which the Pet Registry worked, in 2018. Since then, there has been some DRF funding provided, I think, to improve that process. But in terms of who owns the actual policy for the Pet Registry itself, I think that is local government.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** The money that you just mentioned, the funding from DRF, was that the \$2 million rebuild fund?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, that is correct.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you know if that is all the money that is going to go into it or is there further funding?

**GREG WELLS:** That funding relates to two streams: \$1.3 million for the data entry and registration process and a second stream around registration. So that is the first tranche of funding, as we described before. There could be subsequent phases, but that will deliver the minimum viable product for the solution. I think, to answer your other earlier question, there has been a slight delay in our program finish date, but it is forecasting for completion quite soon.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you have a rough estimated date or month?

**GREG WELLS:** I do not. I will confirm that 100 per cent in the next session.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** And I am not sure if you can answer this or not, but the \$1.3 million for the data entry and the \$0.7 million for registration, what does that practically mean? What will that money be used for? Is that paying for the experts to do the upgrade work, to do the data entry—what falls under "registration"?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, let me clarify that. I think it is basically designing a better process than exists at the moment, so getting it off paper and other forms and processes into a fully digital process, as well as the chip processes that support that as well. So there could be some design, build and deployment as part of all that funding.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Okay.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** But given the impact, given how many people in New South Wales own pets, I know it is a topic that we need to make sure we get right. So I give you my commitment that I will sit down with you and the Minister for Local Government to make sure we get the best solution in the country.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Great, thank you. I also have one more question in regards to the QR codes. How long is it anticipated that QR check-ins will still be required for remaining venues such as nightclubs? Is there a planned end date for any of those facilities?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is determined by, obviously, the COVID recovery committee and, obviously, guided significantly by Health. We regularly meet on those. I have nothing further to say at this point.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You have not heard anything from those meetings about when the changes will take place?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Obviously, we are guided by Health, as we have been right throughout. But, no, nothing to update you at this stage.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Overseas licence holders will have to apply for a licence if they are in New South Wales continuously for three months. But, on the other hand, police are saying they are unable to check how long someone has been in the State and you have said you are going to fix this. Can I just find out what you are doing in this space to make it work and a little bit more about the problem?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The problem is that if you are coming from overseas, whether it is a visa or whatever, you can rely on your international driver licence. I am sure Mr Rees will correct me if I am wrong—initially, you would have that indefinitely, but now we are about to introduce a regulation saying that after three months of staying in the country you must transition to a New South Wales driver licence. The issue with the police, and I can understand the challenges, is that they do not have immediate visibility—if they pull somebody up on the side of the road who says, "I'm an international person. Here's my passport," they do not know how long they have been in the country for. So we are working with Transport and police. I understand that there is a functionality that does exist, but not every police officer is aware of it. But we are working with Transport and police to make sure that there is that visibility.

The other issue though, Ms Hurst, is that we need more driver tester facilities. We are setting up one because there was a bit of a backlog as a result of COVID, and we are setting a major centre up in St Marys in the middle of the year, but equally Transport will put some more on board for the international arrivals as they come through as well. That is basically the challenge that we have got. I am confident that we will see a lot of improvement by the end of the year.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Thank you. Is the time frame sort of by December, end of this year?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** For our driver testing, it is by the middle of the year. Do you know when Transport will as well?

**DAMON REES:** We would want to speak to Transport on their policy. Certainly, when that policy takes effect there is all the people that are already in Australia driving on these licences, so there is a significant initial event of knowledge testing and practical testing that we are going to need to do. We are working very closely with Transport to prepare for that. That will require a significant increase in driver tester numbers as well as locations et cetera.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Thank you. Minister, when do you propose that this new aspect of somebody being within New South Wales for three months? When will that kick in?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is a regulation for Transport. If it has not been signed off yet—give me one moment. I think it should be—I am going to say imminent, Ms Hurst. It is not too far away.



**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Okay.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Obviously, because of the pandemic, things were held up. But, yes, it is imminent. I will chase it up.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** That is alright. You can put that on notice.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will chase it up with the relevant Minister and get back to you.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Thank you. It has been reported that prolonged phone and internet outages are causing enormous anxiety and stress in flood-affected communities in northern New South Wales. Is the New South Wales Government doing anything to try to address this, particularly because people are concerned that floods are going to become more common?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, I received a call from Catherine Cusack on I think it was yesterday, and she repeated the same concerns. Often governments will say, "Go to this website." It is easy to go to a website when you are connected, but when the power is down it is very hard. That is why we put out the mobile buses, and they are out there today, and having our Service staff available at the evacuation centres as well.

**DAMON REES:** Maybe two points to add—firstly, from Service NSW then I wonder if Greg might want to make some comments from the telco authority. Service NSW provides the ability for customers to access our wi-fi networks from all of our service centres. So certainly wherever our centres can be open and have not been impacted in terms of their connectivity, that becomes available to our customers.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** These sound like good measures after an emergency event, stepping in to help and assist. But what about longer-term plans for remote and rural areas in New South Wales that do have current lack of access when an emergency actually hits? What is happening to make sure that they are protected in those moments?

**DAMON REES:** Maybe if I can just clarify. The customer internet access through Service NSW is ever present through all of our service centres, including our regional service centres, but I will pass to Greg for the crisis response.

**GREG WELLS:** I might add two components if that is alright. The telco authority which runs the public safety network—so that is the telecommunications network, the radio network that operates to support emergency services organisations, including the SES, the RFS and everyone responding on the North Coast and across the State at the moment—is operated by Customer Service. That organisation plays a critical role for the carriers you mentioned. So it plays a coordination role in terms of Telstra, other carriers, NBN and others to make sure that the sites that are down that have been inundated with water and so forth, loss of power, are prioritised. They make sure they are safe to get technicians into those sites and to work with all carriers to get those things restored as quickly as possible, so they have played a critical role over the past couple of weeks and previously with fires and previous floods.

To the second part of your question, there is a Mobile Black Spot Program and a lot of investment going into that space as well. We are currently operating I think three or four rounds of mobile black spot connectivity upgrade programs. I will get you the exact statistics, but it is in the order of 165 sites we are targeting. I think we completed 137 of those over the past couple of years. It is a combination of Commonwealth funding, industry funds and things that the New South Wales Government has directly invested in as well. We are putting a lot of investment and focus in regional digital connectivity in general.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, before the break we were talking about potential risks and mitigations, particularly around cyber safety, with this implementation. You mentioned ARNECC—for the benefit of Hansard, ARNECC is the Australian Registrars' National Electronic Conveyancing Council. Can you table any reports your department has commissioned or have been received by ARNECC in terms of risks and mitigation for the implementation of this interoperability?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. What confidence do you have that ARNECC as the regulator will be able to oversee this implementation, given that we have had failures from SIRA to oversight icare reform?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** ARNECC is a national body, for starters. Again, I have every confidence that if they are working with the ACCC, the bankers and the lawyers and all the other key stakeholders that are backing in this reform that they will produce an optimal product and service for the people of our country, let

alone our State. We have led the way here in New South Wales in relation to eConveyancing, and I have every confidence that that can improve even further if we bring competition in.

**The CHAIR:** Outside of competition, what do you hope that this interoperability will actually deliver in terms of innovation?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Competition will drive down prices; competition will introduce innovations to service delivery. I do not know. That is the beauty of competition. I do not know what some smart entrepreneur will do in terms of additional service delivery. That is why the ACCC is backing this in because if you do not hold monopolies—if you only have a monopoly structure, then they are generally very lazy structures. As we have seen in Russia, when you have a monopoly structure it is only the rich up the top that get the big pie.

**The CHAIR:** In your experience with duopolies, whenever you—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You are suggesting that it is limited to a duopoly. I cannot imagine a world where the ACCC is backing in a policy around interoperability, which I am 100 per cent supporting, where they also know that the longer play is to have an open marketplace. Now I would prefer—one is bad, two is better than one, three is better than two et cetera, et cetera. But we have to move towards better competition. That is as simple as that.

**The CHAIR:** Given the significant expenses involved in setting up one of these companies, what are you going to do to encourage us to get beyond a duopoly?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, if you provide a marketplace with additional services and you make it easy for new entrants to come in—and that is what interoperability does—then people will vote with their feet and their wallets. That is the beauty of a competitive marketplace.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, you have been quoted as saying:

Tangible examples of innovation in the eConveyancing sector could include simpler and more efficient interfaces for lawyers and conveyancers.

Would you agree that that is just more cosmetic changes, not necessarily true innovation?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No. I said that is one, but again I do not know what the next five, 10 years will bring. The technology is moving so fast. But why should we be hamstrung? Why should we put public interest behind vested interest? Again, in my view, public interest is served when there is competition, and that is why I am very happy to stay on the side of the angels with the ACCC and the lawyers on this in advocating for public interest.

**The CHAIR:** At the moment lawyers, conveyancers, the banks, they all pay the same fee for the same service. Are you supportive of a differential fee structure where potentially big, larger companies will be able to essentially pay or charge lower fees and the smaller players in the market will have to charge more?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That would be a matter for the regulator, or the regulators. Again, this is—

**The CHAIR:** Is that something you would want to see in the industry?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, I would be guided by what the regulators have to say about that. Again, I would welcome the views of the ACCC. I am a big, big fan of the ACCC, as you probably noticed.

**The CHAIR:** Have you received any views from the regulator or the ACCC in terms of what they plan to do in that space?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Has there been any cost-benefit analysis conducted by this Government on the alternative forms of interoperability that were presented to you?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I believe there has been a report from IPART in relation to interoperability, but there again I can get that to you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. Did you also appoint your own independent technical expert in 2020? Is that correct—on this issue—who might have been a Glenn Archer?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take that on notice. It rings a bell, but I have to check—unless you know, Em'?

**EMMA HOGAN:** No. I would have to talk to the Registrar General and he is not called a witness today.



**The CHAIR:** Perhaps on notice can you also answer why this independent technical expert found in 2020 that your proposed form of interoperability in terms of direct connections was not as good as the two alternative options that were potentially on the card?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes. I will take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, is it true that the combined working group of officials and industries developed a time line for implementation that was presented to the interoperability implementation council on 27 September 2021, which was then cut by 30 weeks at your level without any plan or evidence as to how that was possible?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, I will take that on notice. The working group—I do not have much to do with anything to do with the working group. They just go out and do their bit. Again, I—

**The CHAIR:** But there is a claim that at your level, the ministerial level, you took their time line and cut it by 30 weeks in terms of how long it would take to implement.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I can answer that. There was a collective view—and when I say "collective", sure there is a Liberal Minister here in New South Wales, and equally there is a Labor Minister in Queensland. This is a consensus across Ministers and across States and Territories; so, again, it is a unanimous position that we agreed because the ACCC said that if we stultify the reform process, then you entrench the monopoly. We were worried, as a collective group—a Labor, Liberal collective group—that it was not being reformed at significant pace to enable competition to evolve. So, again, a collective decision was made that we needed to be serious about this.

**The CHAIR:** Are you prepared to allow an independent assessment of the time line to actually occur?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Look, I am very satisfied with the position we have reached. Again, the position we have reached is consistent with the positions adopted by the key stakeholders, being the ACCC and boys in the banks. Again, we are all aligned on this. We are putting public interest ahead of vested interest and I would expect the public would hope we would do that every time, and that is what we are doing.

**The CHAIR:** Just to assist you, Minister, one of your staff seems to be wanting to pass you something.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Right. Time lines. I can read out the time lines. So on March 2021 ARNECC published a paper on the technical model that is being developed by PEXA, Simpli and the Government. In May 2021 PEXA, Simpli and the Government have finalised a draft version one. On the national conveyancing interoperability with other standards, ARNECC announces the first interoperable transaction, being a refinance between the two financial institutions, Titles Queensland, two ELNOs and one landowner; June 2021 interoperability implementation committee is established between ELNO and Government; July 2021 Dominello and South Australian Deputy Premier and Attorney General hold a round table for fellow Ministers to give a progress and update.

Ministers acknowledge that the progress made on facilitating interoperability to date through development of a technical framework and designing of the regulatory regime that the timetable end for 2021 for the first interoperable transaction may be impacted by implementation of the ECNL. The goal is to release the draft ECNL to industry for feedback in the third quarter of 2021. It is pretty dry. I am happy to keep going.

**The CHAIR:** Do you want to table it? It would save us all drying out.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take it on notice.

**The CHAIR:** No problems at all. I only have three seconds remaining. We timed that perfectly. Mr Primrose?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, to be fair to you, I just want to clarify something in relation to the Digital Restart Fund.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Thanks, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have actually obtained something that is not a PDF.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Excellent!

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I think you might be interested in it.

**The CHAIR:** Is it a Word document?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Because PDFs are paper sandwiches.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is actually from a website. I have printed off the relevant bits. Digital Restart Fund: "Is my project eligible?"

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Sorry, can you repeat that?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes. It is called, "Is my project eligible?", from digital.nsw. Okay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Right.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The list includes smart cities funding reserves and at the bottom of the page it says, "Projects that will not be considered for funding include:", and there is a whole number of dot points. The second one is, "Projects that involve local government". Have any of these funds been provided to local government?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will ask Mr Wells to comment.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. As you said, Mr Primrose, the smart places reservation—if you like, the same as there is a cybersecurity reservation under the Digital Restart Fund—is part of the overall fund. There are specific guidelines for both of those reservations and a smart places reservation does—and specifically in a number of ways is designed to—assist and work with local councils. So, yes, that smart places reservation, for which I will clarify, those guidelines are not yet on the website. I think they have just been through another round of updates so we will get those published on the website. But, yes, in terms of the smart places preservation, \$45 million, a number of those—in fact, probably the majority—would be spent in conjunction with local council.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. If I read the document, it says:

**Smart Places**

In December 2020, the Expenditure Review Committee (ERC) approved a \$45 million funding envelope over a three-year period for Smart Places Acceleration Program under the Digital Restart Fund.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And then it continues on:

**Projects that will not be considered for funding include:**

...

- Projects that involve local government

Which part am I not understanding here?

**GREG WELLS:** So the page is in total, so the context for the page is the total fund. What the page talks about is there is a reservation for smart places. It does not go into detail, though, Mr Primrose about that specific reservation as it does not for cybersecurity. So, on notice, I am happy, as I said before, to get the guidelines that pertain to the Smart Places Acceleration Program.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. So if I was reading this—and let us assume I am a member of the public, or particularly someone from local government—and it says to me that projects that involve local government will not be considered for funding, I would be reasonable in assuming—Minister, would I not?—that as it is "Projects that involve local government" will not be considered for funding.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As I have indicated before, yes, that is a fair take; but there is a separate fund established as part of the Smart Places Strategy, and \$45 million is in that. Again, that is where the money was allocated. And, likewise, when we approach the disability sector—because there are a whole lot of people in New South Wales that have real issues in relation to finding where there is disability parking and they do not want to particularly download 30 different apps. They want to have this on one app. We said, "Look, this is a way to help people with disability out", and that is why they are advocating for it as well.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You are welcome.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can I just clarify—and, Minister, thank you for that—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You are welcome.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When were the guidelines for the project finalised?

**GREG WELLS:** Let me take that on notice to get you an exact date. The guidelines—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Were the guidelines finalised before or after?

**GREG WELLS:** The guidelines would have been established at the same time that the money was allocated.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** At the same time.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. So that would have been set up at the commencement of the program.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you.

**GREG WELLS:** That is what the ERC would have expected, obviously. So, again, thank you for the suggestion. We can clarify the way this reads on this website.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We will take that as an action item.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you, I am always pleased to have action items attributed to me. Given this is an action item, will that include the details of what appears now to be a different range of provisions for this particular allocation to be made?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, as I said before—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Does that appear anywhere now? Is that on a website anywhere?

**GREG WELLS:** Let me confirm that, Mr Primrose, and I will come back to you. As I said, that is an action that we will take—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You would expect that that would be on a website now, would you not, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, we have made it very public. I have actually said that we are putting sensors in in relation to mobility parking right across the State. We have been very public about it. If it is not on the website, we will correct it.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The only thing I can find on the website is that local government cannot be funded—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, Mr Primrose, I am not cavilling with you. If it is not there, we will correct it and I will publicly say that this is thanks to Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That cheers me up no end, Minister. What would make me even happier is if you gave me the date upon which those guidelines were actually approved.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As I said, Mr Wells has already answered that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No, he has not, but you will give me the date on which they were approved and by whom?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, we will definitely get that date. Just to clarify, the program guidelines are—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Because I would hate to have a situation, Minister, where you were put in the position of having approved an allocation before the guidelines had been approved.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And I know that would not happen.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Excellent.

**GREG WELLS:** Could I just add, sorry—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** If it does, I will have an even bigger tick.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, okay, sure.

**GREG WELLS:** The program guidelines are publicly available on the Planning, Industry and Environment website. They administer the funds, they administer that proportion of funds, but I will take on notice the process.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** But they are not on your website.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, but they are in Planning because Smart Places—the actual strategy itself—sits with Planning.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay, but the projects will not be considered. If I was looking for this, I would look here.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I accept your constructive criticism and I appreciate that. As I said, we will create an action item to make sure that we make it clearer on our website.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can I also clarify that now—even if you put a link on—

**GREG WELLS:** We will get a link; that is a good suggestion.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will personally call you when it is done.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No need, Minister; I will be reading the link, so I will know exactly when it goes up.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is going to be on the internet, though. I know you like your paper.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Not a PDF, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will try to get it into the metaverse as well.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, are you administering the flood grants funding in any way?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Which type? There is a number of grants.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Which ones are you administering?

**EMMA HOGAN:** We will be administering a business grant and we are just working through what other funds—I think the Premier and the Treasurer announced over \$400 million worth of funding yesterday to support those that are impacted, so we are just working through what that will mean in terms of grants and what service we will be delivering.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is your department keeping an admin fee for this administration?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** In relation to?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The administration of the grants.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, there is the business grant, and there is a bucket that has been allocated, but—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How much of that bucket, if any—and this is a genuine question because I do not know the answer—will your department be retaining to cover its administration?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Are you saying what is the cost of administration of a grant program?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** A grant program out of the allocation that the Government will be providing in the flood grants.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Whether it is a small business grant or—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Whatever the grant, I do not know. What is the going rate in terms of administration?

**DAMON REES:** It looks different program to program, and those agreements tend to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis with Treasury. I think in this particular grant it is co-funded by New South Wales and the Commonwealth, and I believe that agreement provides for up to 5 per cent of the allocation to cover the costs of implementation and administration.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So you are going to clip 5 per cent off the top of the grants for your administration?

**DAMON REES:** We do not clip. The agreements reflect the cost to implement and support customers through the life cycle of those programs.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How much are you going to take off the top then, if you do not clip—about 5 per cent to cover your costs?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** There is no magic pudding where these things just appear out of nowhere. It costs to deliver programs.

**DAMON REES:** If I could add, there is strong governance to ensure that, program by program, the costs are allocated correctly. We do not leverage one program to cross-subsidise other programs, so the cost for this program will reflect the costs that we incur both to implement it and to support customers through the life cycle.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Let me get this clear: So far we have heard that the inadvertent, for some reason, leaking of confidential personal information is not a data breach—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, no.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And now we are hearing that this is not a clip off the top of an allocation going into government coffers.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr Primrose, you have been a member of Parliament for a long time.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, I have.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You are seriously asking this level of question?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Seriously?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Really?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Come on.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I would also like to get an answer.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You can do better than this.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I shall, thank you.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Please. I have already indicated that a Labor release is far from the truth. I prefer what the Privacy Commission—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Point of order: The Minister is not here to make commentary on the line of questioning being adopted by another member. He is here to answer questions and answer questions only, not offer commentary.

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** To the point of order: The Minister is entitled to answer in any way he decides.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** He was not answering the specific question, he was making comments—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I actually was. Mr Primrose made some ridiculous assertion about a clip off the top. It is just typical of a stale Opposition.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The Minister does not get to make submissions on points of order.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Well, I just did.

**The CHAIR:** I will rule on the point of order. The Minister is free to answer the question as he sees fit.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** But there are standing orders governing debating the validity or integrity of questions, so I would encourage the Minister to restrain himself in terms of his critique of Labor's performance when asking questions, or the style of questions, and to answer the question.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, agreed, but let us elevate the style at least.

**The CHAIR:** Once again, you are debating the question.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** If it helps, I apologise to the Minister if I have ruffled his feathers—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You have not ruffled my feathers; you were degrading yours.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Maybe we should just move on to Mr Anthony D'Adam.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You have been around here as long as I have, Mr Primrose—even longer—and you know that that is not very—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We have limited time. I am very happy to pass over to Mr D'Adam now, and maybe the Minister should have a glass of water.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You know that this is not very edifying. If this is the best that Labor has got—

**The CHAIR:** I will pass to Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, why did you think it was necessary to propose to fine councils for not adopting Park'nPay? Why did you think that was necessary?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Where are you getting this from?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The question is: Why did you think it was necessary? Are you saying that you did not propose to fine councils for not adopting Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** There is no proposal at the moment, or tomorrow.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** My question is why would you think it was necessary to propose it in the first place.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Can you show me where the proposal came from? You are making an allegation.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, are you denying it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I am asking you—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you denying it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, I am absolutely saying there is no proposal.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Did you propose it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am saying there is no proposal.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Did you propose it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** If you are making an assertion, show me where it is.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** No, I have put a question to you, Minister. You can answer either yes or no. Did you propose to fine councils that did not adopt Park'nPay?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** If there was a legislative regime that was to be implemented there would have been a proposal for enforcement, but there is no legislative proposal coming forward. It is no different to ePlanning or anything else, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You have not specifically addressed the question, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think I just did, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I will ask it again: Did you propose to fine councils that did not adopt Park'nPay? It is a very simple question—yes or no, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As I said, if there is a legislative regime that requires adoption over time, like there is with ePlanning, sure, there would have to be an enforcement mechanism, but the Government has not proceeded down that path.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Why did you think that was necessary? Earlier you were quite happy with the progress of adoption. Why did you think advancing that proposition was necessary?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As I said before, the councils are coming on board quicker than I thought. I am actually really pleased with the adoption. We will continue to work with councils in that regard because if we continue to work with councils to get Park'nPay more adopted throughout the board then, again, we—when I say "we" I mean the collective we, us and councils—continue to put public interest ahead of vested interests.



**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I might turn to another piece of legislation: your proposal around repealing section 19B of the Workers Compensation Act. Minister, there have been surveys of workers and 90 per cent have rejected this proposal. Isn't it time to pull this bill? Isn't it time that you apologised to the hardworking pandemic heroes for the angst and anguish you caused them? Will you say sorry to nurses, police, junior doctors, transport workers and disability workers for your failure to consult in a proposal to strip them of their workers comp entitlements? Will you apologise, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I remember at the time when we were in the teeth of the pandemic, when there was no vaccine basically coming out, when we were all quite frightened, me included. Everyone was frightened around the world as to how this would play out. I remember reaching out to David Shoebridge, a member of The Greens, because (a) I rate him, (b) he is very intelligent and (c) he understands the space. I reached out to him and said, "What can we do?"

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister—

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** Let the Minister conclude his answer.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Will you apologise and withdraw the legislation?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am answering the question. I remember it at the time. We then brought forward a proposal that was nation leading at the time—nation leading. In an environment and in a vacuum where there was no vaccine, let alone vaccination rates up, we introduced legislation that was nation leading. That environment has changed. We are now at 95 per cent. No other State or Territory has this legislation in place—no-one. No-one is within cooee. We are in a position where every—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Why are you proposing to penalise workers? They are heroes of the pandemic and you want to penalise them.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** We have vaccination rates up to 95 per cent. It is a credit to everybody in our State that we are at that level now. It is a credit to everybody in the State that we have led the world in this regard. What the Coalition Government did—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Workers are still—

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** Point of order: We are trying to hear the Minister's answer. He has clearly not concluded; he is still answering. We have running commentary from the member who has actually begun the line of questioning and he will not let the Minister finish.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** What the Coalition Government did—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** To the point of order: The Minister is not being directly relevant; he is trying to avoid a very pointed question about whether he will withdraw the legislation and apologise.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, I am happy to have a bit of banter going back and forward but can we at least, on both sides, allow a little gap between someone finishing an answer or question before the other one jumps over the top?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I apologise. I will wait for two or three seconds.

**The CHAIR:** Mr D'Adam, did you want to redirect the Minister in terms of your question?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I will put my question again. Will you withdraw the legislation and apologise, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr Chair, through you?

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The Government currently has legislation before the upper House. The Government acknowledges the great work the front line has done. That is why we did at the time lead the country in introducing the reforms. I want to congratulate and thank Mr Shoebridge, who worked with us at the time. But the circumstances have changed; the vaccination rates are up. Proceeding with this in circumstances where no other jurisdiction in the country has anything similar to this would put an undue burden, particularly on small mum-and-dad businesses. The Government's position remains as is and the bill is before the upper House.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I will move on. Minister, your department has a role in the administration of land tax. Is that correct?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Through you, Mr Chair. Yes, through Revenue NSW.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps Ms Hogan might be able to elaborate on the role the department plays in the land tax system.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Revenue NSW does play a role in land tax, but they appeared before the committee on Friday with the deputy secretary, Scott Johnston, who is not called as a witness today. I am happy to take any questions on notice on it, but I do not have detail on any land tax matters to hand.

**The CHAIR:** That is your time, Mr D'Adam, so I will pass to Ms Hurst.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Can you give us an update on the digital licences in New South Wales? Are we reaching a point where everyone at one point will have a digital licence instead of a hard-copy licence?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is a great question, Ms Hurst, because there are two things that have really come out of the pandemic from my perspective, at least. One, the digital maturity of the people of our State has seriously increased; and the second thing that not many people talk about is the level of collaboration between agencies has definitely increased. That is so heartening to see because governments—forget political persuasions—traditionally just go into silos. But we have seen extraordinary collaboration between agencies. That is what you need for digital. Whether it is a driver licence—that is a collaboration between us and Transport. There is also interface with the police in relation to the photo card. Even the Pet Registry, that is digital; that needs to go via local councils.

What I saw, which I will reference in terms of the adoption of digital, in the digital driver licence space in particular—I remember it went well—there was a rapid acceleration through to 10 per cent, 15 per cent and 20 per cent, but then it started plateauing out at about 20 per cent. It then slowly climbed to about 30 per cent and stayed there for a while. But then, after the pandemic, when we introduced the Dine & Discover vouchers, the QR check-ins and the like, it was because of the hard work of businesses as well—they were at the front line and they were helping their patrons, showing them how to use QR codes, showing them how to download Dine & Discover. It was not just the Government; it was businesses working as well. What I saw recently is that we have now seen a significant jump in the adoption to digital driver licences, for example. We are at 70 per cent, which is just extraordinary.

I am really proud of the way the people of our State have embraced it because we are nation leading and definitely world leading in some areas. There are a whole lot of other things that we are going to do. The Seniors Card—I am very passionate about inclusion. My mum, for example, is not passionate about digital; she just likes the plastic card and that is fair enough. That is her choice, that is her life and she is entitled to do that. But there are a whole lot of seniors who do embrace digital and that is why we are now working with the Minister for Seniors, Mark Coure, to digitise the Seniors Card. Again, we have done some road testing on that with the community and it is overwhelming how many people want this. To answer your question, yes, there are a lot more services that we need to bring online but, equally, we must make sure that, for those who do not want the option, that they have traditional channels to transact.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So, for the foreseeable future, those hard copies will still be available for those services?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Absolutely. All of these are designed with opt in. Even with the digital driver licence you still get your plastic licence. But in my case my plastic licence is in my old leather wallet that is somewhere in my place. I have not used it for two or three years because of everything I can do. But equally, there are people, friends and colleagues of mine who love their big leather wallet or leather purse and that is a matter for them.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Or even pleather.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** It is becoming more popular. We were talking about some of the internet issues in certain rural and regional places. I understand there is a Public Safety Mobile Broadband trial currently underway that might be able to help with these situations. Can you tell me a little bit more about that and whether that is something that is being considered for places like Lismore?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I might ask Mr Wells.

**GREG WELLS:** That is a trial that we have been running in collaboration with all jurisdictions and the Commonwealth. The NSW Telco Authority has led a number of streams of that program of work, in particular going to market to assess the technologies that might play a role, exactly as you are saying, in getting, in this case, video from the field. In addition to radio communications, it is looking at specific technologies that get video from the field into evacuation centres and emergency operation centres et cetera. I will clarify and get for you the dates



of when some of that trial and proof of concept operates to but, yes, that is something the New South Wales Government, and the NSW Telco Authority in particular, is participating in.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is that something that would be considered to help with some of the problems around Lismore and places like that? Or is it at too early a stage because we are still in the trial?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, that in addition—as I said, the Public Safety Network is the emergency services network that we operate on behalf of the emergency services organisations. This would complement that, in our sense, and be an additional layer of bandwidth that would enable other sorts of information to be communicated across the network.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, last year you announced that the New South Wales Government was undertaking a recruitment drive to hire 200 digital specialists. Has that been completed? Are those positions now filled and functioning?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Greg or Damon, do you want to answer that?

**DAMON REES:** I cannot reconcile precisely to that number for you, but what I can say is we have continued to place a very strong focus on recruiting additional teammates in digital across a range of job families. We have seen a large number of new people join our team. We continue to be in the market looking for additional team members.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I can say though, Ms Hurst, that it is really difficult. We are all in competition for the same people. There are definitely challenges in our State and in our country about making sure that we have more people with digital skills, without a doubt.

**The CHAIR:** Picking up on some of those questions from Ms Hurst about the digital licences, when and if are we going to see digital firearms licences?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr Murphy would love to answer that question.

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** I would if I could, Minister, but I am afraid that is probably a question for the police on that one.

**The CHAIR:** Given that you are the one who would be administering it, and you talk about inter-agency cooperation, I am interested to hear what have been the hurdles, from your end, in terms of putting that in place.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is something that I would be more than happy to have a discussion with the Minister for Police about. It makes sense to me. Chair, as you would appreciate, there is just so much on the run sheet at the moment. It is just about getting some room in the agenda, that is all. I will be very frank with you: The last two years, particularly with COVID and all the challenges—and now the floods—on any given day we have got this schedule of work and then all of a sudden something happens with COVID and we have to change and stop and start again. Now with the floods we have got to stop what we are doing and allocate, appropriately, resources to people in those communities. It is just a constant challenge of getting a run on the sheet.

**The CHAIR:** Can we talk about the Service NSW vans? I raised this issue in 2019 and there were four. Now it is 2022 and there are four. When are you going to roll out more of these vans, given that they clearly provide a great service to our regional and rural remote communities? When are we going to see more of these?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am in discussions with the Treasurer now. Watch this space.

**The CHAIR:** Do those discussions include more Service NSW vans?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** If I had my way we would have a whole lot more for Service. I am very proud of Service and the great delivery they do. We all remember the RTA days; we are far, far away from that. I am constantly advocating to get more share for our agency but so far, so good. Over the last two years if anybody looked at the work that DCS has done, not just in the digital space but the customer space, we are world leading. We get governments from around the world approaching us saying, "Show us how you've done this." I am not saying it is perfect, Mr Primrose and Mr D'Adam, but regularly our scores in terms of feedback are in the high nineties. Most businesses would be doing handstands if they got that, let alone government agencies.

**The CHAIR:** Can we just go back to our previous topic? You frequently brought up the Australian Banking Association as being a supporter of this model for interoperability. Are you prepared to table its letter of support for your bill and your model?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am happy to table all letters of support from all stakeholders, yes.

**The CHAIR:** Are you prepared to table AIC and LEXTECH's correspondence to you where they withdraw their support for the model?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am happy to table what I have got in terms of the support and otherwise. Again, I will put public interest—let me be very, very clear about this, it all—

**The CHAIR:** It is not about public interest or vested interest—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, no, no.

**The CHAIR:** It is about who supports your model and who does not.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, and I am happy to table everything. But this is about public interest versus vested interest. Let us make no mistake about it. This is public interest versus vested interest. I back public interest. I will table the letters from the ACCC and everybody else. I will be very transparent about it.

**The CHAIR:** Good.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As I said, this is not just me; this is Labor Ministers as well.

**The CHAIR:** Can we go back to the time line? I know you said it was dry. How much time are you allowing for the banks to change their computer systems and operational procedures to fit in with this?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, in terms of the meta position—I have spoken about the metaverse four times now and that is the fifth—of where we are tracking as a nation on this, the first tranche is to say to the sector that we embrace competition and we embrace interoperability, and that is what the legislation is about. The second phase will be around an enforcement regime. The working groups—that is a matter for them, in relation to working with the banks and the like in terms of implementation. But from my perspective and that of my ministerial counterparts, it is about getting those two statutory pieces in place to create that framework for competition.

**The CHAIR:** From your perspective, what would be an appropriate time frame for them to get their—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will be guided by the experts.

**The CHAIR:** Have you received any advice from the experts?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have received lots of—

**The CHAIR:** In terms of the time frame that they expect the banks to be in line?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take it on notice. There is so much material that we receive in relation to this issue. But, again, I will be guided by the ACCC, the banks and the like.

**The CHAIR:** To get into the weeds of the technical details, and I appreciate you may need to take this on notice as well—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think you might know more about the weeds than I do.

**The CHAIR:** I am not going to profess to. But from my understanding, this model requires what they call "programming interfaces" or nodes; I think they call them APIs.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** APIs, yes.

**The CHAIR:** It is like a connecting node between two—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, programming interfaces.

**The CHAIR:** Between two people or two entities. When you originally planned this there—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is like a pipe.

**The CHAIR:** —were apparently five required?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Sorry?

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, what were you saying?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is like a pipe.

**The CHAIR:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** A connection.

**The CHAIR:** Yes. When you were originally proposing this you required five and now that has risen to 80. What work have you done—obviously with all of these connections there is a risk, is there not? Would you

agree that for any connection where there is a connecting port or a node—or, if you use your analogy of plumbing, pipes—where they connect is where the risk is for leaks and security breaches, yes?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As is the case with the banking sector. Could you imagine if there was only one bank?

**The CHAIR:** Can we—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The banking sector seems to have worked and worked well.

**The CHAIR:** Well, we can—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I do not know why we cannot have—

**The CHAIR:** There is probably a bit of debate around that.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I know, but there is interoperability in so many sectors—whether it is the telco or the banking sectors and the like. I just cannot see—again, only vested interests would be saying status quo.

**The CHAIR:** My interest is in the security of people's details.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As is that of the ACCC, the banks and the lawyers.

**The CHAIR:** Going from five of these nodes or connectors to 80—I am assuming 80 is the final figure—what work are you doing to ensure that each one of those 80 connections is secure?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is the Registrar General who you have not asked to be a witness here. These are questions that would be appropriately asked to him because he is leading the technical aspects. Maybe Mr Wells could answer that. He is the Government Chief Information and Digital Officer.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes, I will get Mr Wells to comment, but not all APIs mean they have to transfer personal information. It can just be connecting points from system to system on the way they talk to each other. It does not all contain private information.

**GREG WELLS:** I am not aware of this specific solution, Mr Banasiak, but a number of those APIs could be private APIs, so business to business and not exposed to the public. Some could be public APIs. There are many ways to implement those solutions so they are safe. I would need to look at this specific solution to comment on those numbers, but a number of those, as I said, could be business-to-business APIs that are not exposed to the public and pose less of a security risk.

**The CHAIR:** There was a report done by the Centre for International Economics, which your Government used, which basically reported a net benefit of \$4 per transaction on an average price of \$1 million as part of this reform, but it never placed a value on the risk and impacts if this process breaks down because of technology failure. Given that we are looking at a \$4 benefit—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr Banasiak, again, there are technology failures everywhere.

**The CHAIR:** Not all technological failures end up with people stranded between one house and another.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Correct, but PEXA could have a tech breach right now. No-one is immune from this, but, if you put all your eggs in one basket, you increase the risk. That is why the ACCC is backing this model in again. There is no doubt there is technical complexity about it, but, again, we put people on the moon 50-odd years ago. The banking system is now on SWIFT. We have moved a long way in recent times, and to suggest that technology is a barrier to competition is ridiculous. The only barrier to competition is self-interest and culture.

**The CHAIR:** Would you agree, though, that a \$4 decrease in price is probably not really enticing to consumers on a \$1 million house? Is it necessarily this great windfall that you talked about at the beginning when you talked about competition and driving down prices? You cannot characterise \$4 as driving down prices, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, if you believe in a monopoly, then that price may significantly increase with no regulation around it. My view, and that of the ACCC, and that of other Ministers around this country, is that competition beats monopoly every time.

**The CHAIR:** It does not quite beat an entrenched duopoly, though, does it?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You are saying entrenched duopoly. I disagree. Can I suggest that the ACCC would disagree with you as well. We are creating a framework for competition. This is in the national interest that we put the public interest first rather than playing to vested interests. I am sick to death of—

**The CHAIR:** What other companies, outside of Sympli, are lining up at the door waiting to jump onto this?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I do not know. Who knows what happens in the future.

**The CHAIR:** You have done no research into seeing which companies may be looking to jump into this?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I hope there are plenty more that come through.

**The CHAIR:** So do I, because I do not want to see a Woolworths and Coles version of this.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, and I share your position on that. We are ad idem on this. My job is to put public interest first and to back in competition and to set a framework so that can apply, and that is what we are doing. I agree with you. A duopoly or monopoly: one is bad; one is not much better. But if we can create a framework and an environment where we encourage others to come in, then so be it. But, at the moment, the status quo is monopoly. That is all about vested interests, not public interest. I am backing the public.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** This is part of the problem with doing it virtually. When you were talking with Mr D'Adam in relation to Park'nPay and local government, you were suggesting that maybe he could table relevant documents. I have the documents here, which are emails backwards and forwards between people in your office and people in the office of the then Minister for Local Government. I note that there are some phone numbers and things included, so I would like to table them but would ask the secretariat to delete whatever personal information they think is appropriate.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Thank you, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** If I can just read out very briefly in relation to this discussion, which was last October, in relation to your Cabinet submission. I quote, for example, from the Office of Local Government on 21 October—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Sorry, where are you reading from?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am reading from emails that we received from, in this case, a senior adviser in the Office of Local Government to one of your senior advisers whom I am reluctant to name.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Fair enough.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It says, "Hi X." The second dot point—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is a nice salutation.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am happy to read it all out, Minister, if you want to be smart about it, but I am trying to be reasonable to your office.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Sorry, I apologise.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It says:

The proposal to penalise councils for not participating in the scheme is going to be strongly opposed. It is inappropriately heavy-handed and sends a poor message to local government, a sector which operates parking as a community service, not for profit.

It goes on to say:

Charging councils a fine for not participating is inappropriately heavy-handed. It sends a poor message about collaboration on parking issues.

I also note there is another email from the Office of Local Government to your office. The second dot point states:

A mandatory approach will not be welcomed by local councils.

...

Charging councils a fine for not participating seems inappropriate and sends a very poor message to the sector.

That was on the cards, was it not? It was in your draft Cabinet submission.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I cannot talk about what is in Cabinet, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Your office does. Were they wrong when they assumed—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am not talking about what goes on in Cabinet. You know that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No, I am asking you about your draft submission, which your office is talking about.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, you are asking me to comment about matters in Cabinet in confidence and I cannot do that. You know that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is pretty clear that that was on that policy.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You know I cannot talk about Cabinet matters.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Having said that, we have got the documents. Can I go back to—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Are you opposing the NRMA? Are you opposing the Disability Council?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Do you want to swap places, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I am just asking you—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Let us go on then to QR code breaches and Accellion again.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** —because there are some serious stakeholders that are backing in Park'nPay—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You mentioned earlier on in your—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** —i.e. backing in public interest over private interest.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The Minister should be called to order.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The Minister has been around long enough. I know what he is doing. When I asked you did you advise the Premier of the data breach in relation to the QR code, the first thing you said was it was not a breach.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, Mr Primrose, if you are going to quote me, you can quote me correctly. I read out a statement from the Privacy Commissioner that said it was not a breach.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Do you agree with the Privacy Commissioner?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Transport for NSW, in a letter that was sent presumably to many people advising them—I presume it was an email.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The suggestion in the media release suggests there was a breach of the QR code and it was absolutely wrong. It was false.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is dated 1 March 2022 from Transport for NSW to a particular person—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Sorry, are you reading from a document?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, I am.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** What is the document?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It is a letter from Transport for NSW dated 1 March 2022 to their customers.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** To who?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It says:

I am writing to inform you that Transport for NSW was impacted by a cyberattack in which some files held by Transport for NSW were taken, including files with some of your personal information.

...

Transport for NSW was made aware that it had been impacted by a cyberattack in late December 2020 on a file transfer system owned by international company Accellion. As a result of the attack, some of your personal information was obtained by an unauthorised person.

...

We deeply regret it.

It sounds a bit like a breach to me. Would you agree with that or not?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** This is in relation to Transport?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** No, this is in relation to the cyber breach involving Accellion.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Sorry, Mr Primrose, I think we were just talking before about the breach—or alleged breach—from a few weeks ago, but now you are talking about the Accellion incident that happened in December where Transport was impacted.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** So it is a different topic.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, I am trying to get an idea. Was that a breach?

**GREG WELLS:** The Accellion incident was a breach, yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**GREG WELLS:** That is very different to the conversation about COVID-safe businesses.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. So that was a breach?

**GREG WELLS:** Correct.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes. That was a cyber attack, absolutely.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Let us go back then to the QR codes. You said you did not advise the Premier. Why did you not advise the Premier?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Because it went through the Privacy Commissioner. The agency did the right thing and they reported up to the Privacy Commissioner, they notified the relevant stakeholders and contacted all of those affected, to the satisfaction of the Privacy Commissioner, and the matter was resolved at that point.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Did anyone in your office advise anyone in the Premier's office?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will take that on notice. I definitely did not. I did not. Ultimately, the buck stops with me; I did not.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You were not asleep at the time?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Absolutely not. You can tell from the bags under my eyes, I do not sleep much.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will not go there. On what date was the Privacy Commissioner advised of the breach?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think I read that out, but I am happy to re-read it. It is—

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** I am happy to take that question, Minister. The Privacy Commissioner was advised on 1 October. The data incident was brought to the attention of the department late in the afternoon on 30 September. So it was the next morning, effectively.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Did your department alert all of the organisations affected by this breach?

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** Yes, we did.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When?

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** The data incident was reported to us on 30 September. We then commenced an analysis of the data set to see what sort of exposure there might be. That analysis was completed by the middle of October and, immediately after that, having confirmed the short list of premises that were impacted, we notified them by telephone on 19 October and 20 October. There was a follow-up letter on 21 October.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many agencies or departments were affected?

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** Do you mean how many—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many did you advise?

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** Out of the 566,000 records in that data set that we had published, in the end there were 428 premises whose addresses had not previously been published. I just confirm though, there was no personal information in any of that data set. That was the names of businesses and the addresses of premises.



**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Again, can we just move on to Accellion? I have just got a couple of quick questions, Minister. When were you first made aware of the Accellion breach, including that people's personal data had been taken from their driver licences?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I might—

**EMMA HOGAN:** I do not have the exact date to hand, but I can let you know after the break.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you. Did the breach include personal details of people with the 18-plus card that you get if you do not actually have a driver licence?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** The photo card?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The photo card, yes.

**EMMA HOGAN:** There is probably a distinct difference between the part of the Accellion breach that we own versus the part of it that Transport owns. We were notified in January—I will come back on the date—that there had definitely been a global breach of Accellion data and we had a look across government to see who was impacted by that. Transport was one that was impacted. We worked with them to arrest and make sure that cyber protections were put in place. Then, in terms of the data that was taken and what happens with that data and how customers were impacted, Transport then deal with that directly themselves. So whether the contents of that data contained breaches of data photo cards et cetera, that would be a matter for them. We would not have the detail on exactly what was taken and what was not. We would at a high level, but not to that degree. That would be a question for Transport.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Have all impacted licence holders now been contacted about their data being compromised?

**EMMA HOGAN:** If it was taken from a Transport data set, it would be up to Transport to notify them, so I would have to put that question to Transport or take it on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Please, take it on notice. That would be great. I might pass over to Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, as the Minister responsible for the Land Tax Act, do you support the current stamp duty system?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** If you read my inaugural speech—about a thousand years ago now, it feels like, Mr D'Adam—I remember saying—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is not on the top of my pile.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I recommend you do not put it on the top of your pile because it is seriously dated. I think payroll tax and stamp duty are the two most egregious taxes there are. They are ridiculous. So, yes, I think there is always room for reform and I applaud the Premier for his leadership on that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So you are supporting the Premier's proposal to replace stamp duty with a new annual tax on home owners?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think the Premier has indicated that this needs a national approach. I think when he was the Treasurer he was speaking to other Treasurers of Labor persuasion as well. Because there is no doubt the tax system in the country is broken. It is absolutely terrible. Just on payroll tax, it just drives me—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Your position, Minister? What is your position?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am telling you my position. Payroll tax is just insane. We spend so much money propping up businesses—understandably, in difficult times—with one hand and then on the other hand we tax them because they employ people. It is just a ridiculous tax.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I am not talking about payroll tax. I am talking about stamp duty.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Stamp duty is also, I think, when you look at all the major reports, the most inefficient tax there is—the most inefficient tax. It is a matter for the Treasurer. Obviously, he sets the policies together with—he leads the Government in relation to tax reform. You can ask him that question.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Have you requested any briefings from your department or advice from your department on the proposal advanced by the then Treasurer and now Premier?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** None?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Ms Hogan, have you provided any advice to the Minister on the impacts?

**EMMA HOGAN:** No. Mr Johnston—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Done any modelling?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Mr Johnston from Revenue NSW is responsible for delivering those services on behalf of Treasury and the policy settings are outlined by Treasury, and they were addressed—or I think they may have been addressed—in Friday's committee when Mr Johnston appeared.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Any impacts on the land registry system?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I would have to take that on notice. I am not sure of the answer to that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Okay, thank you. I might move on to another topic. Minister, in 2019 you promised to deliver 14 new Service NSW centres, including 10 new permanent centres over three years. Can I confirm that all of these centres will be completed by 1 January 2023?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I can confirm that the overwhelming majority of them are on track, but there are some challenges with some centres because we are still trying to find locations for them. But I am happy for Mr Rees to provide more detail.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps you might be able to run us through those centres that you do not expect to be completed in time.

**DAMON REES:** We can go through one by one, but I think the headline would be that we do believe we are on track to complete that financial year.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I am happy for you to go through them one by one. Which of the centres do you not believe will be completed?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I said there are challenges. I did not say we will not; I said there are challenges, and there are.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps you could identify the centres where there are challenges and what those challenges are.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** From the top of my head—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Let us start with Northmead. Is Northmead one of the ones where you have got challenges, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Give me a couple of seconds to process and then go through the Chair. So at this stage no site is secured, but we are still looking for a site in Northmead.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You do not have a site? Three years after the promises were made, you do not have even have a site for the Northmead service centre?

**DAMON REES:** Maybe I can comment. We work through Property NSW to identify suitable sites and secure suitable sites. At the moment the advice from Property NSW is that there is not a suitable property available in the market. They are continuing to explore options.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** But we are—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** No property available? In light of that and in light of the time it takes to secure a property, sign a lease, to shop fit-out and recruit staff, Mr Rees, do you expect that Northmead will open before 1 January 2023?

**DAMON REES:** So our planning is based around financial years, Mr D'Adam. At the moment our plans would indicate that we would be able to open all those centres by 30 June in that year, being the completion of the financial year.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So 30 June?

**DAMON REES:** That is the financial year end.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps you might be able to tell us what the status of the Merrylands promised site is.



**DAMON REES:** The update I have there is that there is an early tenancy opportunity for delivery to be brought forward. We do have a lease executed for that site, and I think we had the handover and site access completed on 17 January. So we are tracking well for that site.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You have signed the lease. How long will it take you from the signature of the lease to being in a position to fit out the site?

**DAMON REES:** I do not have a precise date for the opening, so I will need to take that question on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Mr D'Adam, can I?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Yes, jump in, please.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** May I ask, these seem to be very reasonable questions. They were your undertaking three years ago, and we are taking everything on notice. You have come to budget estimates. Minister, is there anything you know about any of this stuff at all?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes? Okay. But everything is being taken on notice, even by your senior officers.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is false.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Well—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Not everything has been taken on notice.

**DAMON REES:** Maybe if I can comment. Of the 10 service centres, four have opened. There is—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, I understand.

**DAMON REES:** There are two key challenges that have really impacted the delivery of all centres, including the remaining. One is access to suitable sites. The second is the impact of COVID on supply chain. So there are a number of variables that do impact—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Are they going to be opened or not?

**DAMON REES:** To the best—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is the promise going to be kept or not?

**DAMON REES:** Our planning has us opening all of those centres by the end of that financial year.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** And Mr Rees has already said that. That was not taken on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. So you are saying the same, Minister, confirming that?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, I back in the agency advice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Good.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I look at what Service delivers and I look at what Labor delivered under the RTA, and I know which one I would back in.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. So they will be opened, says the Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Well, I back in Service over the RTA every day.

**DAMON REES:** To the best of our planning, but again there are variables there that we need to manage through the delivery of these, including access to suitable property. There are specific requirements that we have for the property that enables us to deliver the full range of services.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And you have not even secured the sites?

**DAMON REES:** We have secured a number of the sites.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** A number.

**DAMON REES:** A number of the sites are still part of a search conducted by Property NSW.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Sorry, Mr D'Adam. I will hand back to you.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That is alright. I was going to go to the specifics of Randwick. Where are we up to with Randwick, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Do you want to answer it? You might as well.

**DAMON REES:** We do not yet have a site secured for Randwick. Feedback from Property NSW is that there is currently no market available to meet all of our business needs, so we are working through what an alternative approach could be.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** No site and no prospects then for Randwick. Is that what you are saying?

**DAMON REES:** I think the key challenge for Randwick is finding a site that can also support driver testing. So there are discussions around whether we can enable a site or find a site that is suitable in that location but rely on other surrounding service centres for the delivery of practical driver testing.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It is sounding a lot like, Mr Rees, that is highly improbable that you are going to be able to deliver that one on time.

**DAMON REES:** As I said, at the moment our planning has us completing all of them on time, recognising that there is always some risk to those plans.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What about Glenmore Park? Do you have a site for Glenmore Park?

**DAMON REES:** The feedback I have on Glenmore Park is that delivery is delayed due to the redevelopment of the Glenmore Park Town Centre. There is a DA that I believe is required there, so we are working through that at the moment. When I say it is delayed, that is from our sort of original aspiration of opening dates. We are still aiming to complete that site within the overall program schedule.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That does not sound very promising, I have to say. There is a lot of uncertainty there. Minister, are you satisfied with this level of uncertainty about delivering on your Government's election promises?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes. Revesby has been completed, Engadine completed, Roselands completed, Edmondson Park completed. There are, as I said, challenges because of COVID—there is no doubt about that; challenges in the marketplace—no doubt about that. But we continue to work towards those deadlines.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I think my time is—Mr Chair?

**The CHAIR:** No, you can continue, Mr D'Adam. Keep rolling with any questions you have.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I might hand back to Mr Primrose.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is a good idea. That is a great idea.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Let's go back to Park'nPay. I love Park'nPay.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Well, I have lots of questions to you on Park'nPay.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I love putting the public first, vested interests a distant second. Very distant.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What vested interests are you talking about, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I do not know, the vested interests that would be against the public interest. Who would that be?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I do not know. I do not mix in your circle, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Who would want to keep the status quo? Well, it is not the NRMA. They do not want the status quo. They want public interest. They want Park'nPay. The Disability Council, they do not want status quo. They want public interest. They want Park'nPay.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In relation to your Digital Restart Fund—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is great, isn't it?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am very proud of it, Mr Primrose. Very proud of it.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How much and what percentage is administration costs—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Two point one billion. It was initially 1.6, and then I managed to get the Treasury to give me an extra half.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, if you do not want to answer the questions, just say it.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I do. Sorry, I apologise.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you. Apology accepted. How much and what percentage of the fund actually is used for administration costs?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I would have to ask Mr Wells.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You do not know?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, I do not. Because there are so many projects across the fund, I do not know the—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I thought you were proud of this project.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am very proud of what we have done. In fact, I am so proud that Intermedium, who does a digital government readiness indicator report, lauds the fact that we are the only government that has put this much money into digital infrastructure so that we can provide the digital services that a modern society requires, that we can do the digital driver licence, that we can do all these things.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** If you are asking for minutiae around—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am asking you for information, not a media release.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Well, then—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Very specifically, you do not know how much of the fund is used for administration?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I said Mr Wells might know. I do not know.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay.

**GREG WELLS:** It is 1 per cent.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** One per cent? Okay. How much is recurrent funding?

**GREG WELLS:** What we set out with Digital Restart is a guide and I think targets two-thirds capital, one-third recurrent, but as we go through the process—just clarifying the previous answer that 1 per cent covers Treasury, DCS and other agencies that assist in governing the fund. But in terms of capital and recurrent, we target two-thirds capital and one-third recurrent because some of the solutions, as the Minister—more than 180 projects have now been through the fund. Some of those projects will have different components of opex and capex. So each year we reconcile that with Treasury as part of the annual process and adjust as we need to.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay, so we are talking how much? Twenty-five per cent is recurrent funding?

**GREG WELLS:** So, two-thirds—a bit more than 25 per cent.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. About 33 per cent.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. That is a guide.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes. I just want to clarify because I thought earlier, when we were talking about how much was being clipped off the top, we were talking about 5 per cent.

**GREG WELLS:** We do not clip anything off. Administration for Digital Restart is 1 per cent—not 5 per cent but 1 per cent. Again, that is to govern the working groups, to work with clusters to assist them with lean business cases and input into the fund, to assist with assurance of projects that go through the fund et cetera. So that is 1 per cent, not 5 per cent, to administer the projects that are eligible.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Roughly, in dollar terms, how much are we talking about?

**GREG WELLS:** That is roughly a couple of million dollars.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So a couple of million goes into admin.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Over \$2.1 billion.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. I have got other things here but probably, Minister, because they are actually quite detailed I do not think you will be able to answer them, by the sound of it. So I might talk to your officers.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, and I do not—I appreciate that. I am not responsible for the micro detail. My excellent agency does that hard work, the heavy lifting. My job is to set the vision and to make sure it is implemented.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And not to have some form of oversight?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As I said, to make sure it is implemented.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** But you approve the funding.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I think I just answered the question. Again, I think we are at ad idem, yet again.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Let's talk about something that you have some interest in and oversight of, and that is iVote. Do you think iVote is working well in New South Wales?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Clearly, there were challenges with it.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What were those challenges, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will defer that to Mr Wells.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, can I say—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, you can say whatever you like.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Let's talk about your vision, since you do not know the detail. What is your vision for iVote?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I disagree with that. Again, Mr Primrose, for somebody of your expertise—I will end it at "expertise". As somebody who has been around for so long, do you really want to degrade yourself into that language? I am across the detail as is required, but I have experts around me that have the day-to-day operational responsibility for running the agencies. You know that as much as I know that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Well, I am asking you, Minister, what is your vision for iVote in New South Wales?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, in my world—when I was a lawyer I actually represented unions, the left wing of the Labor Party as it were, and they had a union. I represented them in a massive ballot fraud case, an election fraud case, that went before Michael Moore of the Industrial Court at the time. It went to the High Court, indeed. So I know the voting irregularities that can occur at elections and I believe that ultimately—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So you are equating—

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** This is very interesting. The Minister is going exactly to the heart of the question, which was about his vision for iVote. I would like to hear the rest of the Minister's answer.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** All I can hear is something about him making allegations of voting fraud.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** A Labor voting rort. There was a book written about it. As I said, there are plenty of judgements on it.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That is a long way from the actual question.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is very close. It goes close to the vision because I saw firsthand. I remember it was actually—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, can I ask you again—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** You are bringing back the glory days.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, if you do not want to answer questions—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It was Professor Westwood that was a forensic document examiner.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I asked you a very specific question.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** He was very good.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You said other people know the details, not you, and you are responsible for the vision. So I ask you: What is your vision for iVote?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** To make sure that it provides an option for people to use a digital platform to vote in a secure, trusted environment.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Of the requested \$122 million to improve cybersecurity, how much has the Government actually provided to the NSW Electoral Commission?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, I will defer that to Greg Wells.

**GREG WELLS:** So I think their original request was \$22 million, not \$122 million, but so far what has been approved for uplifting the Electoral Commission cybersecurity is \$4.8 million. That is the first tranche, Mr Primrose, of a process, as I said, we go through with Digital Restart to enable clusters and agencies to get started quickly, which is what this is enabling the Electoral Commission to do.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will come back to that one this afternoon. Given the COVID-19 restrictions that were in place for the last round of council elections and the anticipated increase in demand for iVote, what extra funding was made available for the NSW Electoral Commission for that election?

**GREG WELLS:** Our focus, again, is on the cybersecurity uplift of the Electoral Commission. We are in close contact with them. I think any other questions around funding for the Electoral Commission probably would be a question for Treasury.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In relation to the uplift, as you say, how much money was made available to them?

**GREG WELLS:** It was \$4.8 million.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What fund was that from?

**GREG WELLS:** From the cybersecurity allocation, as I talked about before, within the Digital Restart Fund. So, again, as the Minister pointed out earlier, there was a first reservation under Digital Restart of \$240 million for clusters to take advantage of to uplift to their cybersecurity position. Subsequently there was \$75 million allocated for small and independent agencies to take advantage of that too. So it is from that reservation.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Given the expertise of your agency, Minister, what testing was undertaken to ensure iVote would handle the increased demand at that election? Do you know this, Minister, or are you going to flick it to your staff again?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No. There is an assurance framework in place in relation to everything that goes through the Digital Restart Fund. I am not part of the operational arm that looks at every project, as you would appreciate, but Mr Wells may be able to answer that. If that is a question you are asking, it goes to Mr Wells.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I just thought it may have passed your interest.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No. I do not sit in the public service and go through every—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. I just thought it may have been an interest of yours.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I am not in the working groups working through the assurance frameworks. But Mr Wells would be able to answer that, if you are interested in the answer.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am interested. Maybe you can inform both the Minister and myself, Mr Wells.

**GREG WELLS:** There are probably three or four functions that we work with the Electoral Commission on, Mr Primrose. We do, as part of our assurance function, work with them to make sure their projects are set up for success. So there is an assurance input; there is a cybersecurity input that I have talked about; and we are also assisting the Electoral Commission at the moment to look at what they can do to set up for success for next year. That will include commercial negotiation. It will include platform stability and scalability assistance as well, so there are a number of dimensions or things that we are working closely with the commission on.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So, basically, I got out of that that you are looking at doing good and opposing evil. Can you give us some more specifics? What action has the Government taken to address the failures of iVote, and what specifically is proposed to ensure that it works next year?

**GREG WELLS:** Okay. So, I can go through each of those categories, if you like, specifically.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Even if you take it on notice.

**GREG WELLS:** So, first of all—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am very happy for you to take it on notice.

**GREG WELLS:** I am happy either way

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am just looking for details.

**GREG WELLS:** Okay. I am not going to go into the specifics of the cybersecurity uplift and details that the Electoral Commission has prioritised and planned, for obvious reasons.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I understand.

**GREG WELLS:** But in terms of scalability and stability of the platform, our platforms team is working closely with their team to make sure that we can do everything we can to make sure it is set up to scale. In terms of the commercials, I understand that we are working closely to look at their provider, their vendor Scytl, and how we can assist with any negotiations that are taking place with that vendor as well as, as I said before, the assurance framework that we work through with all projects, not just this one but with all projects, to make sure that enhancements are set up for success. The additional piece, Mr Primrose, is that, as we have done previously with all elections, Cyber Security NSW provides a range of services leading up to and on the day of the elections to assist with monitoring, threat escalations and all those sorts of things as well. So there is, across the spectrum of cyber assurance platforms and commercials, quite a lot of detail.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can I ask you, then, through the Minister if I may, who was at fault for what happened at the last election?

**GREG WELLS:** So, as I said, that is something we are looking into with the Electoral Commission at the moment.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Does your agency accept responsibility?

**GREG WELLS:** We do not run the Electoral Commission's systems, Mr Primrose, but we work very closely with them to set them up for every bit of success we can.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Who do you think was responsible?

**GREG WELLS:** As I said, we are working with them closely to do everything we can to assist them to set up for success.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You did your job properly by monitoring that before the election.

**GREG WELLS:** Sorry, I am not sure of the question.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Do you believe that you performed appropriately your responsibility before the election?

**GREG WELLS:** We monitor the cyber threats associated with the elections. That is something that we have done previously and will no doubt agree to do again leading up to next year, but we do not have direct responsibility for monitoring the performance of the solution. It is something, as I said, that we are going to work closely with the Electoral Commission on to make sure we do everything we can to make sure they are set up for that success. Some of these questions are probably more appropriate for the Electoral Commission.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I just hope you do a better job for the next election than the most recent one. Minister, is the staffing for Cyber Security NSW included in the Department of Customer Service or is it separate?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** No, it is with DCS, with us.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What is the staff; how many people?

**GREG WELLS:** I believe that is currently 49, but I will clarify that, Mr Primrose, and make sure that is 100 per cent correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you very much. Can you guarantee that iVoting will be up and running to support our most vulnerable voters by March 2023, and that it will be safe and secure?

**GREG WELLS:** As I said, we will do everything we can to set the Electoral Commission up for success, but again these are probably questions for the Electoral Commission.



**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I might jump in there, Mr Primrose, if that is okay.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Please.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, can I ask you about test and isolate payments? The program has been closed for some months. There are 11,723 applications still to be processed. Is that correct, or do you have an updated figure on that?

**DAMON REES:** Mr D'Adam, I think that figure you are referring to would be the gap between the applications received and the applications paid. There are a number of things that can account for that, including applications that are deemed fraud.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps you could break that number down so that I can understand how many of those applications, if that is the application number, are fraudulent applications and how many are genuine applications waiting to be processed.

**DAMON REES:** To the best of my knowledge, we do not have test and isolate payments still waiting to be processed. I believe there was a significant level of attempted fraud on that program.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you saying that the 11,723 are all suspected fraudulent applications?

**DAMON REES:** I will not go so far as to say they are all suspected fraud payments, but certainly that would account for a large portion of those.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the process for determining that? When are the decks going to be cleared? I suppose that is the point. You are saying that they are suspect applications. When are you going to get that number down to zero so that we know the status of all applications and that those who are waiting to be paid have been paid?

**DAMON REES:** I will take on notice whether there are any applications that are sitting outside of suspected fraud or fraud triage that are still waiting to be paid. I think that is the core of the question. In terms of the time it takes, there is a very significant fraud control framework that sits around these programs. When we do identify indicators of potential fraud there is a lot of care and diligence taken to make sure that those applications do represent suspected fraud and are not false positives and preventing customers from getting paid. That can often—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How do you make sure that your fraud prevention approach is not actually causing hardship in genuine applications?

**DAMON REES:** It is a great question and it is one of the—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There could be genuine applications in amongst them and, as a result of the approach that you are taking, those people are left waiting, perhaps desperately in need of support.

**DAMON REES:** It is one of the real challenges of managing fraud in these programs. It takes a significant amount of analysis and often confirmation with customers to ultimately form a view of whether an item is in fact suspected fraud before that is referred to the police for further investigation and charging. Through all of these programs you are constantly balancing those tensions and improving processes, systems and the data that underpins that analysis.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, are you satisfied that needy people are getting the money they need as quickly as they need?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As I said at the time, we are moving heaven and earth to make sure that the money is flowing out the door as quickly as possible with all the constraints at the time of COVID. Is it perfect? No. Have the majority of people received the bulk of the money? Yes. But there is always room for improvement, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, what are you doing to expedite the 20,000 pending applications for microbusiness grants that remain unprocessed?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again, I am working with the agency headed by Mr Rees in relation to that, but I will be guided by the agency—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What steps have you—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Mr Rees might answer that.

**DAMON REES:** Yes, maybe to elaborate on that, Mr D'Adam, again there is a range of things that can account for that number, including applications that have been—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Sorry, Mr Rees, that question was specifically to the Minister about the steps that he has taken, not really a question that you can answer.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I have asked my agency—and it is not just me; a number of people have asked—to make sure that the money is paid as soon as possible but to ensure that fraud mitigation steps are in place. Obviously the agency is working through that and Mr Rees is happy to elaborate if you want to listen to the answer.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Rees?

**DAMON REES:** There is a range of cases that would make up the number that I think you are referring to, Mr D'Adam. The applications that are not sitting within fraud triage at the moment, where customers are still working with us on final payments, would number less than 1,000. Many of those cases are where customers are required—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you able to provide on notice the specific numbers of those sitting in fraud triage, those still waiting to be processed?

**DAMON REES:** I can do that. Maybe just a final point of clarification: A large portion of customers that are still to be processed, that will be waiting on customers to evidence further information of their eligibility in order to receive those payments, but we can provide a further breakdown on notice.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you provide us some detail around where we are up to with JobSaver? Apparently there are 1,769 applications remaining unprocessed. Is that a similar story?

**DAMON REES:** It will be, so I am happy to provide the breakdown on notice, if that is helpful.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you suggesting that of that 1,769 the majority are in the triage pile?

**DAMON REES:** There are a lot of programs, Mr D'Adam, so I would have to take on notice the specifics for that one, but all of them have those common characteristics around a range of drivers for the reasons that applications can still be outstanding. For the JobSaver program, as I understand it, the number of outstanding customers is much lower than you have indicated. We have literally two that are incomplete applications where we are waiting on a customer to submit further information; we have six applications that are currently pending manual assessment; and there are another 38 that need some form of follow-up with the customer. We have a range in fraud triage, but the number where the application is complete and ready to be processed sits at six.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Minister, can I ask you about debt recovery notices as high as \$100,000 that have been issued via your department? Do you think now is the time to be chasing people for significant amounts given that it is going to place an enormous burden on those affected businesses in particular?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Through you, Mr Chair, that is a matter for the Minister responsible, which is Minister Tudehope.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you not have an opinion on it, Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I strongly recommend that you—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** And surely you—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** My opinion is that you should approach the appropriate Minister. That is my opinion.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Minister, as I indicated, I will be seeking information, so I will ask your officers this afternoon. How often do you update your websites?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** There are a lot of websites that we are trying to consolidate, Mr Primrose. Which website did you have in mind?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** All of them. Are there any that are out of date?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is a big question.

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** You only have four minutes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am just asking, are there any that are significantly out of date? Surely you want to lead—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Across government, in our department—which one?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In your agency.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** There are a number of websites, which drove me spare, mind you. That is why we are going through a website consolidation because I think there are too many websites across government, which confuses the customer. But, yes, it depends which website you had in mind.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How often does your agency review the information on its websites to ensure that it is—

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** It is ongoing but Mr Murphy can answer.

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** Our websites are always under review for updating and making sure that the information is relevant and accurate et cetera. If you are aware of any information on any of our websites that you think is out of date, I would appreciate hearing about that. We can make sure that we check that out.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So you are not aware of any?

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** I am not aware of any that we know are out of date that are not in the process of being updated.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can you tell us a bit more, Minister, about the proposal to amalgamate the web pages?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Consolidate the web pages?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, what does that involve?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** To your question, there are numerous websites across agencies that have different interfaces and different experiences that the people of our State need to traverse. It is webpage graffiti in my view. If we are truly putting the customer at the centre of everything we do, we must make it easier for them. That is why we set up nsw.gov.au. They were front and centre in relation to the pandemic response. That was your trusted source of information because it is easier to update and keep an eye on one website to make sure that that has a great user experience and interface than a thousand websites. We are collectively going through all the websites right across government to see which ones are being used. For example, there would be a whole lot of websites that might only get one or two clicks. If that information can be brought into a place that is easier to absorb for the people of our State, then it is a better experience.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you, Mr Chair. We will give the Minister a 30-second early mark.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Thank you, Mr Primrose.

**The CHAIR:** That takes us to 1.00 p.m. The Government may make some follow-up questions.

**The Hon. PETER POULOS:** Good afternoon, Minister.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Good afternoon, Mr Poulos.

**The Hon. PETER POULOS:** Thank you very much for your comprehensive and detailed responses today. Just for the benefit of this Committee, before we wrap up for this session, did you have any final comments or information that might be useful?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** More broadly, what we are trying to achieve here in the Department of Customer Service is something that has not been done by any other government, definitely in the country, and we are right up there in the world. I remember two or three years ago when people asked me, "What was the Department of Customer Service?"—because it was brand new—and no-one had a clue, understandably, because it was brand new. But now, when you look at what we have done in terms of our response to the pandemic and the like, we are front and centre of so many important initiatives now that make life easier for the great people of our State. I appreciate all of the questions today and I accept that we are not perfect, but we are well and truly on a journey of transforming for the better the lives of the people of our State. I will end on this note: I ask people to remember the days of the RTA and the perspex glass before COVID and where we are today. It is not a world away; it is a planet away.

**The CHAIR:** A metaverse.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** But there is more to learn and more to do.

**The CHAIR:** I thought you were going to say that it is a metaverse away.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** That is number five. Congratulations, Mr Chair.

**The CHAIR:** That concludes our questioning of you, Minister. We will return with the public servants at 2.15 p.m. after lunch.

**(The Minister withdrew.)**

**(Luncheon adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back to this afternoon session with the public servants from Department of Customer Service. I will throw directly to questions from the Opposition. I am looking to my right at the screen and at Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you, Mr Chair. To whomever is the best person to field this one: In relation to investment in mobile black spot towers, how much has the Government invested both in new locations and upgrading current locations?

**EMMA HOGAN:** That would be for Mr Wells.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Since the State election, mind you.

**GREG WELLS:** Thanks, Mr D'Adam. As I said this morning, there are multiple rounds of mobile black spot programs that we are working on. Some are initiated by the Commonwealth, which we co-invest in; some are initiated by industry, which we also co-invest in. I think in terms of summarising all the rounds we are currently engaged in, there are 174 sites that we target to increase, of which we have completed 137. That completion will extend coverage by 1,800 kilometres of transport routes. It will cover 57,000 residents and 28,000 premises.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** On notice, are you able to provide details of the locations of those sites and the dates that they were completed?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, I can give you that certainly.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** And also the specific funding round that related to the completion of each of those towers?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, we have all that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Great. Has any of the funding for the mobile black spot towers come from the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund?

**GREG WELLS:** I believe the fund is called the Connecting Country Communities Fund, Mr D'Adam. I think that was previously known as the Regional Digital Connectivity fund. I can take on notice how that relates to the Snowy fund that you mentioned.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Right. Are you saying that the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund has been renamed or—

**GREG WELLS:** No, not at all.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you just elaborate on that? It is a bit unclear what you are saying.

**GREG WELLS:** Sure. The funding for the mobile black spot programs comes from something called the Connecting Country Communities Fund. Some \$11 million of that fund was dedicated to regional internet services and \$39 million was dedicated to targeting mobile black spots. The multiple rounds that I have talked about are from the \$39 million of that \$50 million Connecting Country Communities Fund. We work in close collaboration with Regional NSW in prioritising implementing these fixes. I am happy to take on notice by round what has been completed and where.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Okay. In terms of the total value of expenditure on the black spot program, how much is that? Is that more or less than \$300 million?

**GREG WELLS:** This particular fund is \$41.2 million. That is our contribution to all rounds of this program.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the overall value of the fund?

**GREG WELLS:** The overall value of the fund—as I said, this Connecting Country Communities Fund was \$50 million.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It was \$50 million. Okay.

**GREG WELLS:** I think that it is—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you able to—go on, sorry, Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** I think that is different to the Snowy Hydro fund you mentioned previously. I think this is a separate fund.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Right. And as far as you are aware no funds from the Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund have been used for the black spot program?

**GREG WELLS:** I think that is probably a question for Regional NSW, but I can take that on notice and try to follow it up for you.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you. Since the 2019 election, how much has the Government invested in data centres?

**GREG WELLS:** Mr D'Adam, we obviously operate two government data centres: one in Unanderra in the south and one in Silverwater in Sydney. I will take on notice the exact investment, but at this stage what we are doing with those government data centres is essentially maintaining those. It is important to note we are maintaining those two centres on behalf of government. Over the past 10 years we have consolidated many data centres into those two facilities. But I will take on notice the exact spend year on year since 2019, as you asked.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do those data centres have any role in improving speed or reliability for regional internet?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, absolutely. A lot of what was consolidated in regional data centres—or, to be honest, in computer cupboards and equipment that really were not worthy of being called a data centre—has definitely improved the reliability, the security and the speed of a lot of services that are consumed by regional customers.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Have any of the funds for these data centres come from Snowy Hydro Legacy Fund, are you aware?

**GREG WELLS:** No, not that I am aware.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the value of the investment in data centres for the last three years?

**GREG WELLS:** As I said, it is now in an operating phase, but I will take that on notice and come back with what our investment is year on year.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I might hand over to Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you, Mr D'Adam. I would like to return briefly to the issue of flood support. Again, with all of my questions, I ask whoever is the most appropriate person to please answer them. I understand the Federal and State governments have pledged financial support. Can you tell me which agency will be leading the community support programs? Have you been advised of that?

**EMMA HOGAN:** By community support programs, do you mean just the financial delivery component?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The various programs that the State Government will be delivering to ensure that there is some relief for the communities.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Resilience NSW usually coordinates the overall emergency response. Obviously the SES and other emergency services are very involved in the on-the-ground response. As it comes to delivering financial support, the Commonwealth will deliver some and we will deliver some. As it becomes clearer the level of support that the public will need ongoing, once we get through the crisis component that we are in at the moment, it may be that Service NSW provides ongoing support to the community.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Given that we are talking about a week since the floods hit Lismore and we are also talking about many other areas being affected, including north-west Sydney where I come from, has there been consultation between your agency and Resilience NSW?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes. There is a state emergency operations group that is stood up and we are a member of that. We meet each day on what is happening and how each agency is responding and it is coordinated by that mechanism. Then we play a role in comms on nsw.gov.au and other forms of communications channels, and we play a role through the NSW Telco Authority in Mr Wells' remit and obviously in Service NSW through Mr Rees' remit.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And that is chaired by Resilience NSW?



**EMMA HOGAN:** It is chaired by the SEOCON, so whoever the leader is on the day. I think sometimes it is chaired by Commissioner Fitzsimmons and sometimes it is chaired by police. Mr Murphy attends these meetings regularly.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In terms of financial support, are you aware of any undertakings yet that have been given by your agency or the Government as a whole?

**EMMA HOGAN:** There is a disaster relief payment which is already in play with the Feds, which I think is \$1,000 per person; Mr Rees might have more detail. We are in the process of working on a business grant that will be delivered this week, and then we are just working through the other support mechanisms over the coming days. I imagine the Premier and the Treasurer would wish to announce the what, the how, the why and the when later in the week.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How long do you think it will be before cheques start appearing in people's accounts after their application is lodged?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I think it depends on the grant that is applied for and it depends on the complexity of the application process. I will let Mr Rees comment further, but my understanding is that some of the policy settings for these are a joint initiative between the State and the Federal Government and some will be directly State driven. Those are the ones we are working through at the moment. I will ask Mr Rees to comment further.

**DAMON REES:** Maybe just one initiative to add to Ms Hogan's update: I believe Resilience NSW has an emergency hardship support mechanism in place that is also accessible now. For the first piece of support that Service NSW is delivering, which is that expansion of the flood support to impacted businesses, as Ms Hogan said we expect to make that available for applications this week. There will be two components to that program. It is modelled on existing flood support that is available for impacted businesses through 2021. The first \$15,000 can be provided to businesses in advance of them incurring expenditure and the remaining \$35,000 is subject to a subsequent application following businesses incurring expenditure. We expect the first portion of that to be processed quickly on our end and for payments to flow as quickly as we can to businesses.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** By quickly, you mean—

**DAMON REES:** It is dependent on volumes, but we would expect to have money flowing to businesses within five to 10 days of complete applications being submitted. These application processes, from a previous experience, can sometimes take time for business customers to provide a complete application, but once that complete application has been provided, we expect to get the funds to customers quickly.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How complex do you expect the application form and the process will be?

**DAMON REES:** It is of course subjective. Our goal is always to make it as simple as possible. We also need to work with the Commonwealth on its requirements of evidence, but certainly our goal is to make it as simple as possible. We also have teams available that can help businesses make those submissions where businesses require assistance.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We have seen that two years on—more—from the bushfires there are still people living in tents, and I have visited them like many others, and caravans. One of the constant complaints is just the total inability of working through a very complex system. Have you reviewed the experience of the bushfires to make sure it is not replicated here?

**DAMON REES:** I think that there are certainly a lot of learnings on many fronts from bushfires, and as an organisation, we continually adapt based on the feedback of our customers. One of the services that was introduced in bushfires, which I think has made a big difference there, is the customer care service. There was a recognition that actually there are many forms of support available from different tiers of government and outside of government that it can be difficult, particularly if you are under personal pressure, to understand and navigate that support. That is the role that customer care from Service NSW plays, and we continue to work to this day with customers who were impacted by those original bushfires through that process of recovery, helping them to understand and access the various support mechanisms they need along the way.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Are there any other particular key things that you learnt in relation to the problems that are associated with people applying for support following the bushfires that you are going to change and apply here?

**DAMON REES:** One of the questions that is constantly asked is how do you make the ability for people to access services as quick as possible? I think bushfires affirmed the need to enable people to make those applications digitally without requiring a physical visitation to Service NSW. Certainly, it has confirmed things



that worked well. We do see challenges sometimes experienced, particularly around people's ability to prove who they are or sometimes to evidence loss, and so we have continued to iterate on our services where possible to take that into account.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How would you take that into account?

**DAMON REES:** An example would be different forms of evidence accepted for damage and looking beyond invoices. Can we factor other things such as photographs of damaged property?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What measures have you put in place so that people who no longer have access to digital information are able to access this information?

**DAMON REES:** We can help customers from a number of points of presence. We have our service centres themselves. We have digital service teammates who can assist customers to make their applications digitally through service centres. We provide phone-based support. Our mobile service centres are equipped with the people and the technology to assist in customers making those applications. We have a presence within the recovery centres. Depending on the centre and depending on where we are at in that journey of recovery, we potentially can help people from those recovery centres to make those applications as well.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I will call them Service NSW buses. How many are you sending to the Northern Rivers or to the North Coast?

**DAMON REES:** Of the four that we have, two have been sent to the northern region, and that is a situation that we will constantly assess.

**EMMA HOGAN:** I would add, though, Mr Primrose, that we also have a number of disaster recovery centres that have been established. I think there were two that kicked off on Saturday and a number of others in planning for this week, and we have Service NSW representatives in those centres as well. We have a dual-response plan there in that we have boots on the ground in those service centres and then we put the buses where it is safe to be and safe for our community to get to.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** In terms of additional staff, can you tell me how many full-time equivalents have been allocated to that area?

**DAMON REES:** There are a few mechanisms in place. We have an ability to mobilise Service NSW teammates into regions that have been impacted. Also, across the broader Department of Customer Service, we have a group of people who have volunteered to step in in situations like that. We have leveraged both of those both to staff the recovery centres and to put extra people into these communities. I do not have an exact number for you, but I can take that on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Thank you. You mentioned previously you had daily meetings with Resilience NSW. Is that correct? What is that group called? Does it have a title?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I think it is the SEOCON. Is that what it is called?

**WILLIAM MURPHY:** There are a number of groups under the governance around emergency management arrangements. There is a whole hierarchy of structures around how that works.

**EMMA HOGAN:** But it is run by emergency services and we are an attendee.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Are these pre-existing groups?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Whenever there is a crisis, there are a number of hierarchical governance groups that are set up and various agencies are called to attend, and we play a role in those. As I mentioned earlier, we have the Telco Authority in Mr Wells' remit, Service NSW in William's, and then I will sometimes attend, depending on what I am coordinating, on behalf of the whole team.

**DAMON REES:** If I could add, those groups complement and are complemented by the working relationships of the agencies. As an example for the support that has been launched this weekend, that work continued all through the weekend to prepare that and that is agencies working directly with each other.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Do you expect to receive any additional resources from Resilience NSW to support flood victims?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I do not think we need additional resources from Resilience NSW. I think its resources are very focused on the crisis response on the ground. We are more focused on how do we communicate to community what is happening and how do we communicate where to get support from? Then we focus on delivering that support. In Mr Wells' area, we are focused very much on keeping the Safety Network up and running so emergency services can talk to each other during this time.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I might just come back to data centres for a moment. Mr Wells, you indicated that there were two data centres. The Government had committed to building six data centres by the next election. Can you tell us what the status of that commitment is? There are clearly four data centres that are missing that did not seem to rate a mention.

**GREG WELLS:** Mr D'Adam, again, I think that is probably a question for Regional NSW. I think what we are getting to is, as part of the Snowy fund, it was investigating—I am not sure if this is still the case, a question for Regional NSW again—whether it was appropriate to look at edge data centres, so data centres in the regions that might have computing power and data sitting in edge data centres that might benefit regional communities. In terms of the overall government's data centre strategy, as I said before, our strategy has been in place for probably 10 years or more. That strategy has been very successful in consolidating I think hundreds of data centres down into two purpose-built, tier-three, high-availability data centres that sit in those two locations.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Wells, are you telling me that you are unaware of the \$100 million commitment under Regional Digital Connectivity to build six data centres?

**GREG WELLS:** No, as I said, I am aware of that, but that is a question for Regional NSW. That was something that was certainly being investigated as to whether edge data centres were going to be useful, but, again, it is a question for Regional NSW.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How is that a question for Regional NSW? Are data centres not firmly in your brief?

**GREG WELLS:** We are working and continue to work with them on that, but they do administer the Snowy Hydro fund, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I see. In terms of that commitment, there was another \$200 million. I think you said that \$50 million had been spent on black spots and there was another \$150 million that had been committed to dealing with black spots. Where is that?

**GREG WELLS:** I can clarify that. The Connecting Country Communities Fund is not part of the Snowy Hydro fund, as I said. It is administered by Regional NSW as well, as part of the Restart NSW Regional Growth Fund. As I said before, the \$50 million that was allocated from that fund for internet services and for mobile black spots has been the source of funds to cover the rounds of co-funding and the investment in those 167 sites that I mentioned before. So they are separate funds, both administered by Regional NSW, but Telco Authority plays a role in the delivery of the black spot program and the internet services program, as part of the Connecting Country Communities Fund.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I do not really understand. You are responsible for the black spots?

**GREG WELLS:** As I said, Mr D'Adam, Regional NSW administers both of those funds. We work in partnership with Regional NSW, once priorities have been set, to implement those for the Telco Authority. So in the case of the Connecting Country Communities Fund, we have been working with Regional NSW to implement those 167 sites as part of the Mobile Black Spot Program, separate to—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But, ultimately, are you not also jointly responsible in terms of the expenditure of that commitment? I mean, that is—

**GREG WELLS:** No, that is not correct.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That is not correct?

**GREG WELLS:** No. As I said, we work with Regional NSW on particularly the implementation of those programs once they are set. So questions about the priorities of, the allocation of, how those funds are split up and managed is one for Regional.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Okay. I might turn back to Park'nPay. Can I ask about the contract that was entered into with Duncan Solutions without a tender process? This establishes an organisation called OneGov. Is that right?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, that is part of our team in Customer Service.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How many employees work on the Park'nPay project within OneGov?

**GREG WELLS:** I will take that on notice and come back to you, Mr D'Adam—not many.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are there other elements of OneGov's operations or is it exclusively involved in Park'nPay?

**GREG WELLS:** OneGov is a team within the Government Technology Platforms team. The Government Technology Platforms team also is responsible for managing those two data centres that I talked about before and for establishing and running a number of government platforms, whether they be call centre platforms, payment platforms—anything where there is an opportunity to establish a whole-of-government platform that makes it faster to implement and safer to do so. So the OneGov team is a small development team within the Government Technology Platforms team. I am happy to come back to you on notice with the size of the team that is working on the Park'nPay app.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Yes. In providing that information, could you also distinguish between contractors—so, effectively, positions even if they are not direct employees, but could you give us a breakdown of the direct employees and any contracting positions that operate within the ambit of that team?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, no trouble.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I ask about the privacy provisions in the contract with Duncan Solutions and DCS in relation to the Park'nPay app? They are different to the app's privacy provisions; why is that?

**GREG WELLS:** Sorry, can you clarify the app's privacy provision?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The privacy requirements under the app—you know, all apps, where there are users, there is a privacy policy that is associated with that. But the terms of the contract with Duncan Solutions have slightly different privacy arrangements. Can you perhaps elaborate on the differences and why?

**GREG WELLS:** I am not aware of any differences or the relationship that you are talking about between the contract with Duncan Solutions and with the actual application. I can say, though, that the application, before it went live—as we do for all applications—went through a rigorous privacy impact assessment and does so each time there is a major release. So every time we make a major change to the application we go back through a privacy impact assessment process. I can take on notice the arrangements within the Duncan contract as it relates to the application, to the extent I can. It is obviously a commercial-in-confidence contract, but I will see what I can provide on notice around the privacy clauses et cetera as they relate to the application.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the total budget for Park'nPay?

**GREG WELLS:** As we touched on this morning, there was an initial allocation of \$1.5 million from the budget in 2019-20, I believe, and then an additional \$1.8 million through the Digital Restart Fund so far.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I see. Is there an ongoing cost associated with Park'nPay?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the anticipated ongoing operational costs of Park'nPay?

**GREG WELLS:** I do not have that in front of me, but I will come back to you on notice, if that is okay.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is there an expectation that Park'nPay will be self-funding?

**GREG WELLS:** Not to my knowledge. But, again, I will come back on notice.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So there will be a recurrent taxpayer subsidy to maintain or continue to operate Park'nPay? Is that your understanding, Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. All product teams have an ongoing recurrent component, so I will come back to you, Mr D'Adam, with what is absorbed into Government Technology Platforms and what is the ongoing cost.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Yes. Perhaps you could elaborate on whether there is any funding source coming either from the users or from the councils, or from other asset holders within the infrastructure of Park'nPay. Are there any funding sources for any of those components?

**GREG WELLS:** No, definitely not in terms of the two you mentioned. No.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There are no revenue streams flowing from any of those?

**GREG WELLS:** No, there is not.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Okay. Can I ask about the probity report that you initiated, using OCM. What prompted that? Why did you feel the need to initiate a probity review?

**GREG WELLS:** We regularly, I think, Mr D'Adam, use probity advisers to make sure we have followed proper procurement processes. In this case, as you said, in particular because it was sole sourced we wanted to make sure we were within the guidelines, which—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So it was this issue of [inaudible]?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, which, as we have said before, confirmed that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I see. Mr Wells, were you final signoff on that?

**GREG WELLS:** Let me confirm that 100 per cent on notice, Mr D'Adam, but that is probably the case, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is it correct to say that there were two probity reviews?

**GREG WELLS:** Not that I am aware of, no.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It was just one probity review that has been undertaken?

**GREG WELLS:** To the best of my knowledge, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Given the Minister's answers this morning, is it fair to say that Customer Service was not aware of Beth Dominello working for OCM before engaging the firm to conduct the probity assessment?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Categorically no.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Would you have engaged the firm had you known that the Minister had a family member working there?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Well, I do not think even the Minister knew that he had a family member working there. The Minister does not have any role in who we appoint on probity matters. That would have been done independently by Mr Wells' team.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In terms of avoiding apprehended bias, would you perhaps, in retrospect, have chosen a different provider?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I think you are asking a question that is impossible to answer, given that he does not know that his cousin worked there and neither did we, and he does not play any role in appointing a probity adviser. If he had have done and he had have known we were appointing someone, I am sure he would have declared a conflict, but he did not know, as he said this morning, and neither did we.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Wells, I understand the contract with Duncan Solutions is coming to an end. It is a three-year contract, I think you said earlier today. Is that correct?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, correct.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It was signed in 2019; is that right?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, that is correct.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you confirm that it will now be subject to an open tender process?

**GREG WELLS:** There will be a number of options for us at that point, Mr D'Adam. I think we have still got about three or four months to run, so we are in the process of looking at our options now and we will—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you step us through the options that you are considering?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. One is, obviously, an open market process to look at that—again, if you recall, the component that we used for Duncan is around a payment gateway. There are also other options in terms of government payment gateways and a range of opportunities that way too, so we will assess those options. We have just started to do that and we will come back with the best way forward then.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** When are you likely to make that decision?

**GREG WELLS:** In the coming months.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Coming months. Can I ask about the information sharing requirements of the Park'nPay app? So what happens—presumably there is data being collected by the users of the app, including councils, information about council infrastructure. Where does that data sit, and who owns the data?

**GREG WELLS:** Again, Mr D'Adam, I really need to distinguish that we play no role in council procurement of parking infrastructure or solutions they use to provide availability of information or also for parking spaces or any of that. We play zero role in that. So whatever arrangements are in place with councils

currently to procure those services to store that data, that exists with councils at the moment. The arrangement we have is to consume that information or to get access to that information via this payment gateway to make sure we can expose to customers where parking spaces are and make a very simple payment process in place.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** There is a process of collecting and aggregating that data from the various users, the various councils, the individuals who are accessing the app?

**GREG WELLS:** As we talked about—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is that correct?

**GREG WELLS:** That is correct. That is, again, why we will not go through a privacy impact assessment, et cetera.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So who owns the data? Does Duncan Solutions own the data?

**GREG WELLS:** No, we own the data. As I said, Duncan Solutions were using it as a software solution, a payment gateway, through which where—it is one part; it is one very small part of the solution. So we own that data.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So Customer Service owns the data—is that right?

**GREG WELLS:** Correct.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Yes. Okay. I might pass to my colleague Mr Primrose now.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** If I could turn to issues of grants now—for instance, the Dine & Discover vouchers. How much is still left in the kitty for that?

**DAMON REES:** Dine & Discover—I have got the "redeemed"; I am just trying to find the difference. Maybe let me take that on notice. I can tell you how many vouchers have been redeemed if that is helpful, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. Can you tell me how many have been redeemed out of how many were issued.

**DAMON REES:** So 5.18 million customers have actually registered and have access to their vouchers.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**DAMON REES:** I believe 15.95 million vouchers have been actually used—so redeemed.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay.

**DAMON REES:** Of those, 9.75 million of those are Dine vouchers, and 6.2 million are Discover vouchers.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So it would be fair to say that about just over half of the vouchers have been redeemed?

**DAMON REES:** Yes, approximately half. I think between the initial program and the subsequent two vouchers, six vouchers per person—five million. So 30 million vouchers approximately would be out there, and about 16 million of those have been redeemed. That program is still open. What we have seen is redemption does of course move up and down a bit depending on overall climate and operating conditions and, of course, particularly COVID.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How long have people got to redeem them?

**DAMON REES:** Until 30 June this year.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is there any consideration to extending the program at this stage?

**DAMON REES:** I have not been part of any discussion to that effect.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. Now Parent NSW vouchers, my understanding is that when they were first provided they did not allow for foster parents to apply. Is that correct?

**DAMON REES:** I would need to take that on notice. I know there have been some initial challenges where a child is on a different Medicare card to their parent or their carer. I know those issues have been worked through, but I would need to take the details on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Who runs this in your agency? I do not need to know the person, but who is the senior officer who is responsible?



**DAMON REES:** The delivery of the Parent vouchers is a collaboration between Service NSW and the Department of Education. So Service NSW delivers those vouchers. We would be working with the Department of Education and others around appropriate eligibility.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. Well, I would like to ask some questions on it, but it is difficult if no-one at the table knows about an issue like foster—

**DAMON REES:** It depends on the specifics of your questions.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Well, my question here is eligibility. My understanding is that foster children have, as you say, their own Medicare card and therefore initially were not eligible.

**DAMON REES:** The eligibility will be spelt out on the website, and we can provide a specific link to the content there. I think that the challenge experienced with some children in foster care was not a question of eligibility but the way that it had been implemented by the program and the dependency or the assumption that was made about the applicant being on the same Medicare card as the child.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And ergo eligibility, yes. Has that now been fixed?

**DAMON REES:** I will take that on notice. I am not 100 per cent certain.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Could you also then, if no-one there knows, if it has not been fixed how long before it is fixed?

**DAMON REES:** We will confirm.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. Another question about Parent NSW vouchers: Are families along the border where they live interstate but send their children to New South Wales schools eligible for the program?

**DAMON REES:** I would need to take that question on notice, but I will confirm.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So you do not have a briefing on it?

**DAMON REES:** We operate a lot of programs. I am not across the eligibility of every last one. That eligibility will be made clear on the website, but I am happy to take the question on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. This is very difficult asking questions if people do not know the details of their programs. Another one you probably do not know anything about then: Are families along the border who live in New South Wales but send their children to interstate schools eligible for the program? Maybe you want to take that on notice too, please.

**DAMON REES:** I think the scenario is the same as the previous question, but I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Well, the scenario is different but it would be worthwhile finding out about eligibility, please. Okay. The export assistance grant—can you tell me its value, please? The total allocation.

**DAMON REES:** Sorry, you just need to bear with me. Okay. So the export assistance grant, we have made payments of \$9.3 million for that program.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Out of? What was the allocation?

**DAMON REES:** In terms of the overall Treasury allocation for that program?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, please.

**DAMON REES:** I would need to consult with Treasury and take that on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. I have been advised that the allocation was about \$28.1 million, which equates to just over 10 per cent. Can you tell me over what period this grant is actually running?

**DAMON REES:** I believe that grant was enabled on 30 August 2020 and, as I understand it, that grant is still open.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When does it finish?

**DAMON REES:** I will need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. So there is no-one there who can tell me about what is happening with the program that from your figures so far looks as though it has spent only about 10 per cent?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I do not have any information different to Mr Rees.



**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I think someone there may.

**DAMON REES:** My apologies. The advice I have got here is that the applications for that program are now closed. So it was opened in August 2020, but applications are now closed.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay.

**DAMON REES:** There were 3,691 applications received for that \$9.37 million of payments.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is there a total allocation on that form that was available?

**DAMON REES:** This does not provide an indication of the total budget that Treasury would have allocated for that, so we will take that on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Does it also give an approval rate for the applications received?

**DAMON REES:** No, it does not.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can you please advise or take on notice what the approval rate was out of the total number of applications? Was 3,691 the total of applications received or the total of those approved?

**DAMON REES:** The information I have here indicates that it is the total applications received, but we will clarify that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can you clarify how many were actually approved? There is also a test and isolate payment. Can you tell me what that is available for?

**DAMON REES:** Test and isolate was a payment that was introduced to provide financial support for customers that needed to self-isolate whilst waiting for the results of their, at the time, PCR COVID tests. So it was a recognition that not everybody had access to leave provisions and not everyone had access to financial certainty through that period. There was a concern that that was creating an impediment to people effectively self-isolating and the test and isolate payment was designed to provide that financial support to enable that isolation to occur.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So it was aimed to provide speedy and quick support?

**DAMON REES:** That is correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When did it close?

**DAMON REES:** I believe it closed earlier this year but I will take the specific date on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Given that it was designed to provide speedy and rapid support, as you said, my understanding is that 11,697 applications are still unprocessed. Is that correct?

**DAMON REES:** No, I do not think that is the case. I think that was a bit to Mr D'Adam's questions earlier today. There is a range of reasons why applications are not fulfilled, including applications that have indicators of fraud. But as far as I am aware, all eligible applications for test and isolate payments have been fulfilled.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So all applications have been processed?

**DAMON REES:** All eligible applications, as far as I am aware.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Presumably it means that all applications have been processed and some have been declined. That is what you saying?

**DAMON REES:** We have applications that will sit in a full triage process across different grant programs, which takes us to some of the earlier conversation. That can take some time to analyse and understand whether an application is legitimate or not.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is any of this information available on your dashboard—the numbers we are talking about?

**DAMON REES:** So the Service NSW website has a performance dashboard that provides information around a range of grant programs.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is the information we have been talking about available on the dashboard?

**DAMON REES:** A lot of the information that we have been talking about will be available there, yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Are there any test and isolate applications that still remain unprocessed?

**DAMON REES:** Language is important here. I think, from a customer's perspective, if their application has not been fulfilled—if it is part of our fraud triage process, then we would still be working through and trying to determine whether that application is fraudulent or whether it should be paid.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When do you expect that that will be finalised?

**DAMON REES:** I would need to take on notice specifically for test and isolate, but we certainly do work through that analysis as quickly as we can.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So there is no date?

**DAMON REES:** I will take the date on notice, Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I understand there is about \$8 million left in the account. Is that going to be enough to cover any applications that are now approved?

**DAMON REES:** For the test and isolate program?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**DAMON REES:** I believe so. We are not expecting any sort of significant numbers of legitimate applications still requiring payment.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Therefore, you would be able to tell me—and please feel free to take it on notice because I suspect you may have to—the percentage of applications that have been deemed to be fraudulent.

**DAMON REES:** We could. We will take that on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I can take that as a matter in progress.

**DAMON REES:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can I ask you why, despite the program being closed—I will talk about the accommodation and support grant, okay? When did it close?

**EMMA HOGAN:** On 30 November, I believe.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How many applications still remain unprocessed?

**DAMON REES:** We have the information on the total applications, of course. I would need to confirm for you on notice the number still outstanding and the nature of them.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Were these applications also for a matter that required speedy resolution?

**DAMON REES:** I think with any of our programs where we are providing support like this, from a customer's perspective that support is needed quickly. As we have been discussing, the information that has been referenced on the website talks about the total applications and it talks about the applications paid. But there is a range of contributors to the difference between those numbers and I think that is something we will look to see whether we can provide greater transparency on that through the website. Certainly for these closed programs, the majority of that difference will be accounted for by applications that have either been declined or are still under some form of fraud-related assessment.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** But you would have to agree that from 30 November last year and we are now in March of this year, for a program established to provide speedy support and assistance, it is a bit complicated that they are still being assessed. Do you agree with that?

**DAMON REES:** The assessment of fraud is a complicated task; it does take some time.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So it is in process.

**DAMON REES:** For those items that are in fraud triage, that is correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How long does the process take for most of these things? I am picking up a pattern here that this is taking many, many months for you to work your way through. What is the delay? I am not attributing blame here; I am just trying to get an understanding. The Minister makes an announcement, the Premier makes an announcement, people say, "This is available", people put in their forms and then we are

finding large numbers of them are held up for many, many months. The only reason I am being given is, "Oh, because they could be trying to defraud us."

**DAMON REES:** I think we will provide greater transparency through notice. I do not believe a large number of complete and legitimate applications across these programs are held up. The speed of assessment and payment for these programs is typically very, very good. Many of our programs will be assessing complete and valid applications within a matter of days and paying within a matter of days subsequent to that. The majority of applications that have been applied for but not approved will be accounted for by applications that were declined or applications that are under full triage.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So having 11,697 applications for the test and isolate payment still unprocessed is not being tardy?

**DAMON REES:** Again, a portion of that number will be applications that were processed but were declined and will not be paid, and a portion of that will be cases that are suspected to be fraud.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** On average, how many or what percentage of these programs in the past have been found to be fraudulent?

**DAMON REES:** It depends program by program. I think the highest level of attempted fraud that we have seen across programs can sit up at around 20 per cent, and we have seen other programs where that rate is much lower. So it does very much vary on the specifics of the program.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So let's say I had the accommodation support grant, which closed on 30 November. There is \$11.2 million left, which is half the total value of the pot of money. That closed in November. Would you expect about 20 per cent to be fraudulent?

**DAMON REES:** The accommodation support program is an example where we did see a very high level of attempted fraud on that program. We had just over 1,000 applications which were deemed attempted fraud that was prevented, that is about 20 per cent of the total applications for that program. It is an example where the level of suspected fraud that was paid out sat much lower, so 0.8 per cent for that program.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay, 0.8 per cent suspected fraud. Looking at the COVID-19 micro-business grant, when did it close?

**DAMON REES:** Applications for the micro grant closed on 18 October 2021.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** On 18 October?

**DAMON REES:** For new applications. You may recall the micro grant program had an ongoing recurring payment element to it.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**DAMON REES:** Payments went through to 30 November.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay, but they closed on 18 October.

**DAMON REES:** For new applications.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes. How many applications are still unprocessed?

**DAMON REES:** For the micro-grant program, if we exclude fraud triage and those other categories, there are to my knowledge less than 1,000 customers where we are still working through some detail relating to their payment. For some of those that might be relating to a specific recurring payment. For others it might be relating to their initial eligibility. A significant portion of those are waiting on customers to evidence further documentation around their eligibility for the program.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So you are saying about 1,000?

**DAMON REES:** Less than 1,000, the majority of which are waiting for the customer to demonstrate eligibility.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The advice that has been suggested to us is that that figure is closer to 20,000, but you are confirming that it is less than 1,000.

**DAMON REES:** That is correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What is the total funding that was available for that scheme?

**DAMON REES:** I can tell you the total that we have paid. I would need to take on notice the total allocation that Treasury made for the program. The total amount paid for that program is \$772 million.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Looking at JobSaver, how many applications remain unprocessed?

**DAMON REES:** I think we may have covered this in the morning session. We have two applications that are incomplete, so we are waiting for the customer to provide additional information. There are six applications that are currently with us for manual assessment and there is a further 42 where there is some element to be worked through typically with the customer.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When did they close?

**DAMON REES:** JobSaver closed on 18 October 2021 and, in line with the micro grants, the payments went through to 30 November.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can you tell me the total pot, and again you may wish to take it on notice. How much money was allocated and how much money has been expended, please?

**DAMON REES:** The total paid was \$7.14 billion for JobSaver. I will take on notice the total allocation from Treasury.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have seen letters from small business owners who have received debt recovery notices for amounts as high as \$100,000. They are indicating that they have not committed fraud but are now being issued with debt recovery notices with a 14-day period to return the funds. Can you tell me the process you go through to determine whether or not a small business has actually committed fraud?

**DAMON REES:** Debt recovery does not have to be specifically relating to fraud, so in some cases a customer's eligibility for the program will come into question. In some cases, for JobSaver particularly, customers have inadvertently provided incorrect information in their application which resulted in a higher level of payment than they were eligible for. For example, instead of providing an amount that represented their payroll for a month, they may have provided it for a week. Revenue NSW takes the lead on recovery of those funds for New South Wales, so the questions around the specifics of their approach would be best directed to Revenue NSW.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You would not be therefore aware of the number of debt recovery notices that have been issued to businesses?

**DAMON REES:** I do not believe I have that information to hand, no.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Are you saying that because you are not involved or because another agency is?

**DAMON REES:** We certainly do work very closely with Revenue NSW. Both organisations are very conscious of the customers that we are trying to impact and very conscious of the impact that debt recovery can have on customers that have received funds incorrectly from Government.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When you say "incorrectly", how many of these errors are as a consequence of inappropriate or incorrect advice from your agency?

**DAMON REES:** I do not quite understand the question.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** How often is it the case that you are wrong in terms of the information you have provided to your customer?

**DAMON REES:** The assessment and payment of customers—the approach is tailored program by program. In some programs there will be a greater level of verification of the information that customers have provided. In other programs there will be a lower level of verification. In all cases there is a responsibility and a reliance on customers to provide accurate information in those applications.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is there a responsibility for your agency to provide correct information to the customer when they are preparing their application?

**DAMON REES:** Yes, I believe so.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can you please take on notice as per my earlier question about the total number of debt recovery notices that have been issued to businesses, say in the last financial year to date, and also take on notice what is the largest debt in terms of monetary value that has been sought to be recovered?

**DAMON REES:** Yes, I will take both of those on notice. In terms of the largest debt, that will likely relate to the JobSaver program. It was targeted at larger businesses and therefore the payments over time were of a greater magnitude than the other programs, but we will come back with the specifics.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That is all on that point. My colleague Mr D'Adam may have other matters.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** At the last estimates hearing in October you advised that there were 137,000 drivers awaiting driver test appointments. How many are currently still awaiting a driving test?

**DAMON REES:** It is very difficult to calculate the number of people who are awaiting a driver test, just based on the way that that system works. The number you are referring to—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Why is that, Mr Rees? Can you explain why? Surely there is a booking process, there is a data set?

**DAMON REES:** There is.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You must have real time data on that.

**DAMON REES:** There are some limitations around the booking process, so booking slots are opened up a certain number of weeks in advance, so it gives you a picture of demand. But I do not think it would be fair for me to say that it gives you an accurate and full picture. The number you are referring to—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It would be the lower figure, would it not? The figure that you would be able to assess from the bookings would be a conservative estimate in terms of the total number of people waiting. Is that not correct, Mr Rees?

**DAMON REES:** Yes, so I believe the figure you are referring to would be the number of estimated driver tests that we believe would have taken place through that period where we were unable to offer driver tests due to COVID safety. Driver testing, as everyone understands, is an incredibly important service for people and for communities; we appreciate that, so we have been working incredibly hard to rebook those tests. I think driver testing is often one of those unsung parts of the front line.

Our average wait time varies across service centres, but we believe on average that looks like approximately 25 days at the moment. All of those customers who had bookings with us that had to be cancelled due to COVID restrictions, they have all been contacted and had the opportunity to rebook and retake their tests. We have hired 40 new driver testers into the network; we have another 30 who are being hired at the moment. Our driver testers currently do what we call "super Saturdays". They work an extra Saturday each month at about a dozen different locations across New South Wales. We are looking at whether we can bring that back to fortnightly or, ideally, weekly in some communities where there is greater demand.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Coming back to my original question, you are not in a position to provide a figure in terms of that backlog? You were able to make a reasonable assessment back in October of how many were waiting. Surely you know how many are no longer waiting, in addition to knowing what the backlog is?

**DAMON REES:** From a customer's perspective, what matters is how quickly they can access a test. I think the truest reflection of the customer experience in this space is that average waiting time for a booking, which we believe—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That might be the case, Mr Rees, but I am seeking some hard data here. You were able to provide it in October. Why is it that you cannot provide the updated figure now?

**DAMON REES:** Because we are talking about two different types of figures, Mr D'Adam. The figure we discussed in October was a view of the volume of driver tests that would have taken place through that period where we had restrictions in place. Demand for driving tests moves around. We do not have an equivalent figure that we would describe as a backlog now.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the average wait time? Did you say it was 25 days? Is that correct?

**DAMON REES:** It is different community to community, but 25 days is our estimated average across the network at the moment.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the range? What is your highest wait time and what is your lowest wait time?

**DAMON REES:** I would need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What about for motorcycle riders and their L tests? Can you hazard a guess in terms of how many of those are currently waiting for a booking?



**DAMON REES:** I would need to take the question on notice, Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is it fair to say that you have cleared the testing backlog?

**DAMON REES:** What it would be fair to say is that everybody who had previously booked a test that was cancelled due to COVID has had the opportunity to retake that test. We have added capacity, recognising that there is pent-up demand for testing. That average wait time for people to be able to book tests is coming down. We have a mechanism in place to expedite and prioritise any hardship-based requirements. We are opening an additional testing centre in St Marys and putting in additional driver testing and a specific mobile service centre into the network. We will move our capacity around based on where our customer demand and need is. The experience is getting better, but we are not satisfied with where it is. We would like to keep reducing that wait time for customers.

**DAMON REES:** Are you telling me you have no way of assessing what the actual demand for testing is? You cannot make an estimate of what you need and whether you have the capacity to meet that need at any one time, surely?

**DAMON REES:** We have forecasts and assumptions of driver testing demand. What I am saying is it is not possible to get a specific and scientific number of the current backlog based on the dynamics of the way the booking system works and based on the way that driver testing obligations and demand fall on our customer base.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How do you calculate your staffing then? How do you know how many additional driver testers to engage if you are not able to estimate the demand in any meaningful way? It seems inexplicable.

**DAMON REES:** Mr D'Adam, if I could finish. Driver testing has been operating for a long time. We have mature ways of forecasting and assuming demand. What is different about last year is the pause on driver testing, so it does not translate neatly into a crisp number that represents an accurate backlog. What is far more meaningful is to focus on the lead time that it takes for people to book that driver test, to focus on that at a community level and to keep bringing our resources and applying our strategies to bring that lead time back down. That current average of 25 days—our goal is to bring that back to 10 days as quickly as possible for our customers.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the average wait time for a motorcyclist test?

**DAMON REES:** I would need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you also provide on notice the range, the highest and lowest wait times in the system?

**DAMON REES:** I will.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I think you said you have hired 50 additional driver testers?

**DAMON REES:** We have had 40 additional driver testers start; we have another 30 that we are hiring on top of that. Those 40 bring us to about 300 driver testers in total across the network at the moment.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** When were they hired?

**DAMON REES:** They have been hired progressively over the last three or four months.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is your expectation in terms of the impact of that on the overall wait times? Once those 70-odd drivers are engaged, what do you expect the impact will be on wait times?

**DAMON REES:** It is material. Each driver tester will get through a number of tests each day. That is hundreds of extra tests of capacity.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You must have an estimate, Mr Rees? You must have an estimate, surely. That is the key benchmark, isn't it? That is the metric that you are working towards in terms of reducing the wait time. You must have a goal. What do you think is reasonable in terms of wait time and how many driver testers will it take to get to that point?

**DAMON REES:** Our goal is to enable customers to book driver tests within two weeks. That is the historical grade of service that we aim for in this space. We can see that the 40 driver testers that we have brought on and the 30 more add a certain amount of capacity. As I said, that—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Fourteen days, are you saying?

**DAMON REES:** The goal is—



**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Fourteen business days or 14 calendar days?

**DAMON REES:** I will need to clarify whether it is 10 or 14, to your point. But, as I said, the delays for obtaining a driver test look quite different from community to community. We have some communities where driver tests could be accessed quite quickly; we have other communities where that lead time can be longer. We will keep redirecting our workforce to where that demand is required.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Was that the key driver in terms of the locational decision for St Marys?

**DAMON REES:** It was.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In terms of the service centres that will be alleviated by getting St Marys online, what will be the impact there in terms of the estimated wait time? Will it drop below that 14 days?

**DAMON REES:** I do not think St Marys on its own is going to get us there. We have a mobile driver testing centre that is going to focus on Greater Sydney, including the Central Coast as well. Those super Saturdays that I mentioned are important levers that we have. We run them in over a dozen centres. I think if we can bring the frequency of those from monthly down to fortnightly in certain communities, it is the combination of these mechanisms that will enable us to reach greater service across the State.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You are not prepared to commit to a specific number in terms of reducing the wait time?

**DAMON REES:** I am not trying to be unhelpful, Mr D'Adam. We do have forecasts for what normal demand looks like. We do have a view as to the degree to which we have done the catch-up on those tests that should have taken place or would have taken place last year. But there are a lot of variables that continue to move our demand. The truest measure that we have really is that lead time for booking. It does not matter whether we have a big demand or a small demand, a big backlog or a small backlog; it is down to, "Can I access a booking in a reasonable time frame?" That is the ultimate measure that we work to.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How many extra terminals have been put on in terms of written tests? Have you supplemented the capacity in terms of the test component?

**DAMON REES:** Do you mean the driver knowledge testing?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The knowledge test, yes, the terminals to conduct the Driver Knowledge Test.

**DAMON REES:** I will take it on notice. I am not aware that we have put additional terminals in specifically. We are getting very, very high utilisation of our driver knowledge testing across the network but at the moment I believe that we are keeping up with demand overall. What I would say is that we have an ongoing program that refreshes service centres over time. If a service centre is established in a given year we will revisit that service centre at some point. Quite often, as part of that exercise, we are adjusting the level of driver knowledge testing capability we have there. We are adjusting the level of digital kiosks that we have there, for example. There is a continuous right-sizing to adapt to community demand that is an ongoing part of our maintenance of the network.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I ask about those additional driver testers? Are they all full-time positions?

**DAMON REES:** I will need to take that on notice. We have part-time driver testers as well. I will confirm.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** You have claimed 40, so is that 40 FTE or is that 40 people?

**DAMON REES:** I will confirm on notice.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** When will the additional 30 be all on board? When do you anticipate that to occur?

**DAMON REES:** We would like them on board as quickly as we can get them. There is a rigorous process of testing, training and assessment before driver testers are able and allowed to test customers. That creates some lead time there. I would certainly hope that we would have those people on board with us over the coming months.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I think maybe you might have mentioned this, but the number of tests per additional driver tester, how many was that? Each driver tester can be expected to complete how many in a week?

**DAMON REES:** Let me take that question on notice.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Okay. Perhaps on notice you might also provide us with the estimate of the additional weekly testing capacity—how many additional tests you think you are going to be able to undertake with the additional testers coming online. When is the St Marys centre going to be opened?

**DAMON REES:** We are aiming for July this year, both for the St Marys centre and that driver testing-specific mobile service centre.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** The start of July or the end of July?

**DAMON REES:** At this point we are not that precise. We will confirm closer to the time.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How many jobs are being created by that facility?

**DAMON REES:** I would expect that St Marys will be staffed by our overall driver-testing workforce: the 300 driver testers that we have now and the 30 additional driver testers we are getting. That workforce will work across that new centre.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Right, I see. Some of the workforce for the new hub are coming from other centres, are they?

**DAMON REES:** I suspect it will be a combination of our new hires and people reallocating from other centres.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** On notice, can you provide the detail of how many staff you expect to be transferred to the St Marys centre and which centres they are coming from?

**DAMON REES:** We can, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Okay, thank you. These St Marys jobs, they will be a combination of full time and part time?

**DAMON REES:** I would expect so. We manage driver testing as an overall workforce and manage demand across the State. You could imagine the resourcing for a particular site is very dynamic and changes based on the demands of communities.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps on notice you can provide the expected breakdown—full time, part time—of the staff and the classification for the new St Marys testing hub?

**DAMON REES:** Will do.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** As of the start date. Thank you. I have got one other question. Ms Hogan, did you undertake any pre-estimates preparation time? Was there an exercise of preparing for estimates?

**EMMA HOGAN:** We always prepare for estimates, yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What does that involve?

**EMMA HOGAN:** It involves making sure we have got all the briefing notes we think that we will need. We each take time to read those briefing notes and prepare as best we can for what we think the Committee might ask us.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How many staff are involved in the preparation for estimates?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Everyone who is sitting around the table today would do their preparation and there would be some support for each of those people in compiling and helping us prepare the notes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do you do rehearsals?

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** Mate, this is getting a bit weird.

**The CHAIR:** Maybe for some context, there were some previous estimates hearings in Education where the comment was made that they rehearsed for four days. That is where—

**EMMA HOGAN:** Oh right.

**The CHAIR:** To help you understand where the line of questioning is coming from and to quell the hysteria from Mr Martin—

**The Hon. TAYLOR MARTIN:** That is actually helpful because I thought it was getting a bit weird.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Sometimes we will rehearse. We do what we think it takes to prepare appropriately to respect the Committee's time.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you. I might pass on to my colleague now.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** We might have more questions about this later, but I would just like to briefly ask again about some aspects of the Accellion data breach. When did Transport discover about the Accellion attack?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Mr Wells, do you have the dates there?

**GREG WELLS:** To answer the earlier question, Mr Primrose, we were informed on 21 January 2021. Subsequently Transport determined that the breach had occurred I think on Christmas Day the year before—25 December 2020.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Do you know when Transport actually found out?

**GREG WELLS:** I will take that on notice. I think also these were provided as supplementary questions last time, too, but let me try to access those so we can go through that this afternoon as well.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. While you are doing that, can you also find out when Health actually discovered the Accellion attack?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, I will do my best to get that this afternoon. If not, we will provide that again on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Let us go through a couple of others, then. It is my understanding—having gone through that material because I still do not know when they actually found out, but when did each of those agencies tell Cyber Security NSW about the attack?

**GREG WELLS:** Transport, as I just mentioned, informed us on 21 January.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**GREG WELLS:** As I said, I will confirm for Health this afternoon, if I can, or provide that on notice.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Okay. How long is your best estimate after these agencies found out was it that they advised Cyber Security NSW there had been a major—

**GREG WELLS:** It was as fast as possible. You would understand that one of the tradecraft of these breaches and these attacks is for people to hide their tracks. The organisations taking advantage of that information were trying to hide their tracks. Again, we will get this information in terms of time line, but that was provided I think in supplementary questions. We will try to track that down right now. The Accellion FTA incident, as the Minister said this morning, was a global breach that impacted thousands of organisations. It is a vulnerability that cybercriminals took advantage of. It is one that Cyber Security NSW, in our role across the sector, took a role in coordinating a response to in close collaboration with police. In fact, that was why we established Strike Force Martine with—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I understand what you are saying. What I am trying to understand is not that some nefarious body—if some nefarious person tried to break into my house and I was not aware of it, okay, fair enough. But in this case I am trying to become aware of when I actually phoned the police, or when I phoned the fire brigade. I would suspect that if there was a fire in my neighbour's place or my place I would phone the fire brigade quite quickly. My questions do not relate to when it happened; it is when the agency found out about it and when they informed you guys.

**GREG WELLS:** We will try to get that on notice if we cannot get it this afternoon.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** But you would agree that it would be reasonably important if you found that you had been subject to a major attack that you would let the agency that is responsible for responding to that know pretty pronto, would you not?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Were the New South Wales police made aware?

**GREG WELLS:** As I said, we work very closely with the cybercrime squad in New South Wales police, and, as I said, in this instance, Strike Force Martine was set up to coordinate the response to the Accellion breach. In fact, all major cyber incidents are responded to in a triparted degree arrangement that maybe Ms Hogan would like to speak to.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes. I chaired the crisis response at that time. The Accellion breach was probably handled two ways. We get notified by, in this instance, the organisation that owns the Accellion software, if you like, that there has been a breach so we all know to look for it. We coordinate across the sector, "Hey, we have been identified of a breach or a potential breach. Please, for all of you that have this particular type of software, can you please check?" At the same time, agencies are running their own checks all the time and may come to us. In that particular instance it was two-way. As soon as we understood the potential gravity of it and that there was more than one agency that was impacted—as you note there, Transport and Health—we convened a cyber crisis committee of sorts, which the Commissioner of Resilience, at the time Deputy Commissioner Mal Lanyon from New South Wales police and I chaired over the course that it needed to be managed as far as the cyber component of it went. Then, in terms of any data that was taken and the way in which that needed to be processed, that was taken hold of by each agency independently.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** When were the police made aware?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I would have to come back to you with the date, but they were made aware that the Accellion—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Do you have a briefing note on this? Please. I am happy to wait.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes, I do have a briefing note.

**GREG WELLS:** We do and we will find it.

**EMMA HOGAN:** We were just questioned about this last time so I have not brought the dates with me this time. I apologise. I will get those for you. To say the police would have been advised as soon as we were, as I mentioned before, we would have, as Cyber Security NSW, reached out to the police also as an agency to say, "There has been a breach. Do you have Accellion as part of your technology kit?" They would have been dealing with it operationally and we would have also advised them of the potential breach and then they would have been called to the crisis committee that I chair. They knew as soon as practicable at the time of the incident. I just do not have the exact date for you.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** As soon as practicable would be within a day?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. Let us confirm. As we said, we provided all this last time, but we will access that note.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** It would be correct to say that Health would inform you as soon as they became aware. Is that right?

**EMMA HOGAN:** That would be correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And Transport, as soon as they became aware, would inform you?

**EMMA HOGAN:** That is correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And within a day you would inform the police?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You will be able to confirm those dates?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes, we will come back to you on those.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I appreciate that. If a department discovers a cyber attack, who exactly are they meant to report it to? To you or to the police?

**EMMA HOGAN:** They report it up through their own mechanisms through their chief information security officer, or their CISO as they are called, and they would also report it through to Cyber Security NSW. Not every cyber breach gets escalated to the police. It would depend on what the attack was like and what the potential ramifications of that attack were. Not every single incident would be appropriate to be referred to the police.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I would really appreciate those dates and times.

**EMMA HOGAN:** No problem.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** What actually happened to this information? I know there is the mysterious dark web. Did the information that was stolen appear on the dark web?

**GREG WELLS:** We can confirm that the information was accessed by cybercriminals, yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** That is a yes.

**GREG WELLS:** We can confirm it was breached, yes.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Did Transport, police or your agency ever access the full data collection released on the web?

**GREG WELLS:** As we explained before, Cyber Security NSW's role is, in a significant incident like this was, to coordinate response, to work with police, to make sure the protocols are in place for recovery, to start to think about the remediation effort, and that is a key role we play as well. But in terms of the actual response from the data that was breached, again, this is information owned by Transport, owned by Health, owned by other agencies. It is their response in terms of how they deal with that process in terms of the notifications you talked about, et cetera. Again, that would be a question for Transport.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** But how do you know what was stolen?

**GREG WELLS:** There is a range of ways we can work that out, mostly via forensics and logs that we can look at in terms of the systems and information that those agencies advised us was information that was exfiltrated.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Did you look at those forensics and logs to see what information was stolen?

**GREG WELLS:** We were, as part of that response, working closely with those agencies.

**EMMA HOGAN:** But it is ultimately Transport's responsibility to have analysed those logs, to see what was stolen and to deal with any data breaches or privacy breaches accordingly.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I just want to get crystal clear then the timing of this. I think you said Transport advised you on 21 January.

**GREG WELLS:** Correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I think Health around 13 January.

**GREG WELLS:** Let us confirm that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Please. Then within a day or so, they advised you and then within a day or so you advised the New South Wales police. Is that correct?

**GREG WELLS:** I think we are saying Transport advised us on 21 January, so not a day from then. That is when they advised us. We will confirm when Health advised us. I think that is accurate—13 January. Then we can confirm the interaction with New South Wales police but, as the secretary said, that would have been very rapid.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Were any other agencies involved in this whole process? State agencies I am happy with.

**GREG WELLS:** Let me take that on notice. The Accellion product was used across a number of government agencies, but let me confirm to the extent that was an impact. I should also confirm that the Accellion FTA product is not used across government any longer.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I will start by asking Mr Wells, what is the essential eight?

**GREG WELLS:** Thanks, Mr D'Adam. The essential eight are technical controls that agencies put in place to mitigate cybersecurity attacks. They are eight of 37 controls that the ACSC—the Australian Cyber Security Centre—would speak about as being the things that should be put in place. Those essential eight are one component of the New South Wales cybersecurity policy. There are 25 mandatory requirements that agencies all comply with, report against and have been doing so for three years—this year the fourth. The essential eight are technical controls, which is really important because technical controls are one component of avoiding cybersecurity risks, but there are a number of others in terms of response and remediation. Specifically, the essential eight go to good things like patching applications, having backups, putting in place technical safeguards that will protect systems.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the maturity level? Is that the correct way to characterise it in the application of the essential eight? There are various maturity levels, are there not, Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** The essential eight's maturity levels are tracked against four levels—zero to three—and, you are right, different agencies have different maturity levels against each of those. What is important and the way that the policy works is that agencies assess their risk, identify where they sit in terms of the risk they want to target against each of those controls, and that is what the cybersecurity reservation within the Digital Restart Fund is for. It is to target risk levels and the maturity they want to build to.

**The CHAIR:** I will stop proceedings for our afternoon break.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Chair, can I just ask a question?

**The CHAIR:** You can.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Sorry. In previous committees we have been able to dismiss, particularly, independents if they are not going to be asked a question today. Would you like everybody to remain or are we able to ask the Committee whether they would have any questions for Ms Tydd, Ms Gavel or Ms Livingstone?

**The CHAIR:** I would be looking to the Opposition to give an indication as to whether they have questions for them.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am asking a broad range of questions. I am just not sure who may—

**EMMA HOGAN:** Okay.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am not being funny about it.

**EMMA HOGAN:** No, that is okay.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I just do not know who would have the information, sorry.

**The CHAIR:** Any other comments?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I was going to say, given that we are on a break, we might give some consideration to that and come back after the break and advise if there are any witnesses that we can dismiss.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Thank you. We appreciate it.

**(Short adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** I indicate that we will not be able to release anyone at this point because the questions are varied. Mr Primrose has indicated that there probably will not be a huge number of questions left.

**EMMA HOGAN:** No problem. Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** We will go back to Mr D'Adam.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I think we were talking about the maturity level, Mr Wells. We had some questions about that. Mr Wells, can you advise me of which agencies are at Maturity Level One?

**GREG WELLS:** You would understand that we are not going to publicly report on maturity levels of agencies' cybersecurity maturity. We are—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Perhaps you might be able to indicate how many agencies are at Maturity Level One?

**GREG WELLS:** Again, that is something, Mr D'Adam, that we are not going to publicly report on. That is really consistent with advice we have had from the Australian Cyber Security Centre, in terms of the number of incidents, the maturity of organisations and any of that sort of information. As you would understand, it is not something we would want to be assisting people that would want to do us harm any assistance with.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Sure. The Auditor-General has suggested that there is significant improvement that is required in terms of cyber security resilience. Do you think Cyber Security NSW is doing an effective job?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. Can I start by saying that I am very proud of what Cyber Security NSW has achieved. I think it has and is building one of the strongest capabilities in cybersecurity across any New South Wales government agency and probably the region. I can genuinely say, Mr D'Adam, that if it was not for the agency's resilience, the skills they have built up and the way that Cyber Security NSW coordinates incidents, shares threat advice, conducts training, does vulnerability scanning across the sector, there would have been a lot more incidents and a lot more impact to New South Wales customers. So I reject that it is not being effective, or whatever words you used. I think it has made a big impact. I think the other thing is, no organisation—public, private, not for profit—can completely mitigate cyber risks. It is a constant threat that is evolving and increasing



all the time, so it is never set and forget. Cyber Security NSW, and we in clusters, are all aware of that and we are constantly looking to mitigate the risks that keep emerging.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is it correct that Mr Goodwin advised the upper House inquiry into cybersecurity that \$240 million was being invested to improve culture amongst departments and to address the cybersecurity resilience question? Is that correct?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. So under the Digital Restart Fund, as I mentioned earlier, there is an allocation, a reservation, that has been specifically targeted at cybersecurity uplift. In the first round of Digital Restart investment, \$240 million was reserved for cybersecurity uplift across clusters. That uplift, as I said before, targets technical controls, business controls, so agencies are prepared, can respond and recover—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How long ago was that—sorry, I will let you finish.

**GREG WELLS:** Sure. That was part of the \$1.6 billion investment in 2019-20, and then a further \$75 million has been allocated for small and independent agencies in the last round of the Digital Restart Fund. So a total of \$315 million is reserved for cybersecurity specifically.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How much of that has been spent already?

**GREG WELLS:** That I can get you on notice, if I do not have it in front of me. I will come back on notice, if I cannot get that this afternoon.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What kind of projects does that money go to? Can you give us some detail about what that looks like?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes. So we have talked about the Essential 8. Again, each cluster assesses their maturity, they target technical controls. I know we have talked about before. That is looking at patching, it is looking at user application hardening, configuring, macros, doing backups et cetera. But as you pointed out, it goes a lot further than technical maturity. Agencies need to have a response plan, they need to have practised that plan, they need to report against all the elements in the policy, they need to conduct awareness training for staff. So there is a range of, you know, mitigations in those matters—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** They sound like recurrent obligations, Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** Absolutely, this will be an ongoing part of running business and running government. What the Digital Restart Fund and the cybersecurity reservation within it has specifically done is target a faster uplift, if you like, a once-off uplift into this space.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Are you satisfied that you are on track to address the recommendations of the Auditor-General in the financial audit of 2021?

**GREG WELLS:** So in terms of the Audit Office's recommendations, first of all, I would just say we really do welcome that report. It looks specifically at our policy and it is one, as I said, we have had in place for three years, so one we really wanted feedback on and one that we have ourselves sought independent advice on to review that policy, and we have just completed that work. So between the Audit Office recommendations and the independent review we have had of the policy, it has recommended some changes that we do think are going to strengthen the policy and strengthen our resilience. We are in the process of implementing a range of those recommendations this year, in this year's version of the report. They are things like reporting on target maturity levels—a little bit to your question earlier on about clarifying some wordings—and adopting the latest version of the Essential 8. Because, as you would appreciate, the Essential 8 changes over time. So all of those components are in the process of being implemented for this year's policy and then there are some bigger and bigger recommendations that we are planning for implementation from next year as well. So, yes, we welcome the report. They are good recommendations and we are in the process of implementing them.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Mr D'Adam—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** How would the action be taken—sorry, Ms Hogan?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I just wanted to add that I think it is important to note that Cyber Security NSW is an agency that acts to provide advice and commonality across all clusters, but each cluster is responsible for driving its own cybersecurity within its own remit. We do work in partnership on various issues, but we are not a regulator. Cyber Security NSW has been set up to, I guess, provide that centre of excellence and to provide that advice as to what the standards could and should be and to make sure the lessons are being learnt and the capability of the sector is being lifted, all at the same time.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Do cases like the Accellion breach demonstrate that you actually failed in a number of cases? That was a cultural issue. The agencies in question were using an antiquated piece of

software for an antiquated form of file transfer. There were clear vulnerabilities. Clearly, the cultural change that Cyber Security NSW has been responsible for driving had not permeated through to those agencies that were still using that product?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Do you want to respond to that?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Mr Wells?

**GREG WELLS:** Again, I completely disagree, actually. I think what you need to realise with cybersecurity is attacks will occur; attacks will always occur. So in the case of Accellion, a legacy piece of technology, yes, did exist, that is not in place now. But vulnerabilities emerge all the time, so our job is to make sure that we are doing everything we can to patch, to understand risk and to uplift our maturity all the time. It certainly was not a cultural issue, I do not think, the Accellion issue specifically. So, no, I disagree with that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It was not a product of rigorous systems not being in place?

**EMMA HOGAN:** No.

**GREG WELLS:** No.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** But it was an antiquated piece of software, was it not?

**EMMA HOGAN:** It was certainly an older piece of software and there have since been reiterations that are more modern. But the Accellion breach was a global issue and it is an external piece of software that suffered a significant cyber attack of which we were the victim. As Greg said, there are always going to be attacks. There are always going to be new ways of attacking us.

**GREG WELLS:** And, specifically, not just on legacy technologies. Vulnerabilities emerge in all software all the time—big, small, legacy or otherwise.

**EMMA HOGAN:** When notified, I think all the agencies took the right steps, and the steps they needed to, to remove the Accellion product from government. As Mr Wells said earlier, nobody is using that anymore.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is Cyber Security NSW a standalone agency or is it just an organisational unit within Customer Service? What is the status of Cyber Security NSW?

**EMMA HOGAN:** From a structural perspective it operates as its own department within digital.NSW, of which Greg is the chief, if you like. But it does not operate as an executive agency, no. It has very clear responsibilities in the way that it acts as a central agency across the sector. As I have specified at this Committee before, Cyber Security NSW is also responsible for advising the broader DCS and holding the rest of my department to account for excellence.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** It does not have any statutory basis. Is that correct?

**EMMA HOGAN:** That is correct.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can you perhaps, on notice, provide the Committee with a copy of the org chart of Cyber Security NSW?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Sure, no problem.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I also ask about the total annual budget for Cyber Security NSW and details of its staffing establishment?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Certainly.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Is digital.NSW a separate agency as well?

**EMMA HOGAN:** As it operates across the cluster, Greg sits within the department and within the broader DCS core budget, but he runs digital.NSW as part of our central agency responsibilities. As I have mentioned, I have a number of direct reports who are responsible for service delivery, and I have two who are responsible for our central agency functions. Mr Wells is one and Mr Murphy is the other.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I, on notice, ask a similar question—that is, can we have the organisation chart for digital.NSW, its total annual budget as well as its staffing establishment?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes, no problem.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I might just now briefly turn to Mr Dent. I wanted to ask about the status of the implementation of the McDougall review recommendations as they relate to SIRA. Perhaps you might be able to give us an update on where the implementation of those recommendations currently stand.

**ADAM DENT:** Certainly, Mr D'Adam. Can I firstly apologise because you are behind me but my microphone is front of me so I am having this conversation with you behind my head.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I was not sure you were there, Mr Dent.

**ADAM DENT:** I am and unfortunately—

**EMMA HOGAN:** He has spent all day awaiting your questions.

**ADAM DENT:** One might argue you have got the better view! In terms of the McDougall recommendations, there were a number of recommendations directly addressed at SIRA, which we were able to undertake in relation to our own way of operating and which we have either in progress or have completed. More importantly—William, please feel free to clarify—the key parts of the recommendations required legislation. There were a number of recommendations that require changes to be approved in relation to SIRA's powers and our broad legislative environment, and there were also a number that go to benefits as they relate injured people. Those matters are currently in draft as a bill and will be brought to the Parliament at the Government's desire very soon, I understand. It is imminent. Basically, the remaining pieces of the McDougall recommendations that required legislation are due to be legislated soon.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Can I also ask about the recommendations from the 2020 review of the workers compensation legislation by the law and justice committee? Recommendation 9 was specifically directed to SIRA. Can you perhaps outline where consideration is up to on that recommendation?

**ADAM DENT:** Yes. Essentially the process we are undergoing for McDougall noted that recommendation 9—or, in fact, most of the recommendations of that 2020 review—were overlapped by McDougall. So they are being considered in conjunction. That related to the use of the whole person impairment test and a range of others. Those are now in the process of consideration. What I will say about the benefits is the legislation being brought to the Parliament almost imminently will deal with those which were largely uncontroversial when we consulted the range of stakeholders. There were a number of benefits that potentially had far more divergent views—for example, the use of the whole person impairment test and the definition of reasonable and necessary. Those are being considered now as part of a broader McDougall recommendation to essentially redraft the workers compensation legislation in its entirety, recognising the incredible complexity that comes from two principal Acts and three cognate Acts.

So there is a bigger piece of work in which some of those might be addressed, and the reason that they are not being addressed quickly is we feel they need far deeper consideration across the group of stakeholders. You will appreciate that employee representatives and employer representatives and insurers all have very different views on some of those matters, and we are seeking to find the right path and understand one that will deliver the best benefits to injured people but also maintain the sustainability of the scheme.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** What is the time frame for kind of considering and actioning that body of work?

**ADAM DENT:** If you are referring to the more controversial amendments, which I suspect you are, I do not have a time line for that. I suspect, not having had to redraft an entire system worth of legislation before, it will not be a quick exercise. If we were able to find some solutions in the near term that could in fact be legislated separately, we might make that recommendation to government to consider so that we can bring some forward, but at this stage the program to start work on redrafting and looking at the broader suite of legislation as McDougall recommended will commence this year. We want to get the immediate recommendations through first, then we will move to redrafting legislation more broadly. That could be a quick or quite slow and painful process depending on how stakeholder consultation goes. To the point that there are a number of benefit-related issues, some of which it would be a shame to delay dramatically, if they were able to be brought forward we would provide that advice, but some of them sort of start intertwining so deeply into the legislation it would be difficult to retrofit some of those changes without looking at the whole suite of legislation.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you. Am I correct in my understanding that you issued a letter of caution to the Nominal Insurer?

**ADAM DENT:** In relation to a specific issue?

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In relation to its overall performance, I believe.

**ADAM DENT:** You would be correct if you were relating to a specific letter of caution in relation to a matter that related to payment of invoices. That is the most recent letter of caution that I can recall I have issued to the Nominal Insurer. However, in relation to the performance of the Nominal Insurer's financial position, which dipped below the icare board target range, that triggered me writing to icare asking for an explanation about what actions that they would be taking in order to address the financial performance of the Nominal Insurer. That was not a formal letter of caution, rather one triggered by them failing to meet the required ratios in their capital management plan.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I see. When are they required to report on those?

**ADAM DENT:** The initial response in relation to that letter about the capital management plan has been returned to SIRA by icare—that happened before Christmas—with a range of actions that they intend to take, including that the icare board is considering a range of different investment strategies to attempt to address the long-term performance. Icare did remind me that the current insurance ratio does not provide an immediate issue in terms of their solvency or ability to meet their liabilities, but over the long term it is not a sustainable position and they will need to look at the levers they have available to them. There are four that they tend to continue to refer to, one of which is investment returns. There is a strong reliance on investment returns. The other includes the improvement of their return-to-work and their general performance in claims management, on which they have a long-term program of work underway at the moment. There is some work on their reduction of expenditure which they intend to continue looking at, although I think we have heard in this place that those numbers still are not necessarily materialising as we might like to hope.

You will forgive me that the fourth lever is not immediately coming to my mind, but they have written back to me to provide assurance that they are working on a range of those things and we have requested that they continue, as part of our ongoing supervision, to report on them. What I might also add, Mr D'Adam, if I can, is we have, through icare, now engaged Promontory, a sort of external assurance agency, who are working with icare on their claims management and Nominal Insurer improvement plan more broadly. I have access directly to Promontory on a quarterly basis to review the matters of concern with me and to get insight into icare's performance. So we now have that—rather than direct engagement with icare only, we also have an external assurance agency providing us information on their performance and the work or the effectiveness they see of the work underway.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** In relation to the PIawe payments where are we up to with that?

**ADAM DENT:** Let me just find my note. I believe we are close to having finished the investigation. As I understand it, as of very recently the proactive payments are due to commence from March. Those payments will be commencing to workers now. You might remember there was a set of proactive payments agreed to around \$53,000 workers where they will be eligible for payments of a total of \$38 million. To date a small pilot was conducted and a number of payments were being made but that is in the thousands. So the full-scale program, we understand icare are partnering with Service NSW to deliver those payments. That will commence in March and will run until the end of June 2022.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you. I will pass now to Mr Primrose.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I have two lots of final questions to ask, one of which relates to iVoting and the other to Smart Cities. I will address this question directly to Mr Wells but if anyone else wishes to answer, that is fine. I refer to the last round of estimates relating to some questions from the Hon. Adam Searle. I will read the *Hansard* which, inter alia, states:

Mr Wells, we are currently working with the Electoral Commission on that business case. The total requested was \$122 million but we are working with the Electoral Commission on the assurance of that business case and critical recommendations that need to be addressed.

I think this morning when I raised a similar question of the requested \$122 million to improve cybersecurity the answer I received was that they had been provided with only \$4.8 million. Is that correct?

**GREG WELLS:** That is correct. If there is a discrepancy between the business case that we have reviewed for \$22 million, not \$122 million—and the *Hansard* from the last estimates we will get that corrected—but as I said this morning the \$22 million business case was submitted through the assurance process. What we have funded so far is a first tranche of funding for \$4.88 million to enable the Electoral Commission to start their security uplift program.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** To get this crystal clear—Hansard was not correct. With due respect to Hansard there were comments throughout about the difficulties of the audio.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, last estimates audio was very difficult so let me see what that is and we will correct that, if that is the case.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So it is \$22 million?

**GREG WELLS:** Twenty two is the size of the business case we are reviewing, correct.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The first tranche is over what period?

**GREG WELLS:** I will take the exact dates on notice but my understanding is that it covers essentially this calendar year. That program will be implemented across this calendar year.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So calendar year 2022. What do you expect the first tranche will involve? Please feel free to take it on notice, if you want to.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, I will provide what I can on notice but as I said to Mr D'Adam earlier, we are not going to go into specifics about the nature of the exact uplift.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I understand.

**GREG WELLS:** The Electoral Commission has assessed its risk target uplifting opportunities, and that is what this business case will fund.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is there any allocation in the forward estimates for a second tranche?

**GREG WELLS:** So the way that the Digital Restart Fund and the cybersecurity allocation within it works, is that \$22 million has been reserved for the Electoral Commission to come back to. As we talked about last estimates the assurance process looks at a business case and assesses and provides recommendations about where to make sure that program is going to be successful. In many ways that is why Restart is a good model. It lets you can get on and start the work while you get in place controls and measures and all the assurance you need to make sure that the bigger program is successful. So that \$22 million is reserved currently and we will work with the Electoral Commission about subsequent tranches.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The Electoral Commissioner, through the electoral matters committee and a whole range of committees—and it was actually quoted by the Hon. Adam Searle last time—gave quite damning comments about the need for extensive reconfiguration and testing before iVoting reached a standard required to operative effectively and with integrity. Are you confident that this funding will provide that at the next round of State elections?

**GREG WELLS:** So what I can comment on, Mr Primrose, is that that \$4.8 million is specifically for cybersecurity uplift, as I mentioned earlier.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes.

**GREG WELLS:** We will work with the Electoral Commission quite closely this year on a range of dimensions, you know, in terms of platform stability and scalability. We will look at commercial negotiations with Scytl, the vendor that operates iVote. We will work with them closely. It is really important that I point out that the Electoral Commission does run that system, owns that system, and has their own cybersecurity officer that administers that system, but we will do everything we can and work as closely as possible with the Electoral Commission this year from a range of dimensions on their technology. As I said before, in the lead-up to elections we will agree, as we have done for previous elections, the sort of support in terms of threat monitoring, response and other services that Cyber Security NSW can provide.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The Electoral Commissioner in March of last year said:

Lack of adequate investment in the cybersecurity of NSW electoral systems and personnel over time has meant that the Commission does not comply, and cannot comply in the immediate future, with the NSW public sector's mandatory cybersecurity policies. The Commission also does not meet the ACSC's Essential 8 standards for cybersecurity.

Will it meet those at the forthcoming State poll?

**GREG WELLS:** So, again, the investment that has now been approved, recently approved, will uplift cybersecurity maturity in line with the Electoral Commission's plan.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** You do not get a second go at this. At the next State election, if iVoting crashes and burns, as we are told constantly through the electoral matters committee and others, I am going to be asking you some very serious questions.

**GREG WELLS:** Okay.



**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Can I ask then in relation to Smart Cities and the Digital Restart Fund, which agency is charged with administering Smart Cities funding under the Digital Restart Fund?

**GREG WELLS:** Planning and Environment manages or administers that component, that reservation within Digital Restart.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Does the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government give the approval for payments under Smart Cities?

**GREG WELLS:** More generally under Restart, the process is very rigorous. So there is a very strict eligibility criteria against not just Smart Places but what the Digital Restart Fund is for. There is a very strict assessment of programs against that. Those eligibility criteria and assessment criteria are on both of the websites we talked about this morning. The process then by which those programs are approved goes through working groups that involve DPC, Treasury and Customer Service. They are proposed to a steering committee, again which is co-chaired by Treasury and Customer Service but has representatives from across government, and then is recommended to Cabinet for approval. Previously that has been proposed to the Delivery and Performance Committee of Cabinet and then on to ERC. But from this point, they will be approved by ERC only.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Does the Minister sign off on it and recommend the approval?

**GREG WELLS:** It goes to Cabinet for Cabinet decision.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Does the Minister submit it to Cabinet?

**GREG WELLS:** Generally they are DCS Cabinet submissions.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So the Minister for Customer Service and Digital Government does give approval for payments under Smart Cities, or makes a recommendation.

**GREG WELLS:** They are our Cabinet submissions. The DCS administers the Digital Restart Fund, as we have talked about before, so they are DCS Cabinet submissions. But, again, that is a decision that is made in those committees.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Mr Primrose, as I mentioned earlier, we have a delivery responsibility and a central agency responsibility. So when it comes to the Digital Restart Fund, DCS does make those submissions to Cabinet, but they do so on all of government's behalf.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Ms Hogan, did you recommend Park'n Pay to the Minister for funding?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I do not make recommendations to the Minister. As Mr Wells just outlined, there is a rigorous process and the committee's recommendations—Mr Wells might want to elaborate—would have made those recommendations as to the priorities of what would go into that intake. Minister Dominello would have accepted those recommendations alongside many others that would have then gone to the Delivery and Performance Committee for ultimate sign-off by his colleagues.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So there is no one senior person who would recommend?

**EMMA HOGAN:** No. It is collectively put together and coordinated by the committee, but DCS takes carriage for taking those submissions as recommended by that committee to Cabinet, or the appropriate subcommittee of Cabinet.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So your signature would not be on it?

**EMMA HOGAN:** My signature would be on any execution of funds that came back to DCS as approved by DAPCO, but the submission itself would go up by DCS more broadly.

**GREG WELLS:** If I could add, Mr Primrose, what this has enabled is for us to get a really good understanding of the pipeline across government, which we did not have previous to Digital Restart. So it does help us get a better understanding across government of what the priorities are and then to be able to make sure that we are spending money on the right things or the right priorities. That is part of this prioritisation process, quite rigorous.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And I think one of the things we are looking at is who is actually making these recommendations.

**GREG WELLS:** I can clarify that again. The way it works is each cluster, every cluster across government will have their priorities. They are proposed in a pipeline of prioritisation to DCS and we work with all clusters to line those projects up against the criteria of the fund, so for eligibility, and then for a range of



dimensions from strategic alignment to feasibility, benefits for customers et cetera. The programs we fund are also set by the Expenditure Review Committee. That prioritisation process is run over the course of three or four months, is done annually and has been done twice to date and, again, it is signed off by the Expenditure Review Committee of Cabinet.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Which is chaired by the Treasurer.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So there is no one single final person who signs it?

**EMMA HOGAN:** No, it is signed off by the committee ultimately.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So we need to find out who is on these various committees. Are any of these subject to a probity test?

**GREG WELLS:** That is obviously part of the procurement process for the best practice for all of the programs—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So there is no separate—

**GREG WELLS:** No. In a way, Restart is just another way—to be honest, it is a methodology we have implemented to create agility in the funding methodology; to create better ways of collaborating across government agencies because there had not been a way to do that as effectively as this before; it is a way that we can target contemporary ways of working and that we build digital products that are stable. So Digital Restart is more than just the allocation, but I would say that it operates in the framework of everything else across government that it did previously, whether that is procurement, guidelines, cybersecurity protections and everything else that goes with that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Would I be correct in saying that approval for payments under Smart Cities was treated no differently to any other submission?

**GREG WELLS:** Correct. It has some specific guidelines, as we talked about before, because it specifically targets collaboration with local government. That is why the Smart Places Acceleration Program was reserved within Restart specifically for that purpose, in a similar way running parallel to why we have reserved cybersecurity funding. But you are correct, it follows a similar process. It has an advisory committee, it goes to the steering committee, it is proposed to Cabinet, Cabinet makes those decisions.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** So there was nothing unique about this process.

**GREG WELLS:** It is specifically for Smart Places but, other than that, it follows a very similar process that I have just explained.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is there a Digital Restart Fund customer council?

**GREG WELLS:** There is a customer council within the department that is, again, chaired by the Department of Customer Service, but it is not specifically within the Digital Restart Fund.

**EMMA HOGAN:** We do have a customer council across government but it is quite separate and run by Mr Murphy. Then the Digital Restart Fund, we do sometimes give the customer council an update on programs that are within the DRF or programs that directly impact life journeys or customer experience, but they are run as two separate things.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Could you please take on notice who sits on that customer council?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes. There is a representative from each cluster. Do you want specific names?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Yes, please, and their titles.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Sure.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** And is there a steering committee?

**EMMA HOGAN:** A steering committee of the customer council or Digital Restart Fund?

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** The Digital Restart Fund.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, there is.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Again, can you please take on notice the same question?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, I am happy to do that.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Is there a Digital Restart Fund working group?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, there is.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Again, could you please take the same—I am interested in agency, name and position.

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, happy to do that. I will just elaborate. These committees are co-chaired by Treasury and DCS and have DPC involvement—really a whole-of-government approach to Digital.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I just wanted to ask one more thing in terms of the Digital Restart Fund. The Act is quite clear that the Minister approves and that the secretary recommends. So it is your evidence that that process was not followed in relation to Park'nPay, Ms Hogan?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I think the actual Digital Restart Fund Act states that the secretary recommends and the Minister ultimately discharges the funds, but the additional processes that we have put around that are as Mr Wells represents. There are a number of rigorous processes that we use internally, then DCS takes the submissions on behalf of all of government. I am the Secretary for DCS, so you could say that it is my department that puts that up, then it is approved by DAPCO and then Minister Dominello distributes the authorised letters for the funding as it comes out of ERC. But he does not make the decisions on his own; the decisions are made by DAPCO and we submit to DAPCO those submissions on behalf of all of government.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** I am just going to put that question back to you again. In terms of Park'nPay, did the process follow the requirements of the Act? That is, accepting that there may have been these other ancillary processes around that recommendation, ultimately you made the recommendation to the Minister to release the funds for Park'nPay from the Digital Restart Fund?

**EMMA HOGAN:** Once the steering committee had authorised the various things that should have been approved as part of the tranche—I am not sure what the tranche number was that the Park'nPay fund was within—it went up to the Delivery & Performance Committee, DCS submitted it to the Delivery & Performance Committee after it had been through this process, the Delivery & Performance Committee agreed with the prioritisation that was put forward and subsequently approved it, and then the process we have internally is that Minister Dominello advises the successful agencies from there and then the funding is distributed.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** So the committee makes a recommendation—

**EMMA HOGAN:** The public servant level steer committee—

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** —but the Act is clear that you make the final recommendation.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes, on behalf of the Department of Customer Service and all of government, I put forward the paper with Greg's recommendation and all of the processes that we have described. I put that forward to what was the Delivery & Performance Committee for their consideration once I am satisfied that it has gone through a rigorous process. The committee makes the decision as to whether they will accept that. Minister Dominello sat on that committee alongside many of his peers.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I am looking at the document entitled *Who manages the fund?* on digital.nsw and it says:

Under the Digital Restart Fund Act 2020, the Secretary of the Department of Customer Service is responsible for making recommendations to the Minister for what payment should be made from the fund.

It also says:

Under the Digital Restart Fund Act 2020 the NSW Minister for Customer Service, Minister for Digital is responsible for approving payments from the fund.

That is what the legislation that was passed by the Parliament says.

**EMMA HOGAN:** Yes, but there are additional processes of rigour, as we have explained—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** I understand.

**EMMA HOGAN:** —to ensure that the ministry is part of that committee and was part of that committee, but it is ultimately made by the committee.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Sorry, I am happy for you to have all sorts of probity and other things around it, but you would agree that to abide by the legislation, the people who are actually responsible under the legislation, are yourself for making the recommendation and the Minister for approving payments from the fund. That is what the legislation says.

**EMMA HOGAN:** That is what the legislation says in black and white. As I have pointed out to the Committee, there are a number of—

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Did you abide by the legislation or not?

**EMMA HOGAN:** I believe so.

**The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE:** Good. That is all we have been asking: Who is actually responsible for this? Whatever flummery is around it, I have no problems or dramas about that. In terms of who is responsible, you abided as per the Digital Restart Fund Act 2020, you made the recommendation and the Minister is responsible for approving payments. Sorry, Mr D'Adam, I just wanted to clarify that.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That is exactly where I wanted to get to, Mr Primrose. I do not have any further questions.

**The CHAIR:** I am looking to the Government, if they want to have their 15 minutes of questions now.

**The Hon. PETER POULOS:** We are very comfortable for the witnesses to be thanked and dismissed.

**DAMON REES:** Chair, if it is helpful, I have some quick responses to previous questions from Mr Primrose and Mr D'Adam, if you would like me to provide them.

**The CHAIR:** Yes, that would be great.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** That would be appreciated.

**DAMON REES:** Mr Primrose, you asked about children in foster care and their ability to access parent vouchers. I am advised a fix was put in last Friday that should now resolve that issue, and carers of those children should be able to apply for the parent grants. Mr D'Adam, you had a number of questions around driver testing. For planning purposes, we operate on an assumption of eight tests per driver tester per day. The targets I referred to of two weeks grade of service, that is 10 business days. That is the target lead time for people to access a booking. The current performance I referred to of 25, that is currently 25 business days. And the 40 additional driver testers we have hired, they all happen to be full-time, so that is 40 FTE.

**The Hon. ANTHONY D'ADAM:** Thank you.

**The CHAIR:** That concludes today's session. Thank you very much for your time. You have taken several questions on notice. The Committee secretariat will be in touch with details on how to get them back to us and when to get them back to us. Once again, thank you for your time and safe travels home.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**The Committee proceeded to deliberate.**