



BUDGET ESTIMATES 2023-2024

# **Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage Portfolios**

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

Answers to Supplementary Questions

Hearing: 2 November 2023

## Questions from Dr Amanda Cohn MLC

### Energy from waste facilities

1. What analysis has been performed of the carbon dioxide output of waste-to-energy incinerators compared to that of other energy generation methods?
  - (a) Can any modelling for how those calculations are made be released publicly?
2. How will the NSW Government ensure the prevention of the emission of nanoparticles from waste-to-energy incinerators?
3. How will the NSW Government ensure the residual bottom and fly ash produced during incineration of waste and the activated carbon and other solid reagents used to clean stack gases be treated to guarantee their containment?
  - (a) What is done with the residuals after treatment?
4. What kind of independent testing and monitoring (including during startups and shut-downs) will be conducted at energy from waste incinerators of stack emissions for heavy metals, nitrogen oxides, persistent organic pollutants, furans and brominated compounds?

### Answer:

1. Development proposals for waste-to-energy incinerators are generally required to include analysis of the greenhouse gas impacts of the project as part of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Woodlawn Advanced Energy Recovery Centre proposal, for example, has included analysis of greenhouse gas output of waste-to-energy incineration compared to that of other energy generation methods.
  - (a) EIS and related documents for waste-to-energy development proposals are publicly available via the Department of Planning and Environment's Major Projects web portal: [www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects](http://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/major-projects).
2. The NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement provides a framework to ensure that waste-to-energy facilities are designed and operated to meet best practice emission standards, including for particulate matter. This is supported by environment protection laws that enable the regulation of pollution, for example, through environment protection licences.
3. Under the NSW resource recovery framework, potentially reusable ash must undergo significant testing to enable reuse. If specifications are met then ash is typically re-used in cement or brick manufacture. Materials remaining after cleaning stack gases must be treated and immobilised prior to classification for disposal under the NSW Waste Classification Guidelines.
  - (a) Where materials are not suitable for reuse, including pollution control residual materials, they must be treated and immobilised prior to being classified under the NSW Waste Classification Guidelines for disposal to landfill.
4. The NSW Energy from Waste Policy Statement specifies the required frequency of monitoring for air pollutants. Testing and monitoring must be conducted by the operator of the facility, in accordance with conditions specified in the environment protection licence administered by the NSW Environment Protection Authority. Monitoring results must also be published by the operator.

## Plastics recycling

5. What requirements are in place to prevent microplastics entering waterways from plastics recycling facilities?
- (a) How is any existing regulation monitored and enforced?

### Answer:

5. Plastics recycling facilities can apply to the NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) for an environment protection licence issued under the *Protection of the Environment Operations Act 1997* for permission to discharge pollutants to waters. This includes microplastics. The EPA sets discharge limits on the licence based on the risk posed by the discharge to the receiving waters.
- (a) All licensed discharges are subject to monitoring and reporting conditions as well as requirements for the proper and efficient operation of pollution control equipment. Authorised Officers inspect facilities and assess compliance with licence conditions, including by taking samples at any time.

## Questions from the Hon Chris Rath MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)

### ENVIRONMENT

#### Great Koala National Park – Advisory Panels

6. How many individuals, in total, will sit on the three advisory panels?
- (a) Can you provide the names of those individuals sitting on the panels and the organisations they represent?
- (b) Can you set out the process by which these individuals were chosen?
- (c) Will panel members be remunerated for their work on the advisory panels?
- (d) If yes, what is the amount, in total, that everyone will be paid?
- (e) How often will the panels meet?
- (f) How long will be the panels been in exist for?

### Answer:

6. Invitations have been sent to representative groups and responses are being collated. A final number of members is not yet known.
- (a) See answer to question 6.
- (b) Advisory panel membership is drawn from representative groups that have expressed a strong interest in participating in the process to establish the Great Koala National Park. This includes representatives and suitable experts from Aboriginal groups, relevant industry, union, conservation, and recreation bodies, and local government.
- (c) Sitting fees will be paid to Aboriginal Advisory Panel members. Members of the other two advisory panels will not receive remuneration.
- (d) In accordance with Public Service Commission Guidelines, the rate will be \$220 for a full day or \$110 for a half day for Aboriginal Advisory Panel members.

- (e) The frequency of meetings is still to be determined but it is initially expected that panels will meet approximately every four to six weeks.
- (f) It is currently anticipated the panels will be operational until Q4 2024.

### **Great Koala National Park – Independent economic and social assessment**

7. When is the independent economic and social assessment of the Great Koala National Park due to be completed?
8. Who will be undertaking this assessment?
9. What will be the cost of the assessment?

#### **Answer:**

7. The assessment is currently scheduled to be completed by October 2024.
8. Arrangements for undertaking this assessment are not finalised.
9. The cost of the assessment has not been determined.

### **TO THE MINISTER**

#### **Brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park**

10. Now that you have approved the aerial shooting of brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park, what advice did you receive from the department in relation to this matter, prior to making this decision?
11. On 7 August 2023, you issued a media release stating that the NSW Government was seeking feedback on a proposed amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Management Plan:
  - (a) Is it true that this public exhibition period occurred between 8 August and 11 September 2023?
  - (b) Is it true that this public exhibition period received 11,002 submissions?
  - (c) Is it true that 82% of those submissions, or approximately 9021 submissions, were supportive of aerial shooting?
  - (d) How was this feedback considered and reviewed?
  - (e) If the feedback was so strongly in support of this proposed amendment to allow aerial shooting, will you make this feedback publicly available?
12. Considering this exhibition period closed on 11 September 2023, and prior to your announcement on 27 October 2023 that aerial culling will commence, a mere six weeks had passed in which both you and your department had reviewed the 11,002 submissions. This would have been a review process of 1,833 submissions reviewed per week or 261 submissions per day:
  - (a) Was this enough time to make an informed decision?
  - (b) How many staff from the department were responsible for reviewing these submissions?
  - (c) What was the approximate cost to the department in conducting this public exhibition, including the review of the submissions?
13. A commonwealth Senate Inquiry was recently published last month in October, titled “Impacts and Management of feral horses in the Australian Alps”:
  - (a) Are you aware of this inquiry including its findings?

- (b) There were fourteen recommendations from the Committee; the first recommendation on page 7 of the Inquiry recommends, quote, "... that the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCEEW), in collaboration with its state and territory counterparts, undertake an impact and population assessment of feral horses at the national level..." What conversations have you or your department had with the Hon, Tanya Plibersek or DCEEW?
14. Acknowledging the legislated target under the plan to further reduce the population to 3,000 by June 2027, do you agree that the suggested numbers and estimates of the brumby population are highly contentious?
15. Given there is only a '95% confidence level in the Brumby population, and the numbers at either end of the spectrum are greatly varied, do you agree that you've had a gross lapse in judgement given your premature approval of aerial shooting in the park, without knowing what the actual numbers are for the brumby population?
16. A survey conducted in 2020 using the Stuart Cairns Methodology for counting the population stated that the population was estimated at 14,380; a 2022 survey found that the numbers had increased to an estimated 18,814:
- (a) On 2 November 2023 you stated that a recount is underway - is this recount currently being conducted utilising the Stuart Cairns Methodology for counting the population?
17. On 14 April, 2023 you had an introductory meeting with the Invasive Species Council as per your Ministerial Diary Disclosures.
- (a) Were the Brumbies in the Kosciuszko National park discussed at this meeting, if so, what was the nature of these meetings?
- (b) Leading up to your decision to approve aerial shooting, have you met you met with the Invasive Species Council again?
- (c) Have you or your department paid any funding to the Invasive Species Council for their "expert advice to government on a few for service basis
- i. If so, how much?

**Answer:**

10. After the exhibition period, and after all submissions were considered, the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) provided a briefing to the Minister for the Environment in accordance with the requirements of the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018*.
- 11.
- (a) Yes.
- (b) Yes.
- (c) Yes. 82% of submissions that mentioned aerial shooting were supportive.
- (d) All submissions were considered. NPWS formed a dedicated team to review all submissions. A total of 16 staff were tasked with reviewing submissions over a six-week period.
- (e) A summary of representations report for the draft amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan was prepared in accordance with the *Kosciuszko Wild Horse Heritage Act 2018* and has been publicly released. This is consistent with the approach taken

when the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan was exhibited and subsequently adopted in 2021.

12.

(a-b) See answer to question 11 (d) above.

(c) Exhibition advertising costs were \$7284. Existing internal NPWS resources were used to review submissions.

13.

(a) Yes.

(b) I speak regularly with the Australian Environment Minister. I do not disclose details of what we discuss. Department representatives have had general discussions about the Senate Inquiry with representatives from the Australian Department in the context of an Australian Alps Ministerial Council meeting held on 10 November 2023.

14. The survey methodology used to estimate the population of horses in Kosciuszko National Park is the international and Australian standard for population surveys of large animals from the air. The survey is consistent with best scientific practice and was peer-reviewed by independent experts at the CSIRO and the Queensland Government's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

15. No.

16.

(a) The 2023 survey methodology is the international and Australian standard for population surveys of large animals from the air. The survey is consistent with best scientific practice and is being peer-reviewed by independent experts at the CSIRO and the Queensland Government's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries.

17.

(a) A range of issues around invasive species were discussed, including horses.

(b) No.

(c) No such funding has been provided to the Invasive Species Council.

i. Not applicable.

## TO THE DEPARTMENT

### Brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park

18. What advice has the department given to the Minister in relation to the approval of aerial shooting, following the conclusion of the public exhibition period on 11 September 2023 and prior to the decision being made?
19. Is it true that the public exhibition period from 8 August to 11 September 2023 received 11,002 submissions and that 82% of these were in support of aerial shooting?
20. Has the department advised the Minister to not make these submissions publicly available?
21. How many staff were responsible for considering and reviewing these submissions?

22. If 11,002 total submissions would mean that across the roughly six weeks between the closure of the exhibition period and the Ministers announcement to commence aerial shooting, an average of 1,833 submissions were reviewed each week, or 261 a day:
- (a) Including weekends, the 261 submissions reviewed a day equates to 32 submissions reviewed every hour (assuming an 8-hour day was worked every day of the week) or a submission being reviewed every two minutes. In the departments view, was this a sufficient amount of time to conduct a thorough review?
  - (b) If you do consider it a sufficient amount of time to conduct a review of submissions do you also consider it a sufficient amount of time to make an informed decision about the proposed amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Management Plan?
23. Has there been any early costings into aerial shooting?
- (a) If so, what are they?
24. On 14 April 2023 the Minister met with the Invasive Species Council, who from the department accompanied the Minister to this meeting?
- (a) Were the brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park discussed at this meeting?
    - i. If they were, what advice was provided by the Invasive Species Council
25. Since that meeting on 14 April 2023 has another meeting occurred between the Minister and the Invasive Species Council, prior to the Minister making her decision to approve aerial shooting?
26. Has the department paid any funding to the Invasive Species Council for their “expert advice to government” on a fee for services basis?
- (a) If so, how much

**Answer:**

18. See answer to question 10.

19. See answers to questions 11 (b) and 11 (c).

20. The Department believes the summary of representations report for the draft amendment to the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan provides an accurate statement of the issues raised in public submissions.

21. See answer to question 11 (d) above.

22.

(a) Yes. See answer to question 11 (d).

(b) Yes. See answer to question 11 (d).

23. The key factors influencing the cost of aerial shooting programs are generally well understood by the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) because it has conducted more than 4600 hours of aerial shooting for deer, pigs, goats, wild dogs and cats in the period 1 July 2020 to 30 June 2023.

(a) A helicopter costs approximately \$2300 per hour to operate. This is the primary cost for aerial shooting over and above staff time and other on-costs.

24. The Acting Coordinator General, Environment and Heritage Group; Acting Deputy Secretary, NPWS; Acting Director Park Operations Projects, NPWS; and two other staff from NPWS.

(a) Yes.

- i. The Invasive Species Council provided a brief on the scientific evidence of negative wild horse impacts in the park and its opinion on ways the Kosciuszko National Park Wild Horse Heritage Management Plan could be better delivered to achieve the plan's statutory population target objectives by 30 June 2027.

25. No.

26. No such funding has been provided to the Invasive Species Council.

(a) Not applicable.

## HERITAGE

### TO THE MINISTER

#### Manilla Railway Viaduct Underbridge

27. As the Minister for Heritage, have you had any discussions with your department in relation to rail heritage in NSW?
28. Recently, you agreed to list the Manilla Viaduct on the NSW heritage register. Given that the viaduct is in relatively poor condition, what is the plan to preserve that infrastructure?
29. Do you have any oversight on the future of the viaduct now that you've signed off on a heritage listing?
30. If Transport for NSW are responsible for preserving and repairing the viaduct, how can you be assured, as the Minister for Heritage, that they're following proper processes?
31. Are you obfuscating your responsibilities to our rail history?
32. What incentives does the government provide to encourage caretakers of heritage assets to look after them and ensure our heritage is preserved?

#### Answer:

27. Heritage NSW briefs the Minister for Heritage on a wide range of heritage matters including rail heritage.
28. As a State Heritage Register item, the Manilla Railway Viaduct and Underbridge is subject to minimum standards of maintenance and repair as described in the *Heritage Act 1977* and Heritage Regulation 2012.
29. Activities or works to State Heritage Register items require approval by the Heritage Council of NSW under the *Heritage Act 1977*. The Minister for Heritage does not have a role in the approval process.
30. Section 170 of the *Heritage Act 1977* requires State agencies, including Transport for NSW, to identify and manage heritage items on their Heritage and Conservation Register in accordance with State Owned Heritage Management Principles. The Manilla Railway Viaduct and Underbridge is on the Transport for NSW Heritage and Conservation Register. Heritage NSW works with Transport for NSW regularly to support the management of its heritage assets.



31. The Heritage Council of NSW is currently advising Transport for NSW on its NSW Rail Heritage Strategy. The strategy seeks to examine the breadth and complexity of rail heritage assets, critical maintenance, and deferred maintenance liabilities, to support the agency meeting its heritage asset responsibilities.

There are approximately 240 State Heritage Register items which relate to rail history.

32. The NSW Government provides a range of competitive heritage grants to support communities to recognise, value and care for their heritage. The Heritage NSW grants program directly supports items listed on the State Heritage Register, including capital works, for up to \$150,000. A funding round is advertised every two years with around \$3 million allocated annually. The 2023–25 funding round closed on 2 December 2022 and the next round is set to open late 2024. State agencies are not eligible to apply.

### **Revocation of Interim Heritage Order on three properties, 115-117 Holt St, Cremorne**

33. Is the intention of an Interim Heritage Order to safeguard a property for a temporary period to allow time to understand its heritage significance and complete a listing process, if appropriate?
34. Did you seek the advice of the Heritage Council of NSW before you revoked the Interim Heritage Order on 115-117 Holt Street Cremorne?
- (a) If you sought advice of the Heritage Council, what was the advice?
35. The State Heritage Register Committee Meeting issued a new Interim Heritage Order on 31 January 2023 to allow North Sydney Council to finalise the planning proposal to list the properties of local heritage significance in North Sydney LEP:
- (a) If you did not seek the advice of the Heritage Council of NSW what was the justification considering that they are experts in this field?
36. Is it your job to protect heritage in NSW?
37. Can you explain what argument led to the revocation of the IHO which was lawfully issued by former heritage Minister James Griffin?
38. Were you aware that GML's findings were supported by a Land and Environment Court decision on 17 August 2022?
39. Your decision appears to benefit the developer at the expense of the community and our local heritage?
40. When did the developer apply for a demolition permit (CDC)?
41. What are the reasons for the decision to revoke the IHO?
42. Who advised you and what advice was given?
43. If your decision was related to the Class 4 Land and Environment Court Appeal by the developer, why did you not defend the Appeal?
44. Were there discussion between the developer and yourself?
45. Your decision seems to benefit the developer at the expense of local heritage and your job as a Minister is to protect heritage:
- (a) Do you have any association with the developer?
- (b) When was the developer notified of the revocation of the IHO on these three properties?

46. Is it a failure of yours to recognise items of local heritage significance and protect them from demolition?
47. Will you be over-riding recommendations in the future of the continue to demolish locally recognised heritage buildings?
48. Can you be trusted as the Heritage Minister?

**Answer:**

*Please note the properties were located at 115-119 Holt Avenue, Cremorne, not Holt Street.*

33. Interim heritage orders (IHOs) allow time to enable the heritage significance of a place or object to be adequately investigated and determine if a heritage listing is warranted.
34. No. The Minister for Heritage is not required to seek the Heritage Council of NSW's advice before revoking an IHO under the *Heritage Act 1977*.
35. Neither the State Heritage Register Committee nor the Heritage Council of NSW have the power to make IHOs.
- (a) See answer to question 34.
36. Yes.
37. The Minister for Heritage considered a range of factors, including the grounds for making an IHO under the *Heritage Act 1977* and an impending appeal in the Land and Environment Court.
38. No. The Land and Environment Court decision of 17 August 2022 considered further investigation was required to decide whether the sites were of heritage significance.
39. See answer to question 37.
40. 22 August 2023.
41. See answer to question 37.
42. The Minister for Heritage was provided with information by the Department of Planning and Environment on the grounds for making an IHO.
43. The appeal was discontinued after the Minister for Heritage ordered the IHO be revoked.
44. No. The Minister for Heritage responded to correspondence on the matter from the owner.
- 45.
- (a) No.
- (b) 21 September 2023.
46. No.
47. The NSW Government will continue to support local councils in their responsibility to recognise and protect local heritage under the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979* and, when appropriate, the Minister for Heritage will support the protection of local heritage under the *Heritage Act 1977*.
48. Yes.

## The Heritage Act

49. The NSW Government made an election commitment to implement reforms to the Heritage Acts:
  - (a) What changes have been made to the Act?
  - (b) Which reforms have been made?
50. Will the NSW Government be implementing all recommendations from the 2023 performance Audit of State heritage assets?
  - (a) Why have they not commenced?
51. How many items are listed on the State Heritage Register?
52. Why is it that almost 90% of heritage listed items on the register do not include a physical condition rating?
53. Why do 12% of heritage listed items lack a statement outlining why the property is significant?
54. How many State Heritage Register listings contain complete information?
55. What is your government doing to assist owners with the conservation of items of State Heritage significance?
  - (a) Are there any funding rounds open?
56. What compliance arrangements are in place to ensure heritage listed buildings are maintained?
57. What funding programs are available to assist owners to maintain the heritage listed building?

### Answer:

49. The NSW Government has committed to implementing the Review of the *Heritage Act 1977* as part of a NSW Heritage Strategy. The Heritage Strategy is currently under development.
  - (a) See answer to question 49.
  - (b) See answer to question 49.
50. The Department of Planning and Environment has accepted the findings of the Audit Office of NSW's Report on State Heritage Assets and has commenced work to implement the report's recommendations.
  - (a) See answer to question 50.
51. As at 14 November 2023, 1773 items are listed on the State Heritage Register.
52. A physical condition rating is an optional data tool.
53. A 1998 amendment to the *Heritage Act 1977* established the State Heritage Register and required the Heritage Council of NSW to set criteria to use when making decisions as to whether or not an item is of State heritage significance. Subsequently, Permanent Conservation Order items automatically became listings on the State Heritage Register. These items may not have a statement of significance.
54. The State Heritage Register is kept by the Heritage Council of NSW in such form and manner as the Heritage Council determines.

55. The NSW Government provides both information and a range of competitive heritage grants to support communities to recognise, value and care for their heritage items. The Heritage NSW grants program directly supports items listed on the State Heritage Register, including capital works, for up to \$150,000. A funding round is advertised every two years with around \$3 million allocated annually.
- (a) The 2023–25 funding round closed on 2 December 2022 and the next round is set to open in late 2024.
56. Heritage NSW manages compliance and enforcement under the *Heritage Act 1977*. Heritage NSW provides monthly updates to the Heritage Council of NSW and an annual review of compliance activity and trends. Staff operate under a Compliance Policy Framework that is currently being updated. It is available on the Department’s website at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/heritage-compliance-framework](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/research-and-publications/publications-search/heritage-compliance-framework).
57. See answer to question 55.

## OPERATIONAL QUESTIONS

### Merchant fees

58. Please provide a list of all transactions where customers need to pay a merchant fee on credit and/or debit card payments in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities.
59. Please provide the percentage and/or amount of the merchant fees applied to all credit and/or debit card payments/transactions payments in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities.
60. What was the total amount paid in merchant fees on credit and/or debit card payments made by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?

### Answer:

58-60.

Various payment options are available to customers across the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage’s portfolio responsibilities, including BPay (no fees charged) for some transactions. When a customer uses a debit or credit card, merchant fees are applicable.

Detail on merchant fees is not centrally held for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage’s portfolio.

### Website Usage

61. What were the top 20 most utilised (by data sent and received unique domain names accessed by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023)?
62. What were the top 20 most accessed (by number of times accessed unique domain names accessed by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023)?

**Answer:**

61-62.

All acceptable use of network services must be lawful, appropriate and ethical.

The Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Network Services Policy is available in the Ministers' Office Handbook.

**Ministerial disclosures**

63. Did you make any updates to your Ministerial disclosure on or after 2 August 2023?

(a) If yes, what prompted this update to your disclosure?

**Answer:**

63. (a)

Disclosure obligations for Ministers under Part 2 (Standing disclosure of interests), Part 3 (Conflicts of Interest) and Part 4 (Gifts and Hospitality) of the schedule to the Ministerial Code are continuous. Ministers are required to:

- Notify the Premier of a change to pecuniary and other interests as soon as practicable after the change has occurred.
- Notify the Premier of a change to pecuniary and other interests held by their immediate family members, as soon as practicable after the change has occurred.
- Notify the Premier promptly of conflicts of interest.
- Disclose gifts and hospitality promptly to The Cabinet Office Secretary.

The Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage makes continuous disclosures of the matters that are covered by the Ministerial Code.

**Labour Hire Firms**

64. Have any Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities utilised the services of Labour Hire Firms since 28 March 2023? If yes, please advise in table form:

- (a) The names of the firms utilised.
- (b) The total amount paid to each firm engaged.
- (c) The average tenure period for an employee provided by a labour hire company.
- (d) The longest tenure for an employee provided by a labour hire company.
- (e) The duties conducted by employees engaged through a labour hire company.
- (f) The office locations of employees engaged through a labour hire company.
- (g) The highest hourly or daily rate paid to an employee provided by a labour hire company.

**Answer:**

64. (a-g)

Labour hire firms are used in accordance with NSW Public Service policies to cover temporary vacancies, as required. Information about the Contingent Workforce Scheme is available here:

<https://info.buy.nsw.gov.au/schemes/contingent-workforce-scheme>.

## Hospitality

65. How much has your ministerial office spent on hospitality, including catering and beverages, since 28 March 2023?
66. How much have Departments/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities spent on hospitality, including catering and beverages, since 28 March 2023?
67. Have you been the recipient of any free hospitality?
  - (a) What was the total value of the hospitality received?
68. Have any staff members in your office been the recipient of any free hospitality?
  - (a) What was the total value of the hospitality received?
  - (b) Are these gifts of hospitality declared publicly?
  - (c) Do staff declare their gifts publicly?

### Answer:

65. Catering provided for official purposes may be funded from the Ministerial office budget.

As Members of Parliament, Ministers have credit facilities extended to them for dining and hospitality at Parliament House. The facilities may be used for business or private purposes.

66. All departmental/agency expenditure, including on hospitality, must be made in compliance with the *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*. The Act sets out provisions for managing public finances and applies to a range of government decision makers, including Ministers, agency heads and government officers.
67. (a)
 

Ministers are required to declare to the Secretary of The Cabinet Office certain gifts and hospitality with a market value of more than \$500 under Part 4 of the Schedule to the Ministerial Code. This is a continuous obligation for which Ministers are personally responsible.

I comply with my obligations under Part 4 of the Schedule to the Ministerial Code.

68. (a-c)
 

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with their disclosure obligations under the Gifts, Hospitality and Benefits Policy for Office Holder Staff and I expect them to do so.

A breach of the Policy may be a breach of the Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct.

The policy includes disclosure obligations for Ministerial staff in respect of gifts, hospitality and benefits over \$150. These disclosures are kept on the Office Holder's Register of Gifts and Benefits

If a Ministerial staff member is required by their role to accompany their Office Holder at an event that the Office Holder is attending as the State's representative, or where the Office Holder has asked the staff member to attend, then attendance at that event would not constitute a gift or benefit for the purposes of the policy.

## Departmental Credit Cards

69. For each department, statutory agency and/or other body in the Minister's portfolio please report:
- (a) How many credit cards are currently on issue for staff?
    - i. Please provide a break-down of this information by grade.
  - (b) What was the value of the largest reported purchase on a credit card for the last year?
  - (c) What was each largest reported purchase for?
  - (d) What was the largest amount outstanding on a single card at the end of a payment period and what was the card holder's employment grade?
  - (e) How many credit cards have been reported lost or stolen?
    - i. What was the cost to replace them?
    - ii. How many credit card purchases were deemed to be illegitimate or contrary to agency policy?
    - iii. What was the total value of those purchases?
    - iv. How many purchases were asked to be repaid on the basis that they were illegitimate or contrary to agency policy and what was the total value thereof?
    - v. Were all those amounts repaid?
    - vi. If no, how many were not repaid, and what was the total value thereof?
  - (f) What was the largest purchase that was deemed illegitimate or contrary to agency policy and asked to be repaid, and what was the cardholder's employment grade?
    - i. What amount was repaid, in full?
  - (g) What amount was left unpaid?
  - (h) Are any credit cards currently on issue connected to rewards schemes?
    - i. Do staff receive any personal benefit as a result of those reward schemes?
  - (i) Can a copy of the staff credit card policy please be provided?

### Answer:

69. (a-i)

The use and management of purchasing (credit) cards for official purposes is in accordance with the standard procurement arrangements of the NSW Government.

## Agency Invoices

70. How many invoices to suppliers or contactors from your portfolio agency were not paid on time since 28 March 2023, broken down by agency?
71. How many invoices to suppliers or contactors from your portfolio agency were paid over 30 days late on time since 28 March 2023, broken down by agency?
72. How many invoices to suppliers or contactors from your portfolio agency were paid over 60 days late on time since 28 March 2023, broken down by agency?

- (a) What was the penalty for paying suppliers or contactors late, broken down by agency?

**Answer:**

70-72. (a)

Detail on payment performance is not centrally held for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio.

**Car/Driver**

73. Has your Ministerial car been subject to any traffic or parking fines?
- (a) If so, please provide details of each fine?
- (b) Who was driving the car at the time of each incident?
- (c) Who paid any of the fines?
74. Has your Ministerial Car been pulled over by the police?
- (a) If so, who was driving the car?

**Answer:**

73. No.

- (a) Not applicable.
- (b) Not applicable.
- (c) Not applicable.

74. No.

- (a) Not applicable.

**Complaints**

75. Has the Minister been the subject of any workplace complaints, including bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment?

**Answer:**

75. No.

**Consultants**

76. How much did the Department/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities spend in legal costs since 28 March 2023?
- (a) For what specific purposes or matters was legal advice sought?
77. Have any Department/agencies within your portfolio responsibilities engaged any consultants to provide the following services or advice since 28 March 2023:
- (a) Social media?
- i. What were the cost of these services?
- (b) Photography?
- i. What were the cost of these services?
- (c) Videography?
- i. What were the cost of these services?



- (d) Acting training?
    - i. What were the cost of these services?
  - (e) Ergonomics?
    - i. What were the cost of these services?
78. Since 28 March 2023, how many consultancy contracts have been signed in your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?
- (a) What was the individual amount of each contract?
    - i. What is the purpose of each contract?
  - (b) Who was the contract with?
  - (c) Did the contract go to a competitive tender?

**Answer:**

76-78.

Details are contained in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities.

Details about consultancy contracts can also be found on the Government's eTendering website.

**Department/Agency Staffing**

79. How many senior executive service employees were employed by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities on:
- (a) 28 March 2023?
  - (b) 23 October 2023?
80. What is the expenditure on senior executive service employees employed by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?
81. How many individuals were employed as internal legal counsel by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities on:
- (a) 28 March 2023?
  - (b) 23 October 2023?
82. What is the expenditure on internal legal counsel employees employed by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities 28 March 2023?
83. How many redundancies were processed by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?
- (a) Of these redundancies, how many were:
    - i. Voluntary
    - ii. Forced
84. What was the total cost of all redundancies in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?
85. Is any former employee from your ministerial office now employed by any Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?
86. How many staff were dismissed from each Department/agency under your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?

- (a) Without identifying individuals, what were the reason(s) for each dismissal?
87. What was the total amount each of the Departments/agencies under your portfolio responsibilities spent on stationery since 28 March 2023?
88. How many employees in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities are working in an 'acting' capacity?
89. What is the average number of days worked from home by employees in each Department/Agency within your portfolio responsibilities?
90. What was the total expenditure since 28 March 2023 by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities on:
- (a) Taxi hire?
  - (b) Ridesharing services?
  - (c) Limousine/private car hire?
  - (d) Hire car rental?
91. Do any senior executive service employees in any of the Departments/agencies under your portfolio responsibilities have a driver that is paid for by the Department/agency?
- (a) If so, what is the number of senior executive service employees that have a driver, and which senior executive service employees have a driver?
  - (b) How much was spent on these drivers since 28 March 2023?
92. Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on charter air flights by your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?
93. Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on domestic flights by your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?
- (a) Of these, how many flights were taken in business class?
  - (b) Of these, how many flights were taken in first class?
  - (c) Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on overseas flights by your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?
  - (d) Of these, how many flights were taken in business class?
  - (e) Of these, how many flights were taken in first class?

**Answer:**

79. (a-b)

Numbers of senior executives are publicly reported in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities as per standard practice.

80. Numbers and remuneration of senior executives are published in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities. Salaries and wages are included under employee related expenses in the financial statements of the annual reports.

81. (a-b)

Staff numbers are included in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment

and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities. Staff numbers employed as internal legal counsel are commensurate with need and can go down or up as required.

82. Salaries and wages are included under employee related expenses in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities.

83. (a) i-ii

Redundancies are published in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities under employee related expenses.

84. See answer to question 83.

85. No.

86. (a)

The termination of an employee is treated confidentially and is managed in accordance with the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* and relevant accompanying policies.

87. Details are contained in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities.

88. Internal mobility is encouraged and acting arrangements are supported, in line with the Public Service Commission's assignment-to-role guidelines.

89. Flexible working arrangements are tailored on an individual basis, based on the business need and the nature of individual roles.

90. (a-d)

Details are contained in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities.

91. (a-b)

No.

92. Charter air flight costs include various operational activities, including bushfire hazard reduction, aerial surveying, and aerial feral and pest management. Agency travel is conducted in accordance with relevant NSW Government policies and guidelines including the Premier and Cabinet Circular C2022-08 and ATO determinations.

93. (a-e)

Agency travel is conducted in accordance with relevant NSW Government policies and guidelines including the Premier and Cabinet Circular C2022-08 and ATO determinations.

### Efficiency Dividends

94. Was an efficiency dividend applied to any Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities in the 2023-24 NSW Budget?

(a) If so, what was the efficiency dividend applied to each Department/agency?

(b) What measures are being considered to achieve this efficiency dividend?

**Answer:**

94. (a-b)

The Budget papers include detailed information on budgeted expenses, revenue and capital expenditure. This includes detailed financial statements for individual agencies.

**GIPA Applications**

95. How many GIPA Applications have been received by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?
- How many of these Applications have been accepted?
  - How many of these Applications have been rejected?
  - If so, what were the reasons provided?
  - How many of these Applications were re-assigned?
  - How many of these Applications had fees waived/reduced?
  - Please provide in table form the following details of each Application received by your office:
    - Date received.
    - Date acknowledged.
    - Date responded.
    - The description provided for the information sought.
96. How many GIPA Applications have been received by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?
- How many of these Applications have been accepted?
  - How many of these Applications have been rejected?
  - If so, what were the reasons provided?
  - How many of these Applications were re-assigned?
  - How many of these Applications had fees waived/reduced?
  - Please provide in table form the following details of each Application received by your office:
    - Date received.
    - Date acknowledged.
    - Date responded.
    - The description provided for the information sought.

**Answer:**

95. (a-f) i-iv

None.

96. (a-f) i-iv

GIPA statistics are reported annually by the Information and Privacy Commission. Further information can be found at:

[www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/information-access/agency-gipa-dashboard/gipa-dashboard](http://www.ipc.nsw.gov.au/information-access/agency-gipa-dashboard/gipa-dashboard).

### Media and Public Relations

97. How much has your ministerial office spent on advertising or sponsored posts since 28 March 2023 on the following social media platforms:
- (a) Facebook
  - (b) Instagram
  - (c) LinkedIn
  - (d) TikTok
  - (e) YouTube
  - (f) WhatsApp
  - (g) X (formerly known as Twitter)
98. How much has each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities spent on advertising or sponsored posts since 28 March 2023 on the following social media platforms:
- (a) Facebook
  - (b) Instagram
  - (c) LinkedIn
  - (d) TikTok
  - (e) YouTube
  - (f) WhatsApp
  - (g) X (formerly known as Twitter)
99. Have you had media training or public speaking training?
- (a) If yes, who paid for it?
  - (b) If paid by taxpayers, what was the amount paid since 28 March 2023?
100. How many media or public relations advisers are employed for each of your portfolio agencies and what is the total cost to employ these advisers?
101. What is the forecast for the current financial year for the number of media or public relations advisers to be employed in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities and their total cost?
102. What is the total cost of media monitoring services used by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?

#### Answer:

97. (a-g)

Nil.

98. (a-g)

Department and agency expenditure is published in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage's portfolio responsibilities and on OpenGov NSW.

99. (a-b)

Yes – more than five years ago and none since 28 March 2023.

100. Staff numbers are included in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage’s portfolio responsibilities. Staff numbers undertaking media or public relations activities are commensurate with need and can go down or up as required.

101. Staff numbers are included in the annual reports for the Departments and agencies within the Minister for Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage’s portfolio responsibilities. Staff numbers undertaking media or public relations activities are commensurate with need and can go down or up as required.

102. Media monitoring services are procured under a whole-of-government contract.

- A whole-of-Government contract reduces administration costs on individual Departments and Agencies, takes advantage of economies of scale, and avoids duplication in services (and costs) across NSW Government.
- Isentia have recently secured the whole-of-government contract for the next three years, at a savings for more than \$2 million compared to the previous contract.
- Details of the three-year contract are available at <https://www.tenders.nsw.gov.au/?event=public.cn.view&CNUUID=E99BBB53-FC12-DC94-57E7E126B8321F73>

The Environment Protection Authority has a separate contract for media monitoring services. The costs of these services are included within the financial statement of its Annual Report.

### Office Administration

103. How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office at the MS6 grade for the following months:

- (a) April
- (b) May
- (c) June
- (d) July
- (e) August
- (f) September
- (g) October

104. How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office at the MS5 grade for the following months:

- (a) April
- (b) May
- (c) June
- (d) July

- (e) August
- (f) September
- (g) October

105. How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office at the MS4 grade for the following months:

- (a) April
- (b) May
- (c) June
- (d) July
- (e) August
- (f) September
- (g) October

106. How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office at the MS3 grade for the following months:

- (a) April
- (b) May
- (c) June
- (d) July
- (e) August
- (f) September
- (g) October

107. How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office at the MS2 grade for the following months:

- (a) April
- (b) May
- (c) June
- (d) July
- (e) August
- (f) September
- (g) October

108. How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office at the MS1 grade for the following months:

- (a) April
- (b) May
- (c) June
- (d) July
- (e) August
- (f) September
- (g) October

109. What is the average salary for staff members in your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?
110. How many DLOs were seconded to your ministerial office for the following months:
- (a) April
  - (b) May
  - (c) June
  - (d) July
  - (e) August
  - (f) September
  - (g) October
111. How many people are employed in your ministerial office as at 1 October 2023?
112. How many women are employed in your Ministerial office as at 1 October 2023?
113. How many staff employed in your ministerial office identify as culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) as at 1 October 2023?
114. How many staff employed in your ministerial office identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander as at 1 October 2023?
115. How many staff in your office are employed as media advisers or have responsibility for media/social media/communications?
116. How many staff in your office are employed as policy advisers or have responsibility for policy work?
117. How many staff in your office are employed as 'caucus liaison officers'?
- (a) What are the responsibilities allocated to 'caucus liaison officers'?
  - (b) Have 'caucus liaison officers' been directed to only work with Government MPs?
  - (c) Do 'caucus liaison officers' contact members of the Australian Labor Party as part of their regular work duties?
118. How many staff members employed in your office under the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013 have been seconded from a NSW Government Department/agency?
- (a) Please list each Department/agency staff members have been seconded from.
119. What is your ministerial office budget for 2023-24?
- (a) How much of this budget is allocated to staff?
120. How many iPhones/Smart Phones are assigned to staff in your ministerial office?
- (a) For each phone, how much was each bill in 2022-23?
  - (b) How many phones have been lost or replaced due to damage in your office?
    - i. What is the cost of replacing those phones?
121. How many iPads or tablets are assigned to your ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?
- (a) What was the cost of providing iPads or tablets to your ministerial office in 2022-23?



- (b) How many iPads or tablets have been replaced due to lost or damage in 2022-23?
- i. What was the cost of replacing these devices?
122. How many laptops has the Premier's Department or The Cabinet Office assigned to your ministerial office and to whom have they been issued?
- (a) What was the cost of providing laptops to your ministerial office in 2022-23?
- (b) How many laptops have been replaced due to lost or damage in 2022-23?
- i. What was the cost of replacing these devices?
123. Has any artwork been purchased or leased for display in your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?
- (a) What is the cost of this?
124. Have any floral displays or indoor plants been hired or leased for display in your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?
- (a) If so, what was the cost of these items?
125. What was the total amount your office spent on stationery since 28 March 2023?
126. What brand of paper is used in your office?
- (a) Is it recycled paper?
- (b) Is it Australian made paper?
127. What was the total cost of all subscriptions by you and your staff to online news services, newspapers, magazines, journals, and periodicals since 28 March 2023?
- (a) What are these services/newspapers/magazines/journals/periodicals?
128. What was the total value of all gifts purchased for use by you and your office since 28 March 2023?
- (a) What were the gifts purchased?
- i. Who were they gifted to?
129. What non-standard features are fitted to your ministerial vehicle?
- (a) What is the cost of each non-standard feature?
130. What is the total spend for your office since 28 March 2023 for:
- (a) Taxi hire?
- (b) Ridesharing services?
- (c) Hire car rental?
- (d) Limousine/private car hire?
131. Were any planes or helicopters chartered by you or your office and paid for with public money since 28 March 2023?
- (a) If yes, please provide details of the trip including the date of the trip, purpose of the trip, the method of transport and the cost?

**Answer:**

103. (a-g)

All staff are employed to assist the Minister in accordance with the *Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013*.

Ministerial staff numbers and grades are published on the NSW Government website: [www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers](http://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers).

104. (a-g)

All staff are employed to assist the Minister in accordance with the *Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013* and staff are expected to comply with the NSW Officer Holder's Staff Code of Conduct.

105. See the answer to question 103.

106. See the answer to question 103.

107. See the answer to question 103.

108. See the answer to question 103.

109. See the answer to question 103.

110. (a-g)

Information relating to Department Liaison Officers is available on the Disclosure Log: *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (the GIPA Act), Reference number PD\_A5833715 at [www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-09/PD%20A5833715%20-%20Disclosure%20log%20-%2020230913.pdf](http://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-09/PD%20A5833715%20-%20Disclosure%20log%20-%2020230913.pdf).

111. See the answer to question 103.

112. We aim for an inclusive and diverse workforce across Ministerial offices that reflects the communities that we serve.

113. We aim for an inclusive and diverse workforce across Ministerial offices that reflects the communities that we serve.

114. We aim for an inclusive and diverse workforce across Ministerial offices that reflects the communities that we serve.

115. All staff are employed to assist the Minister in accordance with the *Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013*.

Ministerial staff numbers and grades are published on the NSW Government Website at [www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers](http://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers).

116. All staff are employed to assist the Minister in accordance with the *Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013*.

Please also see the answer to question 103.

117. (a-c)

All staff are employed to assist the Minister in accordance with the *Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013* and staff are expected to comply with the NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct.

118. (a)

NSW Government sector employees may be seconded from agencies to Ministers' offices in accordance with clause 35 of the Government Sector Employment Regulation 2014.

Ministerial staff numbers and grades are published on the NSW Government Website at [www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers](http://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers).

119. (a)

Minister's office budgets are drawn from the Premier's Department annual financial allocation to cover employee related expenses, accommodation and other operating expenses. Further information relating to Ministers' Office Budgets is available in the Ministers' Office Handbook.

120. (a-b) i

Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Communication Devices Policy provides guidance on the use, loss, theft and return of communication devices provided for business purposes.

Minister's staff may use mobile telephones for business and (reasonable use) private purposes.

Under the current mobile plans, all local and Australia-wide calls to land lines/mobiles and texts are included in the plan. Premium service calls, international calls and global roaming services are outside of the plan and may be still chargeable based on the principles below.

Minister's staff mobile phone charges are paid from the Minister's office budget except for the items listed below, which need to be paid as a private expense:

- personal international calls from within Australia
- personal travel related global roaming charges
- personal premium number service calls.

Any personal calls which are outside the plan need to be declared and paid for monthly.

Declarations are not required otherwise.

The purchasing of technology items is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements.

The costs for the period 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Annual Report 2022–23.

121. (a-b) i

Ministers' Staff Acceptable Use of Communication Devices Policy provides guidance on the use, loss, theft and return of communication devices provided for business purposes.

The purchasing of technology items is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements.

The costs for the period 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Annual Report 2022–23.

122. (a-b) i

See answer to question 121.

123. (a)

Purchase or lease of artwork for official purposes is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements.

The costs of purchasing or leasing artwork for official purposes are contained within the other expenses category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Premier's Department Annual

Report. The costs for the period 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Annual Report 2022–23.

124. (a)

Hire or lease of floral displays or indoor plants is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements.

The costs of hiring or leasing floral displays or indoor plants are contained within the other expenses category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Premier's Department Annual Report. The costs for the period 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Annual Report 2022–23

125. Spending on office stationery is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements.

The costs of stationery are contained within the other expenses category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Premier's Department Annual Report. The costs for the period 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Annual Report 2022–23.

126. (a-b)

Office supplies are purchased in accordance with standard procurement arrangements.

127. (a)

The total cost of all subscriptions is in accordance with standard procurement arrangements.

The costs of subscriptions are contained within the other expenses category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Premier's Department Annual Report. The costs for the period 28 March 2023 to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department of Premier and Cabinet Annual Report 2022–23.

128. (a) i

The Ministers' Office Handbook outlines that the decision to present a gift is at the discretion of the Minister, having regard to both appropriateness and economy. Gifts may be appropriate, for example, where given as a memento of an official visit or as a small token of appreciation. However, gifts should not be given with the purpose, or in circumstances where they could be perceived as having the purpose, of inducing favourable treatment.

In accordance with the Premier's Department and The Cabinet Office's Gifts and Hospitality Policy, a register of official gifts presented by the Premier will be reported by the Premier's Department at the end of each financial year as required under the provisions of Treasurer's Direction TD21-04 and TD22-27.

129. (a)

Non-standard accessories fitted to Ministerial vehicles are for business, security and safety related reasons, in accordance with the NSW Government Motor Vehicle Operational guidelines.

130. (a-d)

The Ministers' Office Handbook outlines that taxis or ride share services are an option for business trips, including trips:

- Home after evening duty (e.g. when Parliament is sitting, when required to perform the duties of the job, etc.) where public transport is not reasonably available or where it may be unsafe to use public transport. Generally, use of taxis for these purposes would occur after 8pm.
- To or from the airport in connection with early morning or late-night flights on official trips.
- To meetings when it would be unsafe or uneconomical to use public transport.

Costs are managed within Ministerial office budgets.

131. (a)

All domestic and international travel bookings for official business must be made through the NSW Government's approved travel management supplier, this is currently FCM Travel Solutions.

Travel covered by the NSW Government contract includes:

- commercial and charter air travel
- accommodation
- ground transport (car hire, rail, coach, and ferry).

Financial commitments for travel expenditure from the Ministers' office budget need to be made within office arrangements approved by the Chief of Staff as an authorised financial delegate.

Where a Minister, or employee of the Minister's office undertakes travel, travel is taken in accordance with the NSW Government travel policy and the Ministers' Office Handbook. The Premier's Department website also details PD\_A5842315, "Domestic and international travel of NSW Ministers and their offices" that has been released under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009*.

### Overseas Trips

132. Have you had any overseas trips paid for using public funds since 28 March 2023?

133. If yes, did any of your relatives or friends accompany you on these trips?

134. Have you undertaken any official overseas travel that was privately funded since 28 March 2023?

(a) If yes, what was the nature of these trips?

(b) Who paid for these trips?

### Answer:

132. No.

133. Not applicable.

134. The Minister has taken one personal overseas trip. It was privately funded.

(a) Family trip.

(b) Personal.

### Parliamentary Secretary

135. Does your Parliamentary Secretary have pass access to your ministerial office?

136. Does your Parliamentary Secretary have a desk in your ministerial office?
137. Has your Parliamentary Secretary spoken on any pieces of legislation on your behalf? If so which legislation?
138. What event/meetings has your Parliamentary Secretary attended on your behalf?
139. Please provide in table form the date and the purpose of the event/meeting.
140. How often do you meet with your Parliamentary Secretary?
141. Has your Parliamentary Secretary travelled overseas since 28 March 2023?
- (a) If so, when, and where?
  - (b) If so, what was the cost of:
    - i. Airfares?
    - ii. Accommodation?
    - iii. Food and beverage?
    - iv. Transportation?
    - v. Entertainment?
142. Has your Parliamentary Secretary travelled domestically since 28 March 2023?
- (a) If so, when, and where?
  - (b) If so, what was the cost of:
    - i. Airfares?
    - ii. Accommodation?
    - iii. Food and beverage?
    - iv. Transportation?
    - v. Entertainment?
143. Has your Parliamentary Secretary received training?
- (a) If so, was it speech, voice, or media training?
    - i. If yes, who provided this training, on what date and at what cost?

**Answer:**

135. Security passes for 52 Martin Place are required to be issued in accordance with the 52 Martin Place security procedures and the associated Privacy and Surveillance Statement.
136. No.
137. Please refer to the NSW Parliament Hansard.
138. A Parliamentary Secretary shall have and may perform such functions as the Premier may, from time to time, determine in respect of him or her, pursuant to section 38C of the *Constitution Act 1902*.
- The general duties of a Parliamentary Secretary are outlined in the Ministers' Office Handbook available on the Premier's Department website.
139. See the answer to question 138.
140. I regularly meet or speak with my Parliamentary Secretary.

141. (a-b) i-v

The Parliamentary Secretary has not travelled overseas on official business. Parliamentary Secretaries are subject to the same travel rules as Ministers when travelling on behalf of the Premier or the Minister. Further information is available in the NSW Ministers' Office Handbook.

142. (a-b) i-v

Parliamentary Secretaries are subject to the same travel rules as Ministers when travelling on behalf of the Premier or the Minister. Further information is available in the NSW Ministers' Office Handbook.

143. (a) i

No.

### Probity Auditor

144. Has your office or department used a Probity Auditor or Probity Advisors, or similar, since 28 March 2023?

(a) If so please list the company and/or individual, the project, the engagement dates, and their total remuneration in tabular format

### Answer:

144. (a)

Under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009* (GIPA Act), agencies are required to register government contracts valued at \$150,000 (including GST) or more on the NSW Government eTendering website. Departments are also required to include in their annual report information in relation to consultants engaged by or on behalf of the agency, pursuant to Division 7.3 of the *Government Sector Financial Act 2018* and NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines – Annual Reporting Requirements TPG23-10.

The office of the Minister for Energy, Climate Change, the Environment and Heritage has not engaged a Probity Auditor or Probity Advisor since 28 March 2023.

### Qantas

145. Are you a Member of the Qantas Chairmans Club?

(a) Have you ever previously been a member? When did you cease to be a member

(b) When did you initially become a member?

(c) When was this declared on the Ministerial gifts register?

### Answer:

145. Yes. A copy of my most recent Ordinary return, dated 22 September 2023, for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 June 2023 disclosing receipt of Qantas Chairmans's Lounge membership is publicly available on the NSW Parliament's website. A copy of my disclosure under Part 4 of the Schedule to the Ministerial Code, dated 7 August 2023, disclosing receipt of Qantas Lounge membership is publicly available on The Cabinet Office website.

(a) Yes. I ceased to be a member in approximately 2015.

(b) 2005.

(c) Never, I was not a Minister at the time.

### Training

146. Have you received any training since becoming a Minister?

(a) If yes, please provide the details of what the training was.

147. Have you received any speech, vocal or performance training?

(a) If so, what was the cost?

(b) Was this cost covered by the taxpayer?

### Answer:

146. Yes.

(a) All Cabinet Ministers have undertaken a program of Ministerial induction training including Leading for Gender Equality and will undertake Respectful Workplace Policy Training in December 2023.

Members of Parliament have a Skills Development Allowance that may be used in a manner consistent with the Parliamentary Remuneration Tribunal.

147. No.

(a) Not applicable.

(b) Not applicable.

### Questions from the Hon Tania Mihailuk MLC

#### Energy- Offshore Wind Farms

148. In relation to the proposed Hunter Offshore Wind Zone, which local stakeholders or community representatives have you as the Minister met with?

(a) Please list their names.

149. In relation to the proposed Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone, which local stakeholders or community representatives have you as the Minister met with?

(a) Please list their names.

150. Department of Planning and Environment official Kiersten Fishburn confirmed that the Department are preparing a submission for the Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone proposal:

(a) Is the Department conducting their own separate studies into the Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone?

i. If not, then why not?

151. Since the South Australian Government declared on the 29th of August, its opposition to the Southern Ocean Offshore Wind Zone. What correspondence /phone calls / emails or meetings has the Minister, her ministerial office or the Department of Planning & Environment had with Susan Close, the South Australian Minister of Environment, her Office and her Department, or Tom Koutsantonis, the South Australia Minister of Energy, his Office and his Department?

(a) Please provide a list of dates of correspondence/phone calls



152. Has the Minister approached any members of the South Australian Cabinet to seek a better understanding of why SA is opposing Southern Ocean Offshore Wind Farm?
153. Will the Minister make public the NSW Government's submission in relation to the Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone, independent of the federal process?
- (a) If not, then why not?
154. Will the NSW Environment Protection Authority conduct an assessment on the impact of the Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone which is situated on the pristine coastline of the Illawarra and South Coast?
- (a) If no assessment will be undertaken as part of the NSW Government's submission, then why not?
155. Have there been any meetings, correspondence including emails, or phone calls exchanged between yourself, your ministerial office, the Department of Planning Industry & Environment or EnergyCo and the Hon Chris Bowen Minister for Climate Change and Energy or his office, regarding the proposed Hunter Offshore Wind Zone?
- (a) If yes, please provide the date(s)?
- (b) If the Minister has not spoken with their federal counterpart, then why not?
156. Have there been any meetings or correspondence, such as phone calls or emails exchanged between yourself, your ministerial office, the Department of Planning Industry & Environment or EnergyCo and the Hon Chris Bowen Minister for Climate Change and Energy or his office, regarding the proposed Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone?
- (a) If yes, please provide the date(s)?
- (b) If the Minister has not spoken with their federal counterpart, then why not?
157. Have there been any meetings, correspondence including emails, or phone calls exchanged between yourself, your ministerial office, the Department of Planning Industry & Environment or EnergyCo and the Hon Tanya Plibersek Minister for Environment or her office, regarding the proposed Hunter Offshore Wind Zone?
- (a) If yes, please provide the date(s)?
- (b) If the Minister has not spoken with their federal counterpart, then why not?
158. Have there been any meetings or correspondence, such as phone calls or emails exchanged between yourself, your ministerial office, the Department of Planning Industry & Environment or EnergyCo and the Hon Tanya Plibersek Minister for Environment or her office, regarding the proposed Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone?
- (a) If yes, please provide the date(s)?
- (b) If the Minister has not spoken with their federal counterpart, then why not?

**Answer:**

148. (a)

The Minister has met with HunterNet, the Professional Fishers Association and Seafood International in relation to offshore wind.

149. (a)

See answer to question 148 (a).

150. (a) i

Please refer to the answer given in the hearing by Kiersten Fishburn, Secretary, Department of Planning and Environment, recorded on page 56 of the uncorrected transcript. Please also see the answer provided to question 13 on page 7 of the responses to questions taken on notice at the Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Heritage Budget Estimate hearing.

151. (a)

The Minister does not disclose details of conversations with Ministerial colleagues.

152. As above.

153. (a)

This is a matter for the Australian Government.

154. (a)

The Illawarra Offshore Wind Zone is located within the Australian Government's maritime jurisdiction. The NSW Environment Protection Authority will assess relevant and associated planning applications within the NSW jurisdiction when and if they apply. There are currently no planning applications.

155. (a-b)

The Minister does not disclose details of conversations with Ministerial colleagues.

156. (a-b)

As above.

157. (a-b)

As above.

158. (a-b)

As above.

### Energy – Renewable Projects

159. At the Australian Clean Energy Summit, you announced that NSW will “speed up the process” of constructing renewable energy projects and connecting them to the electricity network.

- (a) How does the Minister intend to fast-track the construction of renewable energy projects?
- (b) Will the fast-tracking of the approval processes impact upon the public consultation with local communities?
- (c) Please specify how you intend to fast-track the renewable infrastructure approval processes?

#### Answer:

159.

- (a) Please refer to the section ‘A clean energy future’ on page 31 of the Overview paper of the NSW Budget 2023-24.

- (b) This is a matter for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.
- (c) This is a matter for the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

### City of Sydney Council's Statues

160. The City of Sydney Council has unanimously agreed to a motion 25 historical statues of figures important to the history of New South Wales will have alternate plaques, signage or other additions to present an alternate indigenous perspective.
- (a) Does the NSW Government share the view of the City of Sydney Council that “many of the associated inscriptions and plaques feature inaccurate, misleading and offensive accounts of the feats of those commemorated”?
- (b) Will the Minister issue an Interim Heritage Order to protect the signage and plaques of the statues from revision?

#### Answer:

160.

- (a) The NSW Government believes Councils are able to pass any motions relevant to their local communities.
- (b) Interim heritage orders might be considered if a statue had potential heritage significance, did not have heritage protection, and was under imminent threat.

### Kosciuszko National Park's Brumbies

161. Please specify the number of submissions received in relation to the horse management plan for the Kosciuszko National Park?
- (a) Provide a breakdown from which electorates the submissions came from?
- (b) How many submissions came from the Monaro electorate?
162. How many town hall meetings did you hold prior to making the decision to cull brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park?
163. How many stakeholder meetings did you hold prior to making the decision to cull brumbies in the Kosciuszko National Park?
- (a) Please provide a list of the stakeholder names.

#### Answer:

161. 11,002.

- (a) Information on the electorates of the submission authors was not collected as part of the public exhibition process.
- (b) See answer to question 161 (a).

162. None.

163. (a)

The issue of Wild Horses was raised in several stakeholder meetings prior to the decision. These meetings were not specifically about the issue of wild horses in Kosciuszko National Park. This included during meetings with the Nature Conservation Council and the Invasive Species Council.

A variety of members of Parliament were also spoken to about the issue generally, including the Member for Monaro, Member for Wagga Wagga, the

Hon Rob Roberts MLC, and the Hon Emma Hurst MLC. The Minister's office also met with a variety of MPs who often brought community stakeholders with them.

Other than as noted below, the Environment and Heritage Group did not hold any stakeholder meetings specifically related to the proposed amendment to the draft plan during the period for public comment (8 August to 11 September 2023). Engagement with the National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council, the Wild Horse Community Advisory Panel and the Heritage Council was undertaken consistent with relevant legislative requirements. National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) representatives also met with the Southern Ranges Regional Advisory Council; the Member for Wagga Wagga, at his request; and the RSPCA (NSW) as part of ongoing engagement related to wild horse control. Aboriginal engagement included a conversation with the Chairs of the Tumut Brungle Gundagai Area Aboriginal Advisory Committee and the Southern Snowy Mountains Aboriginal Community Executive Committee. NPWS continued its routine engagement with a range of other stakeholders during this period.

### Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

#### Cost of living relief

164. Does the Government have any plans to abolish the requirement on people who rely on life support equipment to reapply for the NSW Life Support Rebate every 2 years if their health condition has not changed?
165. What costings have been undertaken for enabling landlords to access household energy saving upgrades for their investment properties, to the benefit of tenants?
166. What costings have been undertaken in regards to implementing a recycling collection program for all public housing across NSW?
167. What is the extent of the NSW co-investment in the Commonwealth Household Energy Upgrades Fund program?

#### Answer:

164. The NSW Government is currently considering the medical declaration renewal timing requirements for the NSW Life Support Rebate as part of its review of the NSW Social Programs for Energy Code.
165. None.
166. No costings have been undertaken. Public housing, like all types of housing, has access to local recycling collections run by their local councils. In addition, many local councils run a variety of 'collection' events where hard to recycle items (such as paint or e-waste) can be dropped off.
167. The NSW and Australian governments will announce details of this in due course.

<b>Questions from Ms Sue Higginson MLC</b>
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**Environment****Forests**

168. Is there any work being undertaken by the NSW Government that is consistent with the establishment of a comprehensive, adequate and representative reserve system for forests in Australia?
- (a) Has the Government identified specific forest types that are not currently and adequately protected within the public reserve system?
    - i. What forest types are adequately protected in the NSW reserve system?
    - ii. What forest types are not adequately protected in the NSW reserve system?
169. Is the Government currently undertaking work to ensure that 15% of all forest types are protected in the NSW reserve system?
- (a) Is there any funding available for the purchase of forested land that could contribute to protecting 15% of any native forest type?
  - (b) Is the Government open to considering and acting upon submissions from the community that identify priority areas of native forests that could achieve the 15% of forest type included in the NSW reserve system?
    - i. What assessment criteria is applied to community submissions and proposals for additions to the protected area network?
170. What is the area of koala habitat in the NSW public forest estate that is outside of the area that is identified as the future Great Koala National Park?
- (a) What work is currently underway to protect koala habitat in the NSW public forest estate outside of the area that is identified as the future Great Koala National Park?
  - (b) Has there been any discussions about further protections for koala hubs outside of the Great Koala National Park?
  - (c) Has there been any discussions about further protections for areas of regional koala significance outside of the Great Koala National Park?
171. What Departments and agencies are involved in the interdepartmental committee that is tasked with the preparation of the Great Koala National Park?
- (a) What considerations would be made before adding or removing certain departments or agencies from the committee?
172. When will the advisory groups for the Great Koala National Park be finalised?
- (a) Have the Terms of Reference for the advisory panels been prepared?
    - i. Can you provide these terms of reference?
  - (b) How many members will be on each of the advisory panels?
    - i. What are the qualifications that will be considered of the people that will be appointed to each panel?
  - (c) Will there be capacity for information to be shared across the 3 panels?
    - i. Will there be confidentiality imposed on members of the advisory panels?

- (d) Will the Minister be working directly with the advisory panels?
- i. Will any other Minister or Department be working directly with the advisory panels?
173. What is the total area to be assessed under the planned Great Koala National Park?
- (a) What is the total area within the Great Koala National Park that is currently subject to harvest plans as approved by the Environment Protection Authority?
174. What is the average number of threatened species recorded during broad area surveys prior to the commencement of logging?
- (a) Provide a breakdown by region.
175. How many complaints have been received by the EPA in relation to forestry operations since the beginning of 2023?
- (a) How many of these complaints have been investigated?
    - i. Per forest region?
  - (b) How many of these complaints have been substantiated?
    - i. Per forest region?
  - (c) Have all complainants been provided with information relating to their complaint once it has been concluded?
  - (d) Does the EPA record retractions if initial investigations are discovered to be inaccurate?
    - i. On how many occasions has this occurred?
  - (e) What is the average time taken by the EPA between receiving a report and conducting an investigation?
    - i. What is the maximum time?
    - ii. What is the minimum time?
  - (f) How many stop work orders have been issued by the EPA and for what reason in the financial years:
    - i. 2017-2018?
    - ii. 2018-2019?
    - iii. 2019-2020?
    - iv. 2020-2021?
    - v. 2021-2022?
    - vi. 2022-2023?
    - vii. 2023-Current?
176. Does the EPA track unintentional damage to retained trees?
- (a) Is the frequency of incidents considered when approving harvest plans?

**Answer:**

168. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is preparing an updated Establishment Plan that, among other things, will guide prioritisation of areas for addition to the national park estate. Priorities include sampling each NSW

landscape, within each Interim Biogeographic Regionalisation of Australia (IBRA) subregion.

- (a) In planning for the reserve system in NSW, a key measure of adequacy is based on sub-landscapes (i.e. landscapes by IBRA subregion). There are 1221 sub-landscapes across the State. The IBRA system does not use forest types as a classifications.
  - i. See answer to question 168.
  - ii. See answer to question 168.

169. See answer to question 168 above.

- (a) Funding is available to acquire land for addition to the national park estate. In general terms, priority for allocation of this funding is focused on sub-landscapes with low or no reservation in the existing national parks system; threatened species habitat (including koalas) and threatened ecological communities; areas of significance such as wetlands; areas of cultural heritage significance; and areas that assist with connectivity, resilience and restoration of the national parks system.
- (b) Yes. The NSW Government regularly considers reservation proposal submissions from the community.
  - i. Information about offering or proposing land for acquisition is available on the Department of Planning and Environment website at [www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/establishing-new-parks-and-protected-areas/offer-or-propose-land-for-new-parks](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/topics/parks-reserves-and-protected-areas/establishing-new-parks-and-protected-areas/offer-or-propose-land-for-new-parks).

170. Spatial data on koala habitat, likelihood, koala preferred trees and koala sightings is available via the statewide Koala Habitat Information Base <https://datasets.seed.nsw.gov.au/dataset/koala-habitat-information-base>.

- (a) The Coastal Integrated Forestry Operations Approval (CIFOA) sets the legal requirements for how koala habitat is protected on public land subject to native forestry. The NSW Environment Protection Authority (EPA) is currently consulting with the Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW) about potential adjustments to protocols under the CIFOA.
- (b) See above answer to (a).
- (c) See above answer to (a).

171. The Great Koala National Park Intra-Agency Steering Committee includes Aboriginal Affairs, Destination NSW, the EPA, Department of Planning and Environment (Environment and Heritage Group including NPWS), Department of Regional NSW (including Department of Primary Industries), NSW Treasury, Office of Energy and Climate Change, and The Cabinet Office.

- (a) Consideration was and will be given to the relevance of the agency to the assessment process.

172. Three advisory panels are being established. Invitations to nominated representatives have been sent, and the first meetings are expected to take place before the end of the year.

- (a) Draft terms of reference have been sent to invitees. These will be discussed and finalised with members following the first meeting.
  - i. See answer to question 172 (a).

- (b) Invitations for representative groups have been sent and responses are being collated. A final number of members for each panel is to be confirmed. The number of representatives on each panel is likely to vary.
  - i. Advisory panel membership is drawn from representative groups that have expressed a strong interest in participating in the process to establish the Great Koala National Park. This includes representatives and suitable experts from Aboriginal groups, relevant industry, union, conservation, and recreation bodies, and local government.
- (c) Information-sharing arrangements across the three panels will be established once the terms of reference have been endorsed and the panels are operational.
  - i. Confidentiality and conflict of interest arrangements for the panels are outlined in the terms of reference.
- (d) It is expected there will be opportunities for the members to engage directly with relevant Ministers and Departments through the Intra-Agency Steering Committee, but these arrangements have not yet been determined.
  - i. See answer to question 172 (d).

173. The area of state forest to be assessed for declaration as a Great Koala National Park is up to approximately 171,000 hectares, noting as maps are being refined there could be fluctuations on that figure.

- (a) The EPA does not approve FCNSW harvest plans, or have an approval role in where operations are conducted in state forests.

174. The EPA does not conduct broad area surveys of Crown Forest. The CIFOA requires FCNSW to conduct broad area habitat surveys.

- (a) Not applicable.

175. The EPA received 34 complaints via the Environment Line.

- (a) 32.
  - i. Three were in the Western Integrated Forestry Operations Approval area and 29 in the CIFOA area.
- (b) Of the 32 complaints investigated, two are subject to ongoing investigations, 29 were closed as they were not substantiated, and one resulted in regulatory action.
  - i. The substantiated complaint was in the CIFOA area.
- (c) It is the EPA's standard practice to notify complainants of the outcome of the investigation.
- (d) The EPA is not aware of any occasions where the EPA's investigation findings were not accurate.
  - i. Not applicable.
- (e) The EPA undertakes a triage of all complaints it receives in a timely manner. Investigation activities are completed as soon as practicable. Depending on the nature and complexity of the complaint this could be days, weeks or months. For highly complex investigations, the legislation provides a two year statute of limitations, so this is the maximum time possible to undertake an investigation.



- i. See answer to question (e).
  - ii. See answer to question (e).
- (f)
- i. Zero.
  - ii. Zero.
  - iii. Zero.
  - iv. Two. This included a Stop Work Order for one alleged contravention of section 69SA of the Forestry Act 2012. FCNSW allegedly failed to retain giant tree/s. The second Stop Work Order included an alleged contravention of condition 18.1 of the CIFOA for an alleged forestry operation that was not planned, implemented and conducted in accordance with the conditions of the CIFOA; was not conducted in a competent manner or by a suitably qualified person.
  - v. Zero.
  - vi. Zero.
  - vii. Two. This included a Stop Work Order for one contravention of condition 57.2 of the CIFOA. FCNSW allegedly did not conduct detailed and thorough searches necessary to identify all Southern Greater Gliders and den trees within the forest compartments. The second Stop Work Order was a continuation/extension of the first Stop Work Order.

176. The EPA monitors damage to retained trees during its inspections of forestry operations.

- (a) The EPA does not approve harvest plans.

### **Biodiversity**

177. What is the area of land in NSW that is currently included in the protected area network?

- (a) What is the area of land in the protected area network outside of National Parks?
- (b) What is the area of land in the protected area network on private land?

178. Is biodiversity loss in NSW an urgent issue?

- (a) What specific Government programs exist to:
  - i. Restore substantially altered native vegetation in NSW?
- (b) When will the Government provide a response to the statutory review of the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016?

### **Answer:**

177. As at 30 June 2023, 8,340,915 hectares was included in the protected area network of NSW. In addition, 663,313 hectares have been acquired and are pending reservation.

- (a) As at 30 June 2023, 662,635 hectares.
- (b) As at 30 June 2023, 499,573 hectares of private land were under permanent conservation agreements that contribute towards the National

Reserve System. An additional 1.78 million hectares are protected under term or revocable agreements.

178. Yes.

(a)

- i. The NSW Government is investing in programs to help restore substantially altered native vegetation and conserve biodiversity. This answer addresses only those programs administered by the Environment and Heritage Group.

The Government has invested close to \$250 million through the Biodiversity Conservation Trust (BCT) to support private land conservation outcomes.

While the BCT's focus has mainly been to work with landholders to protect and conserve remnant vegetation and habitats, the BCT does offer support for landholders with BCT agreements who are wishing to undertake restoration activities on their land. The BCT is also running a biodiversity plus carbon reverse auction to protect remnant woodlands and restore adjacent lands using revenue from carbon credits.

Furthermore, the BCT has released a Co-Investment Partnerships Prospectus inviting the corporate and philanthropic sectors, and the Australian Government, to co-invest with the NSW Government in private land conservation and biodiverse carbon projects.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service undertakes some restoration activities on areas of the national park estate, where required and subject to resourcing, for example, areas cleared prior to acquisition for the national park estate.

Other programs managed by the Environment and Heritage Group, such as the Saving our Species program, provide funding for targeted restoration, among other activities. The Biodiversity Offsets Scheme supports some restoration activities.

(b) It is anticipated that the response will be finalised in 2024.

### **Bushfire Emergency Response for Wildlife (BERW)**

179. What stage is the BERW up to in the implementation of Recommendation 53 of the Bushfire Inquiry?

- (a) What measures are in place for the Rural Fire Service to engage with the BERW when fires occur outside of NPWS jurisdiction?

#### **Answer:**

179. This work has transitioned to business as usual. For further detail see answer to supplementary question 180 below.

- (a) The National Parks and Wildlife Service is working with other fire agencies like the Rural Fire Service to establish how the wildlife response will be incorporated into existing fire incident response procedures, and to refine procedures in wildfire response.

### **Wildlife Sub Plan and NPWS Guidelines**

180. Is the Sub Plan currently being deployed at bushfire sites?

(a) What sites have had the Sub Plan deployed?

**Answer:**

180. The Wildlife Emergency Sub Plan, developed by the NSW Environment Protection Authority, is expected to be finalised through the State Emergency Management Committee in December 2023.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) has developed the NSW Wildlife Response During Emergencies Guidelines, and role summaries for associated positions, including the Technical Advisor Wildlife and Wildlife Emergency Response Teams that are consistent with the Australasian Inter-service Incident Management System structure. These framework documents will guide a coordinated approach to responding to injured wildlife and have been used at incidents in the 2023–24 fire season.

(a) The draft Guidelines have been deployed at:

- Coolagolite Fire in Bega, South Coast
- Bayshore Drive, Byron Bay Fire
- Charlie Sector Hazard Reduction on Holsworthy Army Base in Sydney for concerns about koalas on the fireground.

**Energy**

**Eraring**

181. Has the Government undertaken any cost benefit analysis in relation to taking over the operation of the Eraring Power Plant?

(a) If yes, has the cost benefit analysis produced a result greater than 1?

(b) If not, what economic analysis has been undertaken by the Government to inform considerations of taking over operations of Eraring?

(c) Has the Government undertaken any assessment of the Eraring Power Plant and in particular:

- i. a business assessment?
- ii. a profitability assessment?
- iii. a safety assessment?
- iv. a value assessment?
- v. a health assessment?
- vi. an environment assessment?
- vii. a carbon assessment?
- viii. a climate assessment

(d) Has Origin Energy been requested to, or otherwise undertaken to, conduct any assessment of the Eraring Power Plant by the NSW Government and in particular:

- i. a business assessment?
- ii. a profitability assessment?
- iii. a safety assessment?
- iv. a value assessment?

- v. a health assessment?
  - vi. an environment assessment?
  - vii. a carbon assessment?
  - viii. a climate assessment?
- (e) What is the estimated cost for the acquisition and annual ongoing operating costs for the Eraring Power Station?
182. Does the Government have any information about the carbon emissions of the Eraring Power Plant?
- (a) Have the emissions from Eraring been factored into any Government assessment of its current or future emissions?
  - (b) What is the current volume of emissions associated with the ongoing operations at Eraring?
183. Do the current 2030, 2035 and 2050 emissions reductions objectives and projections factor in the operation of Eraring beyond 2025?
- (a) How long do these projections factor in the ongoing operation of Eraring?
  - (b) Has the ongoing operation of Eraring informed your Government's intended 2030 and 2050 emissions reductions targets?
184. What proportion of the daily energy demands of NSW are met by the ongoing operation of Eraring?

**Answer:**

181. (a-e)

The NSW Government is engaging Origin Energy on its plans for Eraring power station. The NSW Government is not considering taking over Eraring power station.

182. Yes.

(a) Yes.

(b) In the 2022–23 financial year, Eraring power station produced approximately 12 million tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent.

183. (a-b)

Current projections assume an Eraring closure date of 2025.

The 2030 and 2050 targets are informed by integrated emissions modelling covering all sectors of the NSW economy. This includes the electricity generation sector and what is assumed, at the time, for generator closure years.

184. Approximately 18%.

**Distributed power**

185. What programs are currently in place to encourage uptake of rooftop solar?
- (a) How much funding is available for each program?
    - i. How many applicants are there for each program?
    - ii. What is the maximum available funding for each program available to each applicant?

(b) Has the Government made any estimations, projections or reports that identify the net capacity of private rooftop, or similar, solar?

- i. How many properties in NSW currently have private rooftop, or similar, solar?
- ii. How many properties in NSW are estimated to not have private rooftop, or similar, solar?
- iii. What is the current average potential maximum output for private rooftop, or similar, solar per day?
- iv. What proportion of the daily energy needs of NSW could be met by private rooftop, or similar, solar?

186. What programs are currently in place to encourage uptake of private household, or similar, batteries?

(a) How much funding is available for each program?

- i. How many applicants are there for each program?
- ii. What is the maximum available funding for each program available to each applicant?

(b) Has the Government made any estimations, projections or reports that identify the net capacity of private household, or similar, batteries?

- i. How many properties in NSW currently have private household, or similar, batteries?
- ii. How many properties in NSW are estimated to not have private household, or similar, batteries?
- iii. What is the current average potential maximum output for private household, or similar, batteries?
- iv. What proportion of the daily energy needs of NSW could be met by private household, or similar, batteries?

**Answer:**

185. The Rebate Swap for Solar (RSS) program.

(a) The RSS offer has approximately \$20 million in funding for the 2023–24 financial year.

- i. As at 13 November 2023, the RSS offer has had 7118 applications and 2688 solar systems have been installed.
- ii. The RSS covers the cost of installing a 3 kilowatt rooftop solar system. The maximum funding for any single customer is \$9620.

(b) No.

- i. As at September 2023, NSW households and small businesses have installed over 914,000 small-scale rooftop solar PV systems. This assumes that any systems less than 100 kilowatts in size are installed on household or small business rooftops.
- ii. As at September 2023, there are approximately 2.3 million occupied private dwellings that do not have rooftop PV installed in NSW. This figure does not include the number of businesses without rooftop PV and assumes that any systems smaller than 10 kilowatts are residential.

- iii. As at September 2023, rooftop solar PV installed in NSW can output a maximum of around 5.8 gigawatts and can produce around 7.4 terawatt hours of energy per year, assuming a capacity factor of around 14.6%.
- iv. On average across a year, rooftop solar PV installed in NSW can supply approximately 10% of total NSW energy needs (based on the 2022–23 financial year consumption rates in NSW).

186. No programs are currently offering incentives. However, the Government recently consulted on changes to the NSW Peak Demand Reduction Scheme to add batteries to the scheme in 2024.

(a) The Peak Demand Reduction Scheme is a market-based scheme.

- i. Not applicable – the Peak Demand Reduction Scheme is not a grant based program.
- ii. Not applicable – the Peak Demand Reduction Scheme is not a grant based program.

(b) No.

- i. As at September 2023, there are approximately 8500 residential battery systems currently installed in NSW.
- ii. As at September 2023, there are around 3.06 million occupied private dwellings that do not have a battery system installed.
- iii. If all of the residential battery systems currently installed in NSW were to discharge at their full rated capacity, the maximum output would be around 48 megawatts (as at September 2023).
- iv. As battery systems are a net consumer of energy due to efficiency losses, they do not contribute to meeting energy needs. However, battery systems can assist in reducing peak demand and increasing minimum demand.

## Climate Change

### Emissions reductions

187. What is the latest that the world can achieve net-zero emissions and still keep average global temperature increases below 2 degrees celsius?

188. How does the Government intend to assess and report on progress towards the 70% emissions reduction by 2035 objective?

- (a) Does the Government intend to abolish the Net Zero Emissions Board?
- (b) If the Net Zero Emissions Board is dissolved or otherwise ceases to exist, what entity will be responsible for assessing and reporting on the 2035 emissions reduction objective?

189. What Government and non-Government entities were consulted with on the 50% emissions reduction by 2030 and net-zero by 2050 targets?

- (a) How many entities that were consulted:
  - i. Did not think that a 50% emissions reduction by 2030 was possible?
  - ii. Thought that a 50% emissions reduction by 2050 was possible?
  - iii. Thought that greater than 50% emissions reduction by 2050 was possible?

- (b) Did you inform all entities that were consulted about the existing emissions reduction objectives in the regulation?

190. Is the Government currently projecting a 56% emissions reduction by 2030?

- (a) Is this projection higher than it was in 2021?
- (b) Does the Government expect that this projection will change at the next review?
- i. If the Government is expecting the new projections to be less than 56%, what are the contributing factors for the reduction?

**Answer:**

187. Please refer to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Working Group III report available at: [www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC\\_AR6\\_WGIII\\_FullReport.pdf](http://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg3/downloads/report/IPCC_AR6_WGIII_FullReport.pdf).

188. Progress towards emissions reduction in NSW is currently monitored by the Department of Planning and Environment.

- (a) The Climate Change (Net Zero Future) Bill 2023 has now passed. The Net Zero Emissions Board will be abolished once the Net Zero Commission is operational.
- (b) The Net Zero Commission will monitor progress towards NSW's emissions reduction targets.

189. (a-b)

The 2030 target was established during the previous term of government with bipartisan support.

190. (a-b) i

In 2021, NSW was projected to reduce emissions to 47-52% below 2005 by 2030. The 2022 update projected a reduction of 56% below 2005 by 2030.

**Carbon accounting**

191. Has the Government undertaken any assessments of the carbon market in NSW?

- (a) How much carbon is stored in native vegetation and native forests in NSW?
- i. How much of this is on private land?
- ii. How much of this is not currently in the protected area network?
- (b) What is the carbon storage potential in restoring native vegetation to pre-invasion levels?

**Answer:**

191. Yes.

- (a) Analysis on behalf of the NSW Natural Resources Commission estimated the total forest carbon stock in NSW in 2021 to be approximately 2.1 billion tonnes of carbon.
- i. Unknown.
- ii. Approximately half.
- (b) This has not been modelled.

## Heritage

### State Heritage Register

192. What is the average time taken between the State Heritage Council making a recommendation and the Department providing advice to the Minister?
- (a) How many recommendations for the inclusion of a thing on the State Heritage Register have been:
    - i. Approved?
    - ii. Denied?
    - iii. Appealed?
  - (b) How many recommendations in the last 12 years for the inclusion of a thing on the State Heritage Register have been:
    - i. Approved?
    - ii. Denied?
    - iii. Appealed?

**Answer:**

192. The Minister for Heritage receives regular advice on heritage matters, including State Heritage Register listings, from Heritage NSW and the Heritage Council of NSW.

- (a) In the last financial year (2022–23)
  - i. 11.
  - ii. Zero.
  - iii. Zero.
- (b) In the last 12 years since 1 July 2011.
  - i. 215.
  - ii. Three.
  - iii. One.