



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-
2025
Supplementary questions**

Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW

**Agriculture, Regional New South Wales, Western New South Wales
(Moriarty)**

Hearing: Tuesday 27 August 2024

**Answers due by: 5pm, Tuesday 24 September
2024**

Budget Estimates secretariat

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**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS**

<p>Questions from Hon Aileen MacDonald MLC</p>

Agriculture Commissioner

- (1) In December 2023, the Government announced that tenders were open to engage an Independent Agriculture Commissioner. Tenders closed on 29 January 2024
- (a) When will the Agriculture Commissioner be appointed?

Answer

It is my intention to appoint someone to the role as soon as possible, subject to the passing of legislation to create a statutory Agriculture Commissioner role.

Funding for Research Facilities

- (2) The Government has announced an investment of \$60 million to upgrade research facilities and emergency response sites across NSW
- (a) What was the process for determining which research facilities received the upgrades?
- (b) Why have research facilities in the Murray Electorate, which produces most of the country's agricultural commodities, missed funding upgrades?

Answer

I am advised:

- (a) A decision was made by the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (the Department), with priority given to operational safety, compliance with regulations, emissions footprint, and emergency and biosecurity response capacity.
- (b) Dareton Primary Industries Institute will receive upgrades to its emergency response systems.

Agriculture Industry Action Plan

- (3) The NSW Government launched the Agriculture Industry Action Plan in July 2013, delivering a report to drive continued growth of our primary industries sector and support growth of jobs in rural and regional areas. The report sets out 40 agreed actions over the next 10 years
- (a) What number of the 40 actions have been completed?
- (b) Can the Government give an update on the actions in the report?

Answer

I am advised:

All 21 actions allocated to the NSW Government have been implemented.

Success has been measured against a number of quantitative targets, including monitoring growth in NSW primary industries exports and increasing the value of primary industries by 30% by 2020 - with that target reached ahead of schedule in 2017.

Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

Animal agriculture emissions

- (4) How many hectares of land was cleared across NSW to make way for livestock, in the last five years?
- (a) How many hectares was cleared for cattle livestock?

Answer

I am advised:

Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW) reports on clearing of vegetation across NSW using satellite imagery. Whilst the statewide land and trees survey (SLATS) reports on woody vegetation cleared for agriculture, it does not report clearing by industry.

DCCEEW also reports on vegetation clearing on rural regulated land. Between 2018-2021 a total of 3,051 hectares of vegetation was cleared for pasture expansion across NSW.

- (5) According to the most recent data from DCCEEW, livestock is responsible for the majority of NSW's agricultural emissions, with enteric methane from ruminant livestock being the largest source at 71%. What actions is the Department currently taking to reduce emissions from animal agriculture to meet NSW's net zero targets?

Answer

I am advised:

The Department is currently involved in a range of research and development projects to reduce methane emissions in livestock, including:

- Providing cattle and sheep producers with the ability to select and breed from animals that have a genetic predisposition to produce less methane;
- Evaluating methane mitigating additives in sheep;
- Assessing the productivity and emission benefits of mixed, multispecies, annual fodder crops grazed by livestock;
- Identifying new and emerging carbon mitigation and sequestration options in a farming system context; and
- Developing Near Infrared Spectroscopy calibration to measure potential methanogenic output from forages which have lower methane emissions per unit of livestock production.
- The Government also recently announced \$60 million will be invested across seven research facilities. This funding will support the upgrade of Wagga Wagga Agricultural Institute's small and large animal houses to increase their studies of animal nutrition and methane emissions research of sheep and cattle.

Animal rescue funding

- (6) What kind of sustainable funding models for animal rescue, rehabilitation, release and rehoming organisations is the Department considering?

Answer

I am advised:

The Government is considering applications for a grant to assist research animal rehoming organisations as per the grant guidelines and is committed to a coordinated approach across Office of Local Government and the Department.

Mulesing

- (7) In order for NSW to eventually reach the point where we can see a full ban on mulesing, we must have government support for a gradual transition, including allocating funding to the NSW wool sector for selective breeding of plain-bodied sheep that are resistant to flystrike, and creating a strategic plan to phase out mulesing practices. Is DPI conducting any research or work into the viability of this?

Answer

I am advised:

The Australian wool industry has been working with CSIRO over a number of years to reduce sheep producers' reliance on mulesing while continuing to improve the welfare of sheep.

Research and development by CSIRO into genetic indicator traits for flystrike resistant sheep resistance now allows sheep producers to select merino rams with both flystrike resistance and wool productivity traits.

The Department has also conducted extensive research into the use of Sterile Insect Technology (SIT) for blowflies, which was successfully piloted on-farm. Sheep and wool industry bodies will be canvassed for funding to validate this localised SIT approach which may provide a non-chemical means of flystrike prevention.

Chicken culling at Hawkesbury farms

- (8) In relation to chickens at two poultry farms in the Hawkesbury area recently infected by avian influenza and consequently depopulated through carbon dioxide gassing confirmed on 19 June 2024 and 22 June 2024, how was the process documented?
- (a) How long did the carbon dioxide gassing process take, for chickens depopulated at each farm?
 - (b) How many chickens were gassed together, for chickens depopulated at each farm?

Answer

I am advised:

The Department had staff onsite daily, keeping records of the process and progress of specialist contractors, supervised Personal Protective Equipment use and compliance with the Individual Biosecurity Direction.

- (a) On the first property, depopulation began on 19 June 2024 and was completed 26 June 2024. The second property depopulation began on the 23 June and was completed on the 26 June 2024.
 - (b) Approximately 500-600 birds.
- (9) According to the Minister for Agriculture in answers to questions on notice 2496,

“mortality of birds prior to depopulation varied from shed to shed and ranged from 10%-40%. At the first property a total of 120,000 birds died between first identification of clinical signs and the completion of depopulation.” How many days did the 10%-40% of these sick birds suffer prior to being gassed by carbon dioxide?

Answer

This is difficult to ascertain because the disease moved through the sheds at varying rates meaning that on the day of confirmation not all sheds were showing clinical signs of infection.

Depopulation commenced the day after HPAI was confirmed and was complete on 26 June 2024. Sheds with the most severe signs of infection were depopulated first.

Second-generation anticoagulant rodenticides (SGARs)

- (10) Please provide details on the use of SGARs by NSW Government’s departments, agencies, and authorities, specifically in relation to the management of rodents at government-owned or operated buildings and infrastructure?

Answer

This question should be directed to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

- (11) Additionally, what measures are being taken to mitigate the environmental and wildlife impacts associated with these chemicals, and are there any plans to transition to more humane and environmentally-friendly alternatives?

Answer

Refer to Question 10.

- (12) Has there been any research conducted in relation to the impacts of SGARs on native species?

Answer

I am advised that the Australian Pest and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) has notified its intention to review first generation and second-generation rodenticides.

Prior to publication of a final regulatory decision, the APVMA will publish a preliminary decision for consultation over 3 months. The preliminary decision is expected in late 2024 or early 2025.

- (13) Given the widespread accessibility of SGARs, particularly via major and online retailers, what actions is the NSW Government taking to address the apparent lack of stringent regulations governing their accessibility and use?

Answer

I am advised that the Australian Pest and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA) is the independent statutory authority responsible for assessing and approving pesticides for use in Australia.

Following their review, any necessary changes to allowed use of SGAR will be considered and implemented.

- (14) How does the Government plan to prevent primary and secondary poisoning of non-target species, and are there any proposals to restrict the availability of SGARs to certified professionals only?

Answer

I am advised that the NSW Code of Practice and Standard Operating Procedures for the Effective and Humane Management of Rodents provides information and guidance to Government agencies, land managers and pest animal controllers around the use of rodenticides and management of risks to non-target species.

As above, any necessary changes to use will be considered and implemented following the APVMA review.

Biosecurity and intensive animal agriculture

- (15) How many intensive animal agribusinesses, by species type, are currently in operation in NSW including cattle feedlots, piggeries, broiler farms, duck farms, egg farms, turkey farms, rabbit farms, emu farms and any other facilities considered to be intensive animal agribusinesses?
- (a) Of these, what is the volume of animals involved, in the last year?
- (b) What is the volume of slaughters, in the last year?

Answer

I am advised:

Intensive animal agribusinesses in operation in NSW:

- Cattle feedlots – data not collected by the Department
- Piggeries – data not collected by the Department
- Broiler farms - 387
- Egg primary production – 1,253
- Duck farms – 199 primary production businesses have nominated ‘Duck’ egg and or meat production being undertaken at the facility.
- Turkey farms – 56 primary production businesses have nominated ‘Turkey’ egg and or meat production being undertaken at the facility.
- Rabbit farms - data not collected by the Department
- Emu farms - data not collected by the Department

- (a) The volume of animals across all agribusinesses sectors is not recorded the Department.

However, below is data reported by industry in relation to animals involved in specific NSW intensive livestock industries:

Animal type	Volume of animals involved in NSW	Source
Feedlot cattle	385,127 head (as of June 2024)	Australian Lot Feeders Association – Quarterly survey
Dairy cows	140,000 cows (as of June 2023)	Dairy Australia In-Focus Report Nov 2023
Pigs	63,000 sows (as of June 2023)	NSW DPI Industry Information
Layer chickens	7,465,589 layers (as of June 2023)	Eggs Australia Annual Report 2023

(NSW state data for the volume of animals is not available for broiler chickens, other meat poultry, rabbit and emus.)

- (b) I am advised that the volume of animal slaughters in the past year has not been recorded by the Department.

However, below is data reported by industry in relation to NSW slaughters:

Species	NSW Slaughter ('000 head) 2023-24
Cattle	1,719
Sheep	9,672
Pigs	855
Chickens	244,001
Source	Source: ABS Livestock Products June 2024

Data is not available by production system (extensive versus intensive). Slaughter data for duck, turkey, rabbit and emu is not reported.

- (16) How many inspections of animal agribusinesses have been conducted in the last year?
 (a) Were there any adverse reports (either animal welfare or environmental) as a result of these inspections?

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Food Authority conducted 4,292 inspections during the 2022/2023 financial year of food businesses.

- (a) Yes, and in these instances where animal welfare and concerns were noted, appropriate follow-up action was taken.

RSPCA NSW’s Intensive Breeding Taskforce (IBTF)

- (17) Has the NSW Government provided any funding for the RSPCA NSW’s Intensive Breeding Taskforce (IBTF)?

Answer

Work is currently underway to deliver on the NSW Government’s commitment to ban puppy farming. Additional funding specific to supporting this commitment is being considered as part of the process.

- (18) Does the NSW Government have oversight of the results of audits undertaken by the IBTF since 2020, including the number of facilities inspected and the number of infringements or cruelty charges that have been laid each year?

Answer

I am advised since August 2020 to June 2024 there have been:

- 744 inspections,
- 429 revisits,
- 110 PINs issued,
- 6 prosecutions, and
- Approximately 18,553 animals inspected.

Animal tourism businesses

(19) How many animal tourism businesses are currently operating in NSW?

Answer

I am advised that there are currently 94 authority holders under the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986*.

(20) How are animal tourism businesses monitored to ensure adherence to animal welfare laws?

Answer

I am advised the Department conducts audits and inspections of exhibited animal authority holders to monitor compliance with the *Exhibited Animals Protection Act 1986*, Exhibited Animals Protection Regulation 2021 and relevant Standards for animal display establishments.

In addition, enforcement agencies including NSW Police and Approved Charitable Organisations (RSPCA NSW and Animal Welfare League) monitor compliance with laws set out under *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* (POCTAA) and relevant subordinate legislation.

Domestic violence

(21) Domestic and family violence services in regional rural and remote areas do not receive any additional funding or loading despite the additional costs they incur to deliver services across vast geographical areas. Will the NSW Government consider a regional loading in funding models for domestic and family violence specialist services?

(a) If not, why not?

Answer

This question should be directed to the Minister for the Prevention of Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault.

(22) To prepare for future floods and fires, will the NSW Government work with Gender and Disaster Australia to incorporate the National Gender and Emergency Management Guidelines in NSW disaster planning?

(a) If not, why not?

Answer

This question should be directed to the Minister Planning and Public Spaces.

Australian National Baboon Colony

(23) How many audits have been conducted by the Department of Primary Industries of the Australian National Baboon Colony (Sydney) in the period January 2014 to January 2024?

Answer

6.

(24) How much funding has been allocated by the NSW Government to fund the Australian National Baboon Colony operational costs in the period January 2014 to January 2024?

Answer

This question should be directed to the Minister for Medical Research.

- (25) Does the Australian National Baboon Colony have a retirement policy in place for primates post their use in research?
 (a) If yes, is this publicly available?

Answer

Yes, the facility has a management plan in place for retired primates.
 Refer to Question 24.

Questions from Hon Mark Banasiak MLC

Posidonia Australis removal permit

- (26) Has DPI Fisheries issued any permits for detached *Posidonia australis* shoots removed from or found in or around Botany Bay to be relocated elsewhere within the last 3 years?

Answer

Yes. Section 37 permits under the Fisheries Management Act 1994 have been issued to the University of NSW (UNSW). The permit allows for *Posidonia* fragments collected in Botany Bay, Port Hacking or Pittwater to be translocated either within the estuary they were collected or relocated to Sydney Harbour only.

- (27) Has *Posidonia australis* from Botany Bay been planted in Sydney Harbour within the last 3 years?

Answer

The permit, issued in February 2024, allows for the translocation of *Posidonia australis* to Sydney Harbour, however the permit holder has reported that to date no translocations have occurred.

- (28) When will the public be engaged in a Citizen Science project in and around Botany Bay to collect *Posidonia australis* shoots, as advertised on the Operation Posidonia website <https://www.operationposidonia.com/storm-squad-1>

Answer

The development of a citizen science project involving the collection of *Posidonia* fragments, is being led by UNSW researchers. The collection of the beach cast fragments is being coordinated under the Operation Posidonia project led by UNSW/USyd staff and Gamay Rangers. This project is ongoing.

Questions from Ms Cate Faehrmann MLC

Marine Estate Management Strategy Projects 2022-2024

- (29) Please provide a full breakdown of all grants allocated as part of the Marine Estate Management Strategy Projects for 2022-2024 by Local Government Area (set out in the below linked document) by:
https://www.marine.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0018/1441260/MEMS-Projects.pdf

- (a) year allocated

- (b) for what period
- (c) to which organisation
- (d) how much and
- (e) for what purpose

Answer

I am advised that:

From 2022-2024, a total of \$2,552,602.00 has been allocated across 5 projects, issued to 78 recipients in 14 LGAs.

\$1,434,651.00 was allocated in the 2022-2023 FY.

\$1,117,951.00 was allocated in the 2023-2024 FY.

Grants were provided across 2 MEMS initiatives:

MEMS Initiative 2 - Marine Estate Management Strategy Reconnecting Fish Habitats

- FY: 2022-2023
- Recipients: 1
- LGAs: Shoalhaven
- Amount: \$500,000.00
- Purpose: To replace a piped causeway acting as a fish passage barrier, to a bridge that will allow free fish passage to approximately 36km of upstream habitat.

MEMS Initiative 1B

- Local Land Services (South East) Marine Estate Management Strategy Grant Program 2022-2023:
 - o FY: 2022-2023
 - o Recipients: 17
 - o LGAs: Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven
 - o Amount: \$484,651.00
 - o Purpose: Support land managers to reduce sediment and nutrients inputs to coastal catchments.
- Local Land Services (South East) Marine Estate Management Strategy Grant Program 2023/2024:
 - o FY: 2023-2024
 - o Recipients: 51
 - o LGAs: Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Kiama, Shellharbour, Shoalhaven, Wollongong
 - o Amount: \$936,072.00
 - o Purpose: Support landowners, primary producers and road managers in South East priority catchments for activities that reduce sediment and nutrients inputs to coastal catchments.
- Local Land Services Clean Coastal Catchments Horticulture Environmental Improvements Grants:
 - o FY: 2023-2024
 - o Recipients: 8
 - o LGAs: Clarence Valley, Coffs Harbour
 - o Amount: \$181,879.00
 - o Purpose: Assist commercial berry and vegetable growers in the North Coast Local Land Services region to reduce diffuse sediment and nutrient pollution.

- The Marine Estate Management Strategy Wagonga Inlet Living Shoreline Grant:
 - o FY: 2022-2023
 - o Recipients: 1
 - o LGAs: Eurobodalla
 - o Amount: \$450,000.00
 - o Purpose: Support the implementation of the Wagonga Inlet Living Shoreline project.

(30) According to the Department's website, the last time the estuary general fishery observer program provided a final report was in 2015, see:
https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0004/657382/OUTPUT-11056-Macbeth-and-Gray-Observer-based-study-of-commercial-line-fishing-in-waters-off-New-South-Wales-FINAL.pdf

- (a) Please provide all reports and/or data from the observer program for all years since 2015

Answer

I am advised that:

Reports specific to Estuary General Fishery:

- BARNES, T. C., BROADHURST, M. K. & JOHNSON, D. D. 2022. Disparity among recommended and adopted escape-gap designs and their utility for improving selection in an Australian portunid trap fishery. *Fisheries Research*, 248. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2021.106219>
- BARNES, T. C., BROADHURST, M. K. & JOHNSON, D. D. 2022. Fleet-wide acceptance of escape gaps and their utility for reducing bycatch in south-eastern Australian *Portunus armatus* traps. *Fisheries Management and Ecology*, 29, 841-850. DOI: 10.1111/fme.12586
- HEWITT, D. E., TAYLOR, M. D., SUTHERS, I. M. & JOHNSON, D. D. 2023. Environmental drivers of variation in southeast Australian Giant Mud Crab (*Scylla serrata*) harvest rates. *Fisheries Research*, 268. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.fishres.2023.106850>

Note: Observer-based survey of the meshnet sectors of the Estuary General Fishery (funded through I5.5 MEMS) has just been completed (sampling concluded 30/08/2024). Data collected from this program is currently being checked, detailed analysis of both observer and commercial fishery logbook data has been planned and will be completed.

(31) According to the Department's website, there is an observer program in Ocean Trap and Line Fishery, see: <https://www.marine.nsw.gov.au/projects/estuary-general-fishery-observer-survey>

- (a) Please provide all reports and/or data from the observer program for all years since 2015

Answer

I am advised that:

Reports specific to Ocean Trap and Line fishery:

- JOHNSON, D. D., BARNES, T. C. & CANDY, S. G. 2024. Optimising fisheries monitoring for rare and protected species: A south-eastern Australian case study shows low levels of interaction with a critically endangered species. *Regional Studies in Marine Science*, 77. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rsma.2024.103669>
- JOHNSON, D. D. & BARNES, T. C. 2022. Observer program data summary - NSW Ocean Trap & Line Fishery - line fishing western zone. NSW Department of Primary Industries, Fisheries. 13 pp. https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0010/1410040/Observer-program-data-summary-NSW-Ocean-Trap-Line-Fishery-line-fishing-western-zone.pdf

Total Allowable Fishing Committee

- (32) Is the Total Allowable Fishing Committee (T AFC) independent of the Department?
- (a) What is the current makeup of the T AFC?
 - (b) What is the role of the T AFC?
 - (c) What is the T AFC's statutory obligations?

Answer

I am advised that:

The TAF Committee is an independent statutory body established under Schedule 2 of the Fisheries Management Act 1994.

Schedule 2, clause 1A of the Act sets out the mandatory composition of the TAF Committee, which is to consist of at least four members, as follows:

- (a) A person appointed by the Minister as the Chairperson of the TAF Committee, being a person who is neither engaged in the administration of this Act nor engaged in commercial fishing;
- (b) A person appointed by the Minister who is a natural resource economist not employed by the Government;
- (c) A person appointed by the Minister who is a fishery scientist not employed by the Government;
- (d) Persons appointed by the Minister who have appropriate fisheries management qualifications.

Under Schedule 2, clause 2 of the Act, a person may be appointed to be a deputy of member of the TAF Committee, and in the absence of the member, the member's deputy has all the functions of the member and is taken to be the member. The TAF Committee currently consists of four members and two deputy members.

- Independent Chairperson (Mr William Zacharin)
- Natural Resource Economist (Dr Daryl McPhee)
- Deputy Natural Resource Economist (Ms Sevaly Sen)
- Fisheries Scientist (Dr Lorne "Richard" Little)
- Deputy Fisheries Scientist (Mr Andrew Penney)
- Fisheries Manager (Ms Alice McDonald)
- Deputy Fisheries Manager (Dr Daryl McPhee)

The TAF Committee must make a Total Allowable Catch (TAC) or Total Allowable Effort (TAE) determination when required by Regulation or under direction from the Minister.

In determining TAC or TAE levels, it is required to consider and give effect to the objects of the Act in relation to relevant scientific, industry, community, social and economic factors, and to call for public submissions in relation to each determination.

In accordance with the regulations, the Committee must determine TACs for the following species:

- Abalone – Abalone fishery
- Lobster – Lobster fishery
- Red sea urchin – Sea Urchin and Turban Shell fishery

The TAF Committee must also make other TAC or TAE determinations if directed by the Minister.

Fisheries that have a TAC or TAE in NSW include:

- Total Allowable Catch:
 - Ocean Trawl Fishery: Bluespotted flathead, Tiger flathead, Eastern school whiting/Stout whiting (combined), Silver trevally, Gemfish
 - Ocean Trap & Line: Gemfish, Bass grouper, Blue eye trevalla, Hapuku, Pink ling, Bigeye ocean perch, Spanner crab
 - Ocean Hauling: Australian sardine, Blue mackerel, Yellowtail scad, Eastern sea garfish,
 - Estuary General: Beachworms, Cockles, Ghost nipper, Pipi, Mud crab, Blue swimmer crab, Longfin river eel and Shortfin river eel (combined)
 - Abalone: Blacklip abalone
 - Lobster: Eastern rock lobster
 - Sea Urchin and Turban Shell: Red sea urchin
- Total Allowable Fishing Effort:
 - Ocean Trawl Fishery: Ocean trawl – inshore prawn, Ocean trawl – offshore prawn
 - Estuary General: Meshing, Category One Hauling, Category Two Hauling

Agricultural Runoff

- (33) What is the Department doing about agricultural runoff in the Coffs Harbour/Nambucca region, particularly from the blueberry industry?
- (a) Are studies of pesticides in Hearnes Lake Catchment being carried out?
 - (b) Are studies of pesticides in the marine park being carried out?
 - (c) Is there a strategy in place to prevent agricultural runoff?
 - (d) Is there a strategy in place to clean up any pesticides found and stop it from entering the ocean?

Answer

I am advised:

Clean Coastal Catchments is an NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy funded project that helps landholders in intensive agricultural industries to implement nutrient management activities and other works that improve water quality through reduced losses of nutrient and sediment exporting from farms.

North Coast Local Land Services is offering support to commercial blueberry, rubus and vegetable growers to make their operations more environmentally sustainable. Supported activities include:

- implementing on-ground works to keep sediment and nutrients on farm and out of waterways
- projects to reduce water use, reduce nutrient and chemical run-off
- projects to repair soil erosion and improve riparian buffer vegetation.

More information is available here: <https://www.lls.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/our-major->

[projects/marine-estate-management-strategy/clean-coastal-catchments-project](#)

- (a) This question should be referred to the Environment Protection Authority (EPA).
 - (b) This question should be referred to the EPA.
 - (c) The Department supports farmers to improve their management of nutrients and soil to reduce runoff from farms into waterways, including through the NSW Marine Estate Management Strategy Clean Coastal Catchments project. The Department understands Coffs Harbour City Council is developing and implementing Coastal Management Programs which also include strategies to support farmers to reduce agricultural runoff and protect marine park water quality.
 - (d) This question should be referred to the EPA.
- (34) Has the Department carried out any testing of blueberries from the Coffs Harbour/Nambucca region?
- (a) If so, what are the results of that testing?

Answer

No.

<p>Questions from Ms Sue Higginson MLC</p>

AGRICULTURE

Forestry

- (35) Has the StollzNow Research conducted on behalf of the North East Regional Forestry Hub into Forestry's social licence to operate, or any part of it, ever been used by the Department or any agency or Government entity for the purposes of ministerial briefs, or external or internal communications?
- (a) Does the StollzNow research constitute public consultation?
 - (b) Is the Department or any agency or Government entity aware of any other public consultation on the public popularity or public support for native forest logging?
 - i. What are the other public consultations that the Department, any agency or Government Entity is aware of relating to native forest logging?
 - (c) Was any assessment of the consultation method, including questions asked, undertaken in relation to the StollzNow research before it was provided in answers to supplementary questions from the hearings held on 21 February 2024?
 - (d) Has the Department ever engaged StollzNow to complete public consultation?
 - i. What were the issues and dates for any occasion where StollzNow was engaged by the Department, any agency, or any other Government entity?

Answer

Yes.

- (a) I am advised the methodology is outlined in the report and is consistent with standard community surveying techniques. This survey may be used as a reference point, however, does not meet the requirement for Government consultation.
- (b) No.
- (c) Yes.
- (d) The Independent Panel is leading engagement on the future of the forestry industry.

- (36) What are the names of the three Forestry Hub reports that have been used to project the 2.2 million hectares of land in NSW that is technically suitable for potential plantation establishment?
- (a) How many Forestry Hubs are there in NSW?
 - i. What are the names of each of the Forestry Hubs in NSW?
 - ii. What oversight of the Forestry Hubs does the Government have?
 - (b) What is the role of the Forestry Hubs in relation to the work of the Department, any agency, or any Government entity?
 - i. What projects, plans or policies have used data or reports produced by any of the Forestry Hubs?
 - (c) Are any of the Forestry Hubs currently undertaking work that will be used by the NSW Government?
 - i. Which Hubs?
 - ii. What is the scope of any of the work being undertaken by the Hubs that will be used by the NSW Government?

Answer

- (a) There are 11 regional forestry hubs across Australia, including 4 in NSW. These are funded and were established by the Commonwealth Government under the National Forestry Industry Plan 2018.
 - i. North East NSW Hub, Central West NSW Hub, South East NSW Hub, Murray Region Hub
 - ii. The NSW Government does not have oversight of the Forestry Hubs.
 - (b) The NSW Government routinely reviews the research outputs of all the Hubs to determine their usefulness to our businesses.
 - i. Please refer to <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/agriculture-land/forestry/regional-forestry-hubs#new-south-walesvictoria>
 - (c) Please refer to Answer 36(b).
- (37) How many hectares of land were purchased by the Forestry Corporation in the 2020-21 financial year of existing plantation or land that was suitable for plantation establishment?
- (a) How much was established hardwood plantation?
 - (b) How much was suitable for hardwood plantation but was not forested?
 - (c) How much was established softwood plantation?
 - (d) How much was suitable for softwood plantation but was not forested?
 - (e) How much was suitable for either softwood or hardwood plantation?

Answer

I am advised that:

- (a) Nil
 - (b) Nil
 - (c) Nil
 - (d) Nil
 - (e) Nil
- (38) How many hectares of land were purchased by the Forestry Corporation in the 2021-22 financial year of existing plantation or land that was suitable for plantation establishment?

- (a) How much was established hardwood plantation?
- (b) How much was suitable for hardwood plantation but was not forested?
- (c) How much was established softwood plantation?
- (d) How much was suitable for softwood plantation but was not forested?
- (e) How much was suitable for either softwood or hardwood plantation?

Answer

I am advised that:

- (a) 92 hectares
 - (b) Nil
 - (c) Nil
 - (d) 92 hectares
 - (e) Nil
- (39) How many hectares of land were purchased by the Forestry Corporation in the 2022-23 financial year of existing plantation or land that was suitable for plantation establishment?
- (a) How much was established hardwood plantation?
 - (b) How much was suitable for hardwood plantation but was not forested?
 - (c) How much was established softwood plantation?
 - (d) How much was suitable for softwood plantation but was not forested?
 - (e) How much was suitable for either softwood or hardwood plantation?

Answer

I am advised that:

- (a) 535 hectares
 - (b) Nil
 - (c) Nil
 - (d) 535 hectares
 - (e) Nil
- (40) How many hectares of land were purchased by the Forestry Corporation in the 2023-24 financial year of existing plantation or land that was suitable for plantation establishment?
- (a) How much was established hardwood plantation?
 - (b) How much was suitable for hardwood plantation but was not forested?
 - (c) How much was established softwood plantation?
 - (d) How much was suitable for softwood plantation but was not forested?
 - (e) How much was suitable for either softwood or hardwood plantation?

Answer

I am advised that:

- (a) 3986 hectares
 - (b) Nil
 - (c) Nil
 - (d) 750 hectares
 - (e) 3236 hectares
- (41) How many hectares of land have been purchased by the Forestry Corporation in the 2024- 25 financial year of existing plantation or land that was suitable for plantation

establishment?

- (a) How much was established hardwood plantation?
- (b) How much was suitable for hardwood plantation but was not forested?
- (c) How much was established softwood plantation?
- (d) How much was suitable for softwood plantation but was not forested?
- (e) How much was suitable for either softwood or hardwood plantation?

Answer

I am advised that:

- (a) Nil
- (b) Nil
- (c) Nil
- (d) Nil
- (e) Nil

- (42) What entities or stakeholders were consulted with in relation to the Forestry Industry Action Plan?
- (a) When did the development of the plan commence?
 - (b) When did consultation with entities commence?
 - (c) Will the scope of the Forestry Industry Action Plan change over time depending on:
 - i. The results of public consultation?
 - ii. Advice from the Independent Forestry Panel?

Answer

I am advised that:

- (a) Development of the Plan has not commenced yet.
- (b) Consultation with non-government stakeholders has not commenced yet.
- (c) Public consultation undertaken by the Independent Forestry Panel will inform the draft Forestry Industry Action Plan.

- (43) What entities were consulted with in relation to the Independent Forestry Panel?
- (a) When did the development of the panel commence?
 - (b) When did consultation with entities commence?
 - (c) What role did the Department, any agency or any Government entity have in the selection of the panel members?
 - i. Were any names for potential panel members submitted by the Department and who were they?
 - (d) What role did the Forestry Corporation have in the selection of the panel members?
 - i. Were any names for potential panel members submitted by the Forestry Corporation and who were they?
 - (e) Is it possible for the membership of the panel to change over time?
 - i. How will changes to the panel be considered and who is the decision making authority in relation to the panel membership?

Answer

The Panel was selected and appointed by the NSW Government.

- (44) What volume of softwood was produced in NSW in the:
- (a) 2019-20 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (b) 2020-21 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (c) 2021-22 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (d) 2022-23 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (e) 2023-24 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?

Answer

I am advised the NSW Government only holds information on timber produced by Forestry Corporation of NSW. Information on timber produced by private companies is not held. The volume and breakdown of softwood timber produced by Forestry Corporation of NSW is reported in its Sustainability Report available on its website.

Broader statistics encompassing private plantations are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at:

<https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (45) What volume of softwood produced in NSW was exported in the:
- (a) 2019-20 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (b) 2020-21 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (c) 2021-22 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (d) 2022-23 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (e) 2023-24 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?

Answer

I am advised for Forestry Corporation of NSW:

- (a) 541,352 tonnes
 - i. Sawlog and sawlog salvage 447,613 tonnes
 - ii. Pulp 93,738 tonnes
- (b) 854,019 tonnes
 - i. Sawlog and sawlog salvage 640,955 tonnes
 - ii. Pulp 213,064 tonnes

- (c) 70,097 tonnes
 - i. Sawlog 64,437 tonnes
 - ii. Pulp 5,660 tonnes
- (d) 26,056 tonnes
 - i. Sawlog 26,056 tonnes
 - ii. Nil
- (e) 1,515 tonnes
 - i. Sawlog 1,515 tonnes
 - ii. Nil

The NSW Government only holds information on timber exports by Forestry Corporation of NSW. Information on timber exported by private companies is not held.

Broader statistics on softwood exports are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (46) What volume of hardwood was produced in NSW in the:
- (a) 2019-20 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (b) 2020-21 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (c) 2021-22 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (d) 2022-23 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (e) 2023-24 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?

Answer

I am advised the NSW Government only holds information on timber produced by Forestry Corporation of NSW. Information on timber produced by private companies is not held. The volume and breakdown of hardwood timber produced by Forestry Corporation of NSW is reported in its Sustainability Report available on its website.

Broader statistics are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (47) What volume of hardwood produced in NSW was exported in the:
- (a) 2019-20 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (b) 2020-21 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
 - (c) 2021-22 financial year?

- i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
- (d) 2022-23 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?
- (e) 2023-24 financial year?
 - i. What volume was sawn timber of any variety?
 - ii. What volume was pulp log of any variety?

Answer

I am advised the NSW Government only holds information on Forestry Corporation of NSW. Information on timber exported by private companies is not held.

Forestry Corporation did not export any hardwood logs in the above periods.

Broader statistics on hardwood exports are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (48) What volume of softwood is expected to be produced in NSW in the:
- (a) 2024-2025 financial year?
 - (b) 2025-2026 financial year?
 - (c) 2026-2027 financial year?
 - (d) 2027-2028 financial year?
 - (e) 2028-2029 financial year?

Answer

I am advised the NSW Government only holds information on expected production by Forestry Corporation of NSW and not private companies.

The volume of timber supplied by Forestry Corporation is expected to remain between 2.7 and 2.8 million tonnes a year, with annual fluctuations in response to market demands and weather.

Broader statistics are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (49) What volume of softwood produced in NSW is expected to be exported in the:
- (a) 2024-2025 financial year?
 - (b) 2025-2026 financial year?
 - (c) 2026-2027 financial year?
 - (d) 2027-2028 financial year?
 - (e) 2028-2029 financial year?

Answer

I am advised the NSW Government only holds information on expected exports by Forestry

Corporation of NSW and not private companies.

Forestry Corporation is not expecting to export softwood timber in these periods.

Broader statistics are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (50) What volume of hardwood is expected to be produced in NSW in the:
- 2024-2025 financial year?
 - 2025-2026 financial year?
 - 2026-2027 financial year?
 - 2027-2028 financial year?
 - 2028-2029 financial year?

Answer

I am advised the NSW Government only holds information on expected production by Forestry Corporation of NSW and not private companies.

Forestry Corporation's major supply commitments for hardwood timber are published in the contracts on its website. Actual production varies in response to weather and other factors and does not exceed the modelled sustainable yield volumes published on the Forestry Corporation web.

Broader statistics are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (51) What volume of hardwood produced in NSW is expected to be exported in the:
- 2024-2025 financial year?
 - 2025-2026 financial year?
 - 2026-2027 financial year?
 - 2027-2028 financial year?
 - 2028-2029 financial year?

Answer

I am advised the NSW Government only holds information on expected exports by Forestry Corporation of NSW and not private companies.

Forestry Corporation does not have any plans to export hardwood timber.

Broader statistics are available from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences website at: <https://www.agriculture.gov.au/abares/research-topics/forests>

- (52) How many native forest hardwood logging operations were subject to either voluntary or mandatory stop work orders in the 2023-24 Financial year?
- What forests were the operations in, for each order? What was the reason for each order?
 - What was the estimated costs associated with worker costs for each order?
 - How many workers were impacted by each order?

- iv. What was the estimated volume of wood that was not harvested as a result of each order?
- v. What was the outcome of each order?

Answer

I am advised with respect to native forest hardwood logging operations on privately owned land - Mandatory stop work orders are the responsibility of the EPA as the compliance authority for Private Native Forestry. Voluntary stop work orders are a matter for private landholders.

Two Forestry Corporation native forest operations were subject to stop work orders in 2023-24. Voluntary stand downs are not stop work orders.

- i. Stop work orders were issued for Tallaganda State Forest and Flat Rock State Forest. The orders are published on the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) website.
- ii. This has not been calculated
- iii. This has not been calculated
- iv. Estimated volumes are in the harvest plans published on the Forestry Corporation website. Actual volumes harvested in each operation are published in the Biomaterial Report on the Forestry Corporation website.
- v. The Stop Work Orders have lapsed.

(53) How many native forest hardwood logging operations were subject to either voluntary or mandatory stop work orders in the 2022-23 Financial year?

- (a) What forests were the operations in, for each order?
 - i. What was the reason for each order?
 - ii. What was the estimated costs associated with worker costs for each order?
 - iii. How many workers were impacted by each order?
 - iv. What was the estimated volume of wood that was not harvested as a result of each order?
 - v. What was the outcome of each order?

Answer

I am advised no Forestry Corporation native forest operations were subject to stop work orders in 2022-23. Voluntary stand downs are not stop work orders.

With respect to native forest hardwood logging operations on privately owned land - Mandatory stop work orders are the responsibility of the EPA as the compliance authority for Private Native Forestry. Voluntary stop work orders are a matter for private landholders.

(54) How many native forest hardwood logging operations were subject to either voluntary or mandatory stop work orders in the 2021-22 Financial year?

- (a) What forests were the operations in, for each order?
 - i. What was the reason for each order?
 - ii. What was the estimated costs associated with worker costs for each order?
 - iii. How many workers were impacted by each order?
 - iv. What was the estimated volume of wood that was not harvested as a result of each order?
 - v. What was the outcome of each order?

Answer

I am advised no Forestry Corporation operations were subject to stop work orders in 2021-22. Voluntary stand downs are not stop work orders.

With respect to native forest hardwood logging operations on privately owned land - Mandatory stop work orders are the responsibility of the EPA as the compliance authority for Private Native Forestry. Voluntary stop work orders are a matter for private landholders.

- (55) How many native forest hardwood logging operations were subject to either voluntary or mandatory stop work orders in the 2020-21 Financial year?
- (a) What forests were the operations in, for each order?
- i. What was the reason for each order?
 - ii. What was the estimated costs associated with worker costs for each order?
 - iii. How many workers were impacted by each order?
 - iv. What was the estimated volume of wood that was not harvested as a result of each order?
 - v. What was the outcome of each order?

Answer

I am advised with respect to native forest hardwood logging operations on privately owned land - Mandatory stop work orders are the responsibility of the EPA as the compliance authority for Private Native Forestry. Voluntary stop work orders are a matter for private landholders.

Two Forestry Corporation operations were subject to stop work orders in 2020-21. Voluntary stand downs are not stop work orders.

- i. Stop work orders were issued for Wild Cattle Creek State Forest and South Brooman State Forest. The stop work orders related to identification and protection of giant trees and hollow bearing trees.
- ii. This has not been calculated
- iii. This has not been calculated
- iv. Estimated volumes are in the harvest plans published on the Forestry Corporation website. Actual volumes harvested in each operation are published in the Biomaterial Report on the Forestry Corporation website
- v. The stop work orders lapsed.

- (56) How many native forest hardwood logging operations were subject to either voluntary or mandatory stop work orders in the 2019-20 Financial year?
- (a) What forests were the operations in, for each order?
- i. What was the reason for each order?
 - ii. What was the estimated costs associated with worker costs for each order?
 - iii. How many workers were impacted by each order?
 - iv. What was the estimated volume of wood that was not harvested as a result of each order?
 - v. What was the outcome of each order?

Answer

I am advised with respect to native forest hardwood logging operations on privately owned land - Mandatory stop work orders are the responsibility of the EPA as the compliance authority for Private Native Forestry. Voluntary stop work orders are a matter for private landholders.

No Forestry Corporation operations were subject to stop work orders in 2019-20. Voluntary stand downs are not stop work orders.

- (57) What was the minimum or shortest cycle out of all approved native forest logging operations in NSW in the Financial year:
- (a) 2023-14?
 - (b) 2014-15?
 - (c) 2015-16?
 - (d) 2016-17?
 - (e) 2017-18?
 - (f) 2018-19?
 - (g) 2019-20?
 - (h) 2020-21?
 - (i) 2021-22?
 - (j) 2022-23?
 - (k) 2023-24?

Answer

I am advised with respect to approved native forest hardwood logging operations on privately owned land - Return cycles are the decision of the Forest manager noting all forestry operations are subject to regeneration requirements under the PNF Code of Practice for each region.

The regulations for public native forestry are detailed in the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals.

- (58) What was the maximum or longest return cycle out of all approved native forest logging operations in NSW in the Financial year:
- (a) 2013-14?
 - (b) 2014-15?
 - (c) 2015-16?
 - (d) 2016-17?
 - (e) 2017-18?
 - (f) 2018-19?
 - (g) 2019-20?
 - (h) 2020-21?
 - (i) 2021-22?
 - (j) 2022-23?
 - (k) 2023-24?

Answer

I am advised with respect to approved native forest hardwood logging operations on privately owned land - Return cycles are the decision of the forest manager noting all forestry operations are subject to regeneration requirements under the PNF Code of Practice for each region.

The regulations for public native forestry are detailed in the Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals.

- (59) What area of forests was approved to be logged in the financial year:
- (a) 2013-14?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?

- (b) 2014-15?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (c) 2015-16?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (d) 2016-17?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (e) 2017-18?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (f) 2018-19?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (g) 2019-20?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (h) 2020-21?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (i) 2021-22?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (j) 2022-23?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?
- (k) 2023-24?
 - i. What area of this was softwood plantation?
 - ii. What area of this was hardwood plantation?
 - iii. What area of this was non-plantation hardwood?

Answer

I am advised Forestry Corporation only holds information on public native forests. The areas of State forest harvested by forest type are reported in the Forestry Corporation Sustainability Report each year.

- (60) What surveying has been undertaken by the Department or Forestry Corporation to assess the health and density of koala populations that does not rely on the acoustic records?

Answer

This work is summarised in the table below.

Note that acoustic monitoring is widely recognised and accepted by ecologists as a technique to reliably monitor many vocalising species, including koalas. Acoustic recording is a useful method to apply over large areas, and across many sites that cannot be logistically surveyed with more detailed methods. Acoustic surveys can also be combined with additional methods, such as GPS tracking, to provide rich data for koala research.

Description	Summary	Reporting of data
Pre-harvest ecology surveys and broad area habitat searches	<p>Ecology surveys and broad area habitat searches carried out in native forest areas prior to timber harvesting</p> <p>Survey requirements described in Integrated Forestry Operations Approvals at https://www.epa.nsw.gov.au/your-environment/native-forestry/public-native-forestry/integrated-forestry-operations-approvals</p>	NSW BIONET Atlas
CIFOA monitoring program	<p>Program of research and monitoring includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Monitoring of species occupancy using automated data collection and species detection methods -Research on koala responses to conditions including tree retention rates, species distribution and sizes <p>Program described at https://www.nrc.nsw.gov.au/ifoa-mer</p>	Natural Resources Commission
Acoustic monitoring in north coast forests	<p>Annual monitoring of the koala metapopulation of the hinterland forests of north-east New South Wales since 2015</p> <p>Program described at https://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/forestry/science/forest-ecology/Koala-Monitoring</p>	Department of Primary Industries
Post-fire management and monitoring program in Kiwarrak State Forest	<p>Localised low intensity fire and monitoring program in fire-affected forest undertaken through a partnership with Local Land Services (LLS) under the Australian Government's koala conservation and protection program.</p>	Forestry Corporation
Radio tracking in north coast forests	<p>Localised study in partnership with Department of Primary Industries and Port Macquarie Koala Hospital used GPS collars on koalas to track their movements throughout State forests to investigate how koalas respond to selective harvesting.</p>	Department of Primary Industries
Koala scat searches	<p>DPI - koala scat searches with detection dogs and genotyping to assess koala sex ratio and provide independent estimates of density at a subset of acoustic arrays.</p>	Department of Primary Industries

(61) What is the amount of money in the 2023-24 budget was spent on fines payable by

the Department or the Forestry Corporation?

- (a) What amount of money was spent on court fees?

Answer

I am advised Forestry Corporation fines and court fees are paid by Forestry Corporation and not from the NSW Government budget

The Department does not undertake forestry operations.

- (62) What is the amount of money in the 2024-25 budget that is allocated to fines payable by the Department or the Forestry Corporation?

- (a) What amount of money is expected to be spent on court fees?

Answer

I am advised Forestry Corporation fines and court fees are paid by Forestry Corporation and not from the NSW Government budget

The Department does not undertake forestry operations.

Biosecurity

- (63) What was the date of the first Departmental brief prepared on the issue of the H5-N1 bird flu that is expected to arrive in Australia with migratory birds in spring 2024?

- (a) Did this briefing address the impacts on wild bird species and native bird populations?
 (b) Did this briefing address the impacts on other native species?
 (c) When was the Minister first provided with a briefing on H5-N1 bird flu?

Answer

The first H5-N1 specific brief was provided on 28 November 2023.

- (a) Yes.
 (b) Yes.
 (c) The Chief Veterinary Officer and Executive Director Biosecurity regularly communicate with the Minister's Office on biosecurity risks, including H5-N1 which has been identified as a major potential risk for Australia for the last few years.

- (64) How many briefings have been prepared by the Department on the issue of H5-N1 bird flu since March 2023?

- (a) How many of these are cross Departmental briefings?
 (b) What role does the Department have in protecting native and wild species from the biosecurity risks posed by H5-N1 bird flu?

Answer

One written briefing has been prepared and the Chief Veterinary Officer and Executive Director-Biosecurity are in regular communication with the Minister's Office regarding biosecurity issues, including avian influenza.

- (a) Work has been underway to assess the risk and implement preparedness activities for a possible H5N1 incursion, since September 2023 via the NSW Wildlife Health Interagency Group. Membership of the group is made up of representative(s) from:
- NSW Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development
 - NSW Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW)
 - NSW Environmental Protection Agency

- NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS)
 - The Australian Registry of Wildlife Health.
 - NSW Health
- (b) The Department is the lead combat agency in emergency animal disease outbreaks in NSW and would be the lead agency for an H5N1 outbreak in wildlife in NSW.
The Department also supports NSW DCCEEW and NPWS in monitoring the potential impacts on native species, through the two-way exchange of information on potential wildlife mortalities.

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

REGIONAL NSW

Executive Director – Media, Strategy and Ministerial Services

- (65) On what date did the role of Acting Executive Director in the Office of the Secretary, which was filled by Dr Adam Tyndall, become available?
- (a) On what date was Dr Adam Tyndall offered the role of Acting Executive Director in the Office of the Secretary?
 - (b) On what date did Dr Adam Tyndall officially commence in the role of Acting Executive Director in the Office of the Secretary?

Answer

I am advised that the role became available on 11 April 2023

- (a) I am advised that Dr Adam Tyndall was offered the position on 29 March 2023
 - (b) I am advised that Dr Adam Tyndall officially commenced on 11 April 2023
- (66) On what date was Dr Adam Tyndall offered the full-time role of Executive Director – Media, Strategy and Ministerial Services in the Office of the Secretary?
- (a) On what date did Dr Adam Tyndall officially commence in the full-time role of Executive Director – Media, Strategy and Ministerial Services in the Office of the Secretary?
 - (b) Was the role of Executive Director – Media, Strategy and Ministerial Services advertised publicly?
 - (c) If so, on what date did applications open and on what date did applications close?
 - (d) If so, how many applications were received from the public advertising of the role?
 - (e) Was the role of Executive Director – Media, Strategy and Ministerial Services advertised internally?
 - (f) If so, on what date did applications open and on what date did applications close?
 - (g) If so, how many applications were received from the internal advertising of the role?
 - (h) Did Dr Adam Tyndall undertake a formal interview for the full-time role of Executive Director – Media, Strategy and Ministerial Services in the Office of the Secretary?
 - (i) If so, on what date did this formal interview take place?
 - (j) If so, who was on the formal interview panel?
 - (k) If so, how many candidates were interviewed for the role?

Answer

I am advised that Dr Adam Tyndall was offered the position on 24 December 2024

- (a) I am advised that Dr Adam Tyndall commenced on 11 January 2024
 - (b) I am advised that the role was publicly advertised. Noting the role title changed from Executive Director Office of the Secretary to Executive Director – Strategy, Media and Ministerial Services on 1 July 2024.
 - (c) I am advised that the applications were open from 5-10 December 2023
 - (d) I am advised that there were 41 applicants.
 - (e) I am advised that the role was advertised internally.
 - (f) Refer to Question 66 (c).
 - (g) I am advised that 3 applications were received.
 - (h) I am advised that Dr Adam Tyndall did undertake a formal interview.
 - (i) I am advised that the interview took place on 20 December 2023.
 - (j) I am advised that the formal interview panel consisted of the Secretary, Department of Regional NSW; and the Director Workforce Capability and Talent.
 - (k) I am advised that 2 candidates were interviewed for the role.
- (67) On what date was Dr Adam Tyndall issued with a pass that enabled access to Minister Moriarty's offices in 52 Martin Place and Parliament House?
- (a) Who authorised the issuing of the pass that enabled Dr Adam Tyndall to access Minister Moriarty's offices in 52 Martin Place and Parliament House?
 - (b) By the end of April 2023, how many departmental staff had been issued with passes that enabled access to Minister Moriarty's offices in 52 Martin Place and Parliament House?
 - (c) By the end of April 2023, which departmental staff had been issued passes that enabled access to Minister Moriarty's offices in 52 Martin Place and Parliament House?

Answer

(a) – (c) I am advised:

Security passes for the Parliamentary Precinct and 52 Martin Place are required to be issued in accordance with the Parliament House Security Pass Policy and 52 Martin Place security procedures and the associated Privacy and Surveillance Statement.

- (68) Between March 25, 2023, and June 30, 2023, was there any formal communication, via internal memo or email, to staff within the Department of Regional NSW identifying Mr Tyndall as a point-of-contact in Minister Moriarty's office?

Answer

I am advised that a search has been undertaken of staff emails between these dates, however no email matching this description was found.

- (69) If so, who sent the internal memo and/or email/s?

Answer

Refer to Question 68.

- (70) Between March 25, 2023 and June 30, 2023, did Dr Adam Tyndall undertake any travel with Minister Moriarty?
- (a) If so, when and to where?
 - (b) If so, did Dr Adam Tyndall accompany Minister Moriarty in a Ministerial vehicle?
 - (c) If so, did Dr Adam Tyndall ever stay overnight at accommodation utilising the travel budget from within the Minister's office?
 - (d) If so, who authorised the travel that was undertaken by Dr Adam Tyndall?

Answer

Yes.

- (a) I am advised that Dr Adam Tyndall was present at the below visits:

13 April 2023 – Paterson

19-20 April 2023 – Coffs Harbour – Lismore

17 – 19 May 2023 – Coffs Harbour – Orange – Dubbo

30 June 2023 – Dubbo

Note that for each visit, Dr Adam Tyndall was one of a number of Department representatives that were present.

- (b) Yes on 30 June 2023, travelling from Dubbo airport to Dubbo. Travel was undertaken consistent with relevant public sector policies and guidelines and in line with the role description.
- (c) No
- (d) N/A

Regional Funding

- (71) How much funding was allocated to the Regional Development Trust Fund on the date it was first announced?
- (a) As of August 30, 2024, how much funding remains in the Regional Development Trust Fund?
- (b) Which projects and/or programs have been funded utilising the Regional Development Trust Fund?

Answer

The 2024/25 NSW Budget Papers contains relevant financial information regarding the Regional Development Trust.

- (72) Has the Minister sent any official correspondence to the Treasurer to seek the release of funds from the Working Regions Fund?
- (a) If not, why not?
- (b) If not, given this funding was part of the former government's Regional Growth Fund, will she seek to have funding released from the program for the betterment of the regions?

Answer

Our Offices collaborate on a range of initiatives to support regional communities.

- (73) Does your government have any programs that provide a guaranteed allocation of funding to every Local Government Area in regional NSW?
- (a) If not, why not?
- (b) If so, what are the specific funds and how much is allocated to each Local Government Area?

Answer

The NSW Government's online grants and funding portal (www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding) provides a list of current and proposed grant opportunities.

- (74) In May 2024, you announced funding for a rural and remote airstrips program
- When did the Department of Regional NSW commence work on this program?
 - On what date was this program presented to the Regional Development Trust for approval?
 - On what date was this program approved by the Regional Development Trust?
 - On what date was approval granted for this announcement to proceed?
 - Which Local Government Areas can access funding through this program?
 - In the announcement, it was indicated that a rollout schedule for this program would be completed by September 2024. Has this rollout schedule been completed?

Answer

Refer to Question 71.

AGRICULTURE**Agriculture Funding**

- (75) As of August 30, 2024, how much funding is available in the Drought Infrastructure Fund?
- What was the figure on March 25, 2023?
 - How many applications have been received for this program since its inception?
 - How many applications have been received since March 25, 2023?

Answer

I am advised that \$21,688,865 is available in the Drought Infrastructure Fund.

- I am advised that \$153,746,887 was available as at 31 March 2023.
 - I am advised that 9,238 applications had been received as at 30 August 2024. This includes Drought Infrastructure Fund (formerly Farm Innovation Fund), Drought Assistance Fund and Seafood Innovation Fund.
 - I am advised that 842 applications had been received since 25 March 2023. This includes Drought Infrastructure Fund (formerly Farm Innovation Fund), Drought Assistance Fund and Seafood Innovation Fund from 31 March 2023.
- (76) As of August 30, 2024, how much funding is available in the Drought Ready and Resilient Fund?
- How many applications have been received for this program since its inception

Answer

I am advised that \$243,598,471 is available in the Drought Ready and Resilient Fund.

- I am advised that 114 applications had been received as at 30 August 2024.
- (77) The former Coalition Government provided more than \$12 million in 2022/23 for the Weeds Action Program (WAP). How much is being funded to the WAP in 2024/25?

Answer

I am advised that the Weeds Action Program was provided \$12.3 million in 2024/25.

Biosecurity

- (78) In 2022 the former Coalition government held a biosecurity conference in Dubbo. Will the Labor government be hosting a follow-up conference?
- If so, when will the conference be held?
 - If not, why not?

Answer

Biosecurity is a key priority of the Minns Labor Government.

While the former Liberal-National Government talked about biosecurity, the Minns Labor Government has acted on it, contributing record investment to prepare and prevent the state from biosecurity threats, and appointed the first Independent Biosecurity Commissioner.

- (79) How much additional funding has been included in the 2024/25 budget, separate to the funding announced in 2023/24, to address the issue of Red Imported Fire Ants?

Answer

The NSW Government has made a significant contribution of \$95 million over 4 years to the National Fire Ant Eradication Program. The NSW Government is playing its part to eradicate the biosecurity threat in line with our Commonwealth Cost Sharing agreement.

- (80) How much additional funding has been included in the 2024/25 budget, separate to the funding announced in 2023/24, for the rollout of electronic identification in sheep and goats?

Answer

I am advised that the Government invested another \$2,010,000 through the 2024-25 budget process over 2 years.

- (81) How much funding has been allocated in the budget for electronic tag rebates?
- How many tags will this funding cover?

Answer

I am advised that \$10.2 million over 2 years to 2025-26. This will cover 13,404,207 tags.

- (82) As of August 30, 2024, how much of the \$2.6 million allocation announced in December 2022 to counter Hudson Pear is remaining?
- How much of this allocation was spent between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024?
 - How much of this allocation is budgeted to be spent in the 2024/25 financial year?
 - Between March 25, 2023 and August 30, 2024, how many cochineal have been bred in the Rearing Facility in Lightning Ridge?

Answer

I am advised that there is \$1,453,599 in remaining funds.

- \$500,000 (2023/2024 had a budget of \$500,000 which was fully expended)
- \$453,599 remaining of the \$500,000 allocated budget for 2024/25
- 46,700 infected cladodes (segments) were released over 30,000Ha of Hudson pear infected agricultural, mining and conservation land in the NW LLS region. The 46,700 infected cladodes equate to the release of 4,670,000 cochineal females (based on a conservative average figure of 100 females per infected segment).

Research Stations

- (83) How many research stations are there in NSW?
- As of August 30, 2024, how many of these research stations has the Minister visited since March 25, 2023?
 - As of August 30, 2024, how many staff are employed at research stations across NSW?
 - What was this figure on March 25, 2023?
 - Who has drafted the terms of reference of the review into research stations?

Answer

There are 21 research stations (there are 7 additional associated field sites).

- As I travel across regional communities, I regularly engage with department staff in the field who are undertaking terrific work to support and grow the agriculture industry.
- As of 28 June 2024, there were 1,608 as reported in the End of Financial Year reconciliation.
- On the 28 February 2023 the figure was 1420.
The research station head count data was not reconciled at the end of March 2023, due to MyWorkZone systems blackout in late March that was planned to coincide with MOG changes triggered by the state election.
The reason for the increase was due to LLS staff moving into key growth sites.
- The Terms of Reference for the Research and Development Review were drafted by representatives from across the Department in conjunction with the independent expert panel.
A copy of the TOR is available at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/regional-nsw/resources/research-and-development-review-underway>

Biosecurity Commissioner

- (84) On what date did applications open for the role of Biosecurity Commissioner?
- On what date did applications close?
 - How many applications were received?
 - Who put together the interview panel of Mr Sean Sloan, Mr Steve Orr and Dr Marion Healy?
 - On what date did the interview panel conduct interviews?
 - How many candidates were interviewed on this date?
 - How many candidates were shortlisted and put forward to the Minister?
 - On what date did the Minister formally reject the shortlisted candidates?
 - On what date was Rimfire engaged to conduct a recruitment process for the role?
 - How many applications were received by Rimfire?
 - How many applicants were approached by Rimfire?
 - Did Dr Marion Healy apply for the role? Or did Rimfire approach Dr Healy?
 - Did Dr Marion Healy undertake an interview for the role?
 - If so, on what date did this interview occur?
 - If not, why not?
 - How many candidates were formally interviewed for the role by Rimfire?
 - On what date was Dr Marion Healy formally offered the role of Biosecurity Commissioner?
 - On what date did Dr Marion Healy officially start in the role of Biosecurity Commissioner?

Answer

I am advised applications opened on 6 December 2023

- I am advised that applications closed on 21 January 2024

- (b) I am advised that 11 applicants were received.
- (c) I am advised the then Secretary determined the composition of the Biosecurity Commissioner recruitment selection panel.
- (d) I am advised that the interview panel conducted interviews between 13 February 2024 and 16 February 2024
- (e) I am advised that the breakdown of interview times was as follows:
 - 13 February 2024 – three candidates
 - 16 February 2024 – one candidate
- (f) 3
- (g) A brief containing the panel’s recommendations was received by the Minister’s office on 22 February 2024 and subsequently returned to the Department for further recruitment action.
- (h) 19 March 2024
- (i) 2
- (j) 6
- (k) Rimfire Resources approached Dr Healy.
- (l) Yes
 - i. 3 May 2024
 - ii. N/A
- (m) 2
- (n) 20 June 2024
- (o) 1 July 2024

WESTERN NSW

Western NSW LGA funding

- (85) Through the Department of Regional NSW, how much funding has been allocated to the Local Government Areas included in the Western NSW portfolio since March 25, 2023?
- (a) Of this, how much has been allocated to Dubbo Regional Council?
 - (b) Of this, how much has been allocated to Gilgandra Shire Council?
 - (c) Of this, how much has been allocated to Warrumbungle Shire Council?
 - (d) Of this, how much has been allocated to Coonamble Shire Council?
 - (e) Of this, how much has been allocated to Walgett Shire Council?
 - (f) Of this, how much has been allocated to Brewarrina Shire Council?
 - (g) Of this, how much has been allocated to Bourke Shire Council?
 - (h) Of this, how much has been allocated to Cobar Shire Council?
 - (i) Of this, how much has been allocated to Bogan Shire Council?
 - (j) Of this, how much has been allocated to Warren Shire Council?
 - (k) Of this, how much has been allocated to Narromine Shire Council?
 - (l) Of this, how much has been allocated to Lachlan Shire Council?
 - (m) Of this, how much has been allocated to Central Darling Shire Council?
 - (n) Of this, how much has been allocated to Broken Hill City Council?
 - (o) Of this, how much has been allocated to Wentworth Shire Council?
 - (p) Of this, how much has been allocated to Hay Shire Council?
 - (q) Of this, how much has been allocated to Balranald Shire Council?
 - (r) Of this, how much has been allocated to Carrathool Shire Council?

Answer

All NSW Government grant information is publicly available on the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development NSW website.

- (86) Broken Hill City Council needs to upgrade the runway of its airport. Which funding program/s is/are available for the council to seek assistance towards this project?

Answer

The NSW Government's online grants and funding portal (www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding) provides a list of current and proposed grant opportunities.

- (87) Broken Hill City Council has had to pause plans for a project aimed at upgrading a sporting facility to cater for more sports, due lack of certainty over funding.
- (a) What funding program/s is/are available for the council seek funding towards this project?

Answer

Refer to Question 86.

- (88) How many meetings of the Alliance of Western Councils has the Minister been invited to?
- (a) How many meetings of the Alliance of Western Councils has the Minister attended?

Answer

I engage with stakeholders in regional NSW on a wide range of issues on a regular basis and will continue to do so.

- (a) Ministerial stakeholder meetings can be viewed via the Ministerial diary disclosure, which is published on the Cabinet website.

Qantas Chairman's Club

- (89) Are you a Member of the Qantas Chairman's Club?
- (a) If no, have you ever previously been a member?
- (b) If yes, when did you cease to be a member?
- (c) If yes, when did you initially become a member?
- (d) If yes, when did you make a declaration to The Cabinet Office?
- (e) If yes, how many times since 28 March 2023 have you used the Qantas Chairman's Club?

Answer

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament. The Legislative Assembly Standing Committee on Parliamentary Privilege and Ethics Report on Review of the Code of Conduct, Aspects of Disclosure of Interests, and Related Issues (December 2010) notes that:

"Advice has been received from the Crown Solicitor that use of the Chairman's Lounge by invitation is not a "gift" for the purposes of clause 10 of the Regulation, as it does not involve disposition of property. However, when the membership leads to an upgrade valued at more than \$250, it becomes disclosable as a contribution to travel, and should be reported under clause 11 of the Regulation." Clause 16 of the Regulation allows a Member to, at their discretion, disclose any direct or indirect

benefit, advantage or liability, whether pecuniary or not.

Relevant disclosures have been made to the Cabinet Office and to the Parliament.

Union membership

- (90) Are you a member of a union?
 (a) If yes, what union?

Answer

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

Union membership fees

- (91) What was the expenditure for you to join a union in:
 (a) 2022-23?
 (b) 2023-24?
 (c) 2024-25?

Answer

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

CFMEU membership

- (92) Have you ever been a member of the Construction, Forestry and Maritime Employees Union (CFMEU)?
 (a) If yes, when?

Answer

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

CFMEU meetings

- (93) Given ministerial diary disclosures do not include all meetings and provide exceptions to disclosures, since 28 March 2023, have you met with the CFMEU?

Answer

I am advised:

In accordance with the Premier's Memorandum 2015-05, all Ministers publish extracts from their diaries summarising details of scheduled meetings held with stakeholders, external organisations, third-party lobbyists and individuals. Ministers are not required to disclose details of the following meetings:

- meetings involving Ministers, ministerial staff, parliamentarians or government officials (whether from NSW or other jurisdictions)
- meetings that are strictly personal, electorate or party political
- social or public functions or events
- meetings held overseas (which must be disclosed in accordance with regulation 6(1)(b) of the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 and Attachment B to the Memorandum), and
- matters for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Ministers' diary disclosures are published quarterly on The Cabinet Office's website (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures>).

ETU membership

- (94) Have you ever been a member of the Electrical Trades Union (ETU)?
 (a) If yes, when?

Answer

I am advised:

The Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983 (the Regulation) sets out Members' obligations to disclose relevant pecuniary and other interests in periodic returns to Parliament.

Clause 13 of the Regulation relevantly requires the disclosure of the name of each trade union and each professional or business association 'in which he or she held any position' as at specified dates. The Regulation does not require Members to disclose membership of a trade union.

Membership of Unions can be disclosed on a discretionary basis. The Clerk of the Parliaments has confirmed that this view is consistent with guidance provided to Members.

ETU meetings

(95) Given ministerial diary disclosures do not include all meetings and provide exceptions to disclosures, since 28 March 2023, have you met with the ETU?

Answer

I am advised:

In accordance with Premier's Memorandum M2015-05 Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information, all Ministers publish extracts from their diaries summarising details of scheduled meetings held with stakeholders, external organisations, third-party lobbyists and individuals. Ministers are not required to disclose details of the following meetings:

- meetings involving Ministers, ministerial staff, parliamentarians or government officials (whether from NSW or other jurisdictions)
- meetings that are strictly personal, electorate or party political
- social or public functions or events
- meetings held overseas (which must be disclosed in accordance with regulation 6(1)(b) of the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 and Attachment B to the Memorandum), and
- matters for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure.

Ministers' diary disclosures are published quarterly on The Cabinet Office's website (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/ministers-diary-disclosures>).

Paper shredder

(96) Does your ministerial office have a paper shredder?

Answer

I am advised:

When the NSW Government was elected in 2023, shredders used by the former Liberal and National Government were left in Ministerial and Parliament offices.

Office equipment is purchased in line with NSW Government procurement rules.

Ministerial disclosures to The Cabinet Office

(97) On what date did you last update/make a ministerial disclosure to The Cabinet Office?

Answer

I am advised:

The Ministerial Code of Conduct (Ministerial Code) requires Ministers to make certain disclosures to the Premier and the Secretary of The Cabinet Office.

I comply with my obligations under the Ministerial Code.

Department(s)/Agency(s) in Portfolio

(98) What department(s)/agency(s) are included in your portfolio?

Answer

I am advised:

The Cabinet Office publishes a Governance Arrangements Chart containing information about Ministers, NSW Government agencies established under Schedule 1 to the *Government Sector Employment Act 2013* and State Owned Corporations established under Schedule 5 to the *State Owned Corporations Act 1989*. The Governance Arrangements Chart outlines the agencies in the Premier and Cabinet portfolio.

The Governance Arrangements Chart may be accessed via The Cabinet Office's website at www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2024-08/20240807-Governance-Arrangements-Chart.pdf.

The *Government Sector Employment Act 2013*, and Administrative Arrangements Orders made under Part 7 of the *Constitution Act 1902*, are available on the NSW Legislation website (www.legislation.nsw.gov.au).

Department(s)/Agency(s) Employees

- (99) How many senior executive service employees were employed by each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities on:
- 28 March 2023?
 - 1 July 2023?
 - 1 January 2024?
 - 1 July 2024?

Answer

I am advised:

The number of senior executives is publicly reported within Annual Reports.

- (100) How many public servants within your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) were paid more than the Premier in 2023-24?

Answer

I am advised:

The remuneration of public service senior executives is published in the respective Department /Agency Annual Reports.

- (101) How many redundancies were processed by each Department(s)/agency(s) within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?
- Of these redundancies, how many were:
 - Voluntary?
 - Forced?
 - What was the total cost of all redundancies in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?

Answer

I am advised:

Redundancies are published in the respective Department /Agency Annual Reports under employee related expenses.

Former Ministerial Employees

- (102) Are there any former employee from your ministerial office now employed by any department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?
 (a) If yes, how many?

Answer

I am advised:

The employment of former Ministerial office staff is not tracked.

Under the Government Sector Employment Act 2013, the Secretary of a Department exercises the employer functions of the Government in relation to departmental employees. The Secretary is not subject to the direction or control of a Minister in the exercise of those functions. Similarly, the head of a Public Service agency exercises the employer functions of the Government in relation to non-Public Service senior executives of the agency. A head of a Public Service agency is not subject to the direction or control of a Minister in the exercise of those functions.

All NSW government sector employees must comply with the Code of Ethics and Conduct for NSW government sector employees. Employees must also have regard to their relevant agency's code of conduct.

Ministerial office staff must comply with their ethical obligations under the NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, including after the cessation of the employment.

Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports

- (103) In what month will the 2023-24 annual reports for each department / agency in your portfolio be published?

Answer

I am advised:

The annual report of a reporting GSF agency is to be prepared, submitted and tabled in accordance with requirements under the Government Sector Finance Act 2018 and Treasurer's Direction 23-11.

- (104) Will the 2023-24 annual reports for the department / agency in your portfolio include a printed copy?
 (a) If yes, how much is budgeted for printing in 2024-25?

Answer

I am advised:

As per the NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines – Annual Reporting Requirements TPG23-10, agencies in the portfolio will be providing two printed copies of the annual report (via in house printing) to the Minister for tabling in both houses of Parliament.

The cost is incurred by internal printing and office supply budgets.

State Records Act

(105) Have you and your ministerial office had training and/or a briefing about the State Records Act from State Records NSW and/or The Cabinet Office and/or Premier's Department?

(a) If yes, when?

Answer

I am advised:

The Ministers' Office Handbook provides guidance in relation to these obligations to assist each Minister's office.

The Premier's Department and The Cabinet Office also provide guidance, advice, training and support on these obligations for all Ministers' offices.

I expect my office to comply with their obligations under the State Records Act 1998.

Consultants

(106) 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?

(b) What is the purpose of each contract?

(c) Who was the contract with?

(d) Did the contract go through a competitive tender?

Answer

I am advised:

Consultancy expenditure, including details of consulting engagements over \$50,000, are included in the annual reports of agencies and departments in accordance with the NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines TPG23-10 - Annual Reporting Requirements.

Details for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Details for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

Legal Costs

(107) 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?

Answer

I am advised:

Legal costs are included in the Other Operating Expenses of an agency's financial statement and further categorised in the note to Other Operating Expenses in accordance with the guidance in TPG24-05 Policy and Guidelines: Financial Reporting Code for NSW General Government Sector Agencies.

The practice of the Department is to include legal costs within the fees for services rendered category. Agencies will include legal costs as a separate line item if it is considered a material expense for the agency.

Details for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the former Department / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Details for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department /Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

Advertising

(108) 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) X (formerly known as Twitter)

Answer

I am advised:

Department and agency expenditure is published in Annual Reports and on OpenGov NSW and data.nsw.gov.au.

Catering

(109) How much of your ministerial budget was spent on catering in 2023-24?

Answer

I am advised:

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

Catering costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

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.

(110) Was catering used for external stakeholders?

(a) If yes, who were these external stakeholders?

Answer

I am advised:

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.

(111) Did any catering costs in 2023-24 include expenditure on alcohol?

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, which is Attachment B to the Ministers' Office Handbook, provides that all office holder staff must use State resources for the effective conduct of public business in a proper manner. Office holder staff must be economical and efficient in the use and management of public resources.

The Handbook can be found here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2023-12/Ministers-Office-Handbook.pdf>

Gin

(112) Since 28 March 2023, have you or your ministerial office purchased 'gin' using your ministerial budget?

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, which is Attachment B to the Ministers' Office Handbook, provides that all office holder staff must use State resources for the effective conduct of

public business in a proper manner. Office holder staff must be economical and efficient in the use and management of public resources.

The Handbook can be found here: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/noindex/2023-12/Ministers-Office-Handbook.pdf>.

Stationery

(113) How much of your ministerial budget was spent on stationery in 2023-24?

Answer

I am advised:

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

The costs of stationery are contained within the Premier's Department Annual Report.

(114) Did your stationery expenditure include gifts for external stakeholders?

- (a) If yes, what was the gift(s)?
- (b) If yes, who received the gift(s)?

Answer

I am advised:

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.

Gifts may be purchased as needed on an occasional basis or purchased and stored for future use. Gifts need to be purchased in accordance with NSW Government procurement policy.

Ministerial Vehicles and Driving Offences

(115) Since 28 March 2023, have you personally driven your ministerial vehicle?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, other nominated public office holders, and certain former office holders are provided with official cars and drivers.

Office holders may drive themselves whenever they choose. Cars should be driven only by the office holder, officially employed drivers, the office holder's spouse or approved relative and any other person authorised by the office holder in those circumstances considered to be appropriate.

(116) As a driver since 28 March 2023:

- (a) Have you been pulled over by the NSW Police Force?
- (b) Have you been fined for speeding?
- (c) Have you been fined for school zone related offence?
- (d) Have you been fined for red light related offence?

- (e) Have you been involved in an accident that included the NSW Police attending the scene?
- i. If yes to a) to e), did this include whilst driving your ministerial vehicle?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministers, like all members of the community are subject to the laws of New South Wales, including Road Rules 2014.

Where a fine is incurred, the payment of the fine is the responsibility of the driver of the vehicle.

Speeches

(117) Does your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) draft and write speeches for you?

Answer

I am advised:

Department and agency staff may contribute to factual information for speaking notes as part of their duties in line with longstanding practices in place under successive governments.

(118) How many public servants have undertaken writing speeches in your portfolio department(s)/ agency(s)?

Answer

I am advised:

Department and agency staff may contribute to factual information for speaking notes as part of their duties in line with longstanding practices in place under successive governments.

Ministerial Staff – Local Government Councillors

(119) As at 30 June 2024, how many of your ministerial staff were local government councillors?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministerial staff are employed by Ministers, on behalf of the State, in their capacity as "political office holders" under Part 2 of the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013 (Act).

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with the NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, including obligations to seek approval for secondary employment, and to take reasonable steps to avoid, and in all cases disclose, any actual or potential conflicts of interest (real or apparent).

(120) What local government(s) did they serve?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministerial staff are employed by Ministers, on behalf of the State, in their capacity as "political office holders" under Part 2 of the Members of Parliament Staff Act 2013 (Act).

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with the NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, including obligations to seek approval for secondary employment, and to take reasonable steps to avoid, and in all cases disclose, any actual or potential conflicts of interest (real or apparent).

Ministerial Advisers

(121) How many staff members were employed in your ministerial office in 2023-24 FY?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministerial staffing numbers are proactively published on the NSW Government Website: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers>.

(122) What is the average salary for staff members in your ministerial office in 2023-24 FY?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministerial staffing numbers are proactively published on the NSW Government Website: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-staff-numbers>.

Police Commissioner Gin

(123) Have you received gin from the Police Commissioner?

Answer

No.

Cabinet Sub Committees

(124) What cabinet sub committees are you a member of?

Answer

I am advised:

Details of individual Cabinet committee members and the work of Cabinet committees are not generally made public. This reflects the longstanding Cabinet conventions of confidentiality and collective Ministerial responsibility, which are central to the Westminster system of government.

The NSW Cabinet Practice Manual is publicly available on the NSW Government website (www.nsw.gov.au) and provides information on operation of Cabinet and committees in NSW.

E-Toll

(125) Does your ministerial vehicle have an E-Toll?

(a) If yes, is expenditure paid by your by your ministerial budget?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministers, the Leader of the Opposition, other nominated public office holders, and certain former office holders are provided with official cars and drivers. All costs associated with these vehicles need to be paid from the relevant approved budget.

Costs for e-tolls form part of the Premier's Department Annual Report.

Department(s)/Agency(s) Gifts and Hospitality Register

(126) Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) have a gifts and/or hospitality register?

(a) If yes, is it available online?

i. If yes, what is the URL?

Answer

The Department's staff submit and manage their declarations through an internal online portal. This register is not publicly available.

Workplace complaints

(127) Have you been the subject of any workplace complaints, including bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment since 28 March 2023?

Answer

I am advised:

Any complaint or disclosure made under the Respectful Workplace Policy is confidential.

The Respectful Workplace Policy applies to all Ministerial Offices and staff. As noted in the Goward review, a key aspect of effective workplace complaint policies is confidentiality in the complaint and investigation process.

Confidentiality ensures that staff feel safe about raising concerns and confident that action will be taken in response.

(128) Has any member of your ministerial staff been the subject of any workplace complaints, including bullying, harassment, and sexual harassment since 28 March 2023?

Answer

I am advised:

Any complaint or disclosure made under the Respectful Workplace Policy is confidential. The Respectful Workplace Policy applies to all Ministerial Offices and staff. As noted in the Goward review, a key aspect of effective workplace complaint policies is confidentiality in the complaint and investigation process.

Confidentiality ensures that staff feel safe about raising concerns and confident that action will be taken in response.

Ministerial staff disclosure of gifts and/or hospitality

(129) Does your ministerial office keep a register of gifts and/or hospitality for staff to

make disclosures?

Answer

I am advised:

All Ministerial staff are required to comply with the Gifts, Hospitality and Benefits Policy for Office Holder Staff attached to the Ministers' Office Handbook and available on the NSW Government website.

(130) 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?

Answer

I am advised:

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.

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.

Ministerial Code of Conduct

(131) Since 28 March 2023, have you breached the Ministerial Code of Conduct?

- (a) If yes, what was the breach?

Answer

I am advised:

All Ministers are expected to comply with their obligations under the NSW Ministerial Code of Conduct (**Ministerial Code**) at all times.

The Ministerial Code sets the ethical standards of behaviour required of Ministers and establishes practices and procedures to assist with compliance.

Among other matters, the Ministerial Code requires Ministers to:

- disclose their pecuniary interests and those of their immediate family members to the Premier
- seek rulings from the Premier if they wish to hold shares, directorships, other business interests or engage in secondary employment (known as 'prohibited interests')
- identify, avoid, disclose and manage conflicts of interest
- disclose gifts and hospitality with a market value over \$500.

A substantial breach of the Ministerial Code (including a knowing breach of any provision of the Schedule) may constitute corrupt conduct for the purposes of the *Independent Commission Against*

Corruption Act 1988.

Credit Cards

- (132) Have you ever been issued with a credit card by a NSW Government department(s) and/or agency(s) since 28 March 2023?
- (a) If yes, under what circumstance?
 - (b) If yes, what items and expenditure was undertaken?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministers and Ministerial Staff are not eligible to receive Departmental credit cards except in the case of overseas travel. In cases of overseas travel short-term cards will be issued and returned at the completion of official travel together with a travel diary for fringe benefit tax purposes.

Where an NSW Government-issued credit card is provided the credit card must only be used for official overseas business trips and official business purposes, this includes for transport to/from the airport when departing/returning from the trip. NSW Government-issued credit cards for official business trips overseas will be held with government contract bankers and used within credit limits imposed. Credit cards are a useful means of expenditure control, but their use should never be for personal purposes.

Costs associated with overseas travel are published on the NSW Government website in line with M2015-05.

- (133) For each department, agency and/or other body in the Minister's portfolio please report:
- (a) How many credit cards are currently on issue for staff? (Please provide a breakdown 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?
 - (e) And what was the card holder's employment grade?
 - (f) How many credit cards have been reported lost or stolen?
 - (g) What was the cost to replace them?
 - (h) How many credit card purchases were deemed to be illegitimate or contrary to agency policy?
 - i. 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?
 - ii. Were all those amounts repaid?
 - (i) 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?
 - ii. Can a copy of the staff credit card policy please be provided?

Answer

I am advised:

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

within the portfolio have a specified policy, these are attached.

Department(s)/agency(s) desk or office

(134) Do you have a desk or office in your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) building(s)?

Answer

I am advised:

I make use of an office in 52 Martin Place and NSW Parliament.

When travelling, Ministers may make ad hoc arrangements to work for periods in Departmental offices.

Senior Executive Drivers

(135) How many senior executives in your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) have a driver?

Answer

I am advised:

No senior executive employed by the Department or Agencies within the portfolio have a driver.

Mobile phones

(136) How many mobile phones has your ministerial office been allocated as at 1 July 2024?

Answer

I am advised:

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.

Ministers' staff mobile phone charges are paid from the Ministers' 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 form part of the Premier's Department Annual report.

(137) How many mobile phones in your ministerial office have been lost or stolen since 28 March 2023?

Answer

I am advised:

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.

Ministers' staff mobile phone charges are paid from the Ministers' 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 form part of the Premier's Department Annual report.

Efficiency dividends

(138) Was an efficiency dividend applied to your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) within your portfolio responsibilities in:

(a) 2023-24?

(b) 2024-25?

- i. If so, what was the efficiency dividend applied to each department/agency?
- ii. What measures are being considered to achieve this efficiency dividend?

Answer

I am advised:

The budget papers include detailed information on budgeted expenses, revenue and capital expenditure. This includes detailed financial statements for individual agencies as well as for government as a whole. The budget papers also outline the financial impact of measures in the budget on individual portfolios as well as for government as a whole.

GIPA Applications / Standing Order 52 – Ministerial Office

(139) Does your ministerial office have staff member(s) to undertake Government Information (Public Access) Act application(s) and/or Standing Order 52 requests?

(a) If yes, has that ministerial staffer(s) received formal training about their

legal obligations?

Answer

I am advised:

The Cabinet Office provides training for Ministerial staff on their obligations under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act) and the requirements for responding to orders for papers under Standing Order 52 of the Legislative Council.

(140) How many GIPA Applications have been received by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?

Answer

I am advised:

Information concerning the obligations of a Minister's office as an agency under the Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (the Act) is required to be submitted to the Attorney General in accordance with section 125(2) of the Act.

The information is included in the annual report of the Department of Communities and Justice in accordance with sections 125(3) and (5) of the Act.

Land audit – Department(s)/Agency(s)

(141) Has your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) undertaken a land audit of surplus government property in any of the following postcodes:

- (a) 2077?
- (b) 2079?
- (c) 2080?
- (d) 2081?
- (e) 2082?
- (f) 2083?
- (g) 2117?
- (h) 2118?
- (i) 2119?
- (j) 2120?
- (k) 2121?
- (l) 2125?
- (m) 2126?
- (n) 2151?

- (o) 2154?
- (p) 2156?
- (q) 2157?
- (r) 2158?
- (s) 2159?
- (t) 2756?
- (u) 2775?

i. If yes to (a) to (u), how many properties have been identified?

Answer

I am advised:

- The NSW Government has been conducting an audit of government land to identify surplus sites that are suitable for social, affordable or market housing.
- The locations of an initial set of 44 sites identified by the audit will be made public over the coming weeks and months as they are transferred to housing delivery agencies or brought to market.

GIPA Applications – Department(s)/Agency(s)

(142) Since 28 March 2023, have you and/or your ministerial office given instructions to your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) in relation to Government Information (Public Access) Act application(s)?

Answer

I am advised:

The Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 provides that agencies are not subject to the direction or control of any Minister in the exercise of the agency's functions in dealing with a particular access application under the Act (subsection 9(2)). The Act also contains offences prohibiting agency officers from acting unlawfully, and prohibiting persons from directing agencies to make an unlawful decision in relation to an access application (sections 116 and 117 of the Act).

It is, however, generally appropriate for agencies to inform the responsible Minister where documents are to be released under the Act, for the Minister's information.

Department(s)/Agency(s) Travel

(143) As Minister, do you approve overseas travel for public servants in your portfolio department(s) / Agency(s)?

(a) If yes, how many overseas trips have you approved since 28 March 2023?

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Government Travel and Transport Policy provides a framework for NSW Government travelling employees and covers official air and land travel by public officials using public money.

Section 2.1 of that Policy sets out approvals required in relation to overseas travel. Further information in relation to the Policy can be found here: <https://www.info.buy.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/travel-and-transport-policy>.

NSW Treasury Policy and Guidelines – Annual Reporting Requirements (TPG-10) requires agencies to include information on overseas visits by officers and employees in agency annual reports.

Information for the period prior to 30 June 2023 is available in agencies' 2022-23 annual reports. Information for the period between 1 July 2023 and 30 June 2024 will be available in agencies' 2023-24 annual reports.

(144) Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on charter air flights by your portfolio agencies, broken down by agency?

Answer

I am advised:

Charter air flights are contained within the travel costs category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Department / Agency's Annual Report. This is in accordance with the Treasury Direction TD23-11 Annual reporting requirements.

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

(145) 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?

Answer

I am advised:

Domestic travel is contained within the travel costs category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Department / Agency's Annual Report. This is in accordance with the Treasury Direction TD23-11 Annual reporting requirements.

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

Official travel is taken in accordance with the NSW government travel policy.

(146) Since 28 March 2023, how much has been spent on international 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?

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Government Travel and Transport Policy provides a framework for all NSW Government travelling employees and covers all official air and land travel by public officials using public money. Further information in relation to the Policy can be found here:

<https://www.info.buy.nsw.gov.au/policy-library/policies/travel-and-transport-policy>

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

- (147) 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?

Answer

I am advised:

The items are contained within the travel costs category in the Other Operating Expenses note of the audited financial statements within the Department / Agency's Annual Report.

This is in accordance with the Treasury Direction TD23-11 Annual reporting requirements.

The travel costs for the period prior to 30 June 2023 form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2022-23.

Travel costs for the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024 will form part of the Department / Agency Annual Report 2023-24.

TikTok

- (148) Are you on TikTok?
- (a) If yes, do you access TikTok from a NSW Government device?

Answer

I am advised:

The Circular DCS-2023-01 Cyber Security NSW Directive - Protecting NSW Government information on government-issued devices sets out how NSW Government agencies are to manage the risk of using TikTok.

More information is available at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/public%3A//2023->

[05/TikTok%20Ban%20-%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20%282%29.pdf](#)
[TikTok%20Ban%20-%20Frequently%20Asked%20Questions%20%282%29.pdf](#)

Signal

(149) Are you on Signal?

(a) If yes, do you access Signal from a NSW Government device?

Answer

I am advised:

Like the former Coalition Government, a range of communications are used by the NSW Government.

I comply with the State Records Act 1998 and I expect all staff members to comply with their obligations under the State Records Act 1998.

Training

(150) Since 28 March 2023, have you had training from an external stakeholder that included an invoice and payment paid for using your ministerial budget?

(a) If yes, what is the description of training?

(b) If yes, how much?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministers have undertaken a program of Ministerial induction training. Ministers have undertaken Respectful Workplace Policy Training.

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

Cabinet documents

(151) Since 28 March 2023, have you shared Cabinet documents with your Parliamentary Secretary?

Answer

Not applicable, as there is no Parliamentary Secretary for the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for Agriculture, Regional New South Wales and Western New South Wales.

Parliamentary Secretary

(152) Does your Parliamentary Secretary have pass access to your ministerial office?

Answer

Refer to Question 151.

(153) Does your Parliamentary Secretary have a desk in your ministerial office?

Answer

Refer to Question 151.

Website usage

(154) What were the top 20 most utilised (by data sent and received) unique domain names accessed by your ministerial office since 28 March 2023?

Answer

I am advised:

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.

(155) 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

I am advised:

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 visits

(156) Since 28 March 2023, have you visited any of these postcodes:

- (a) 2077?
- (b) 2079?
- (c) 2080?
- (d) 2081?
- (e) 2082?

- (f) 2083?
- (g) 2117?
- (h) 2118?
- (i) 2119?
- (j) 2120?
- (k) 2121?
- (l) 2125?
- (m) 2126?
- (n) 2151?
- (o) 2154?
- (p) 2156?
- (q) 2157?
- (r) 2158?
- (s) 2159?
- (t) 2756?
- (u) 2775?

i. If yes to (a) to (u):

1. *What was the purpose of the visit(s)?*
2. *Did you make a funding announcement(s)?*

Answer

I am advised:

Ministers' diary disclosures are publicly available.

Premier's and Ministers' domestic travel information is published on the Premier's Department's website at: <https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/premiers-department/access-to-information/premier-and-ministers-domestic-travel>

Hard hats and/or vests

- (157) Do you have a hard hat and/or vest for visiting infrastructure sites?
- (a) If yes, was it paid from your ministerial budget?

Answer

I am advised:

Ministers are to comply with the appropriate use of personal protective equipment as per Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017.

The NSW Office Holder's Staff Code of Conduct, which is Attachment B to the Ministers' Office Handbook, provides that all office holder staff must use State resources for the effective conduct of public business in a proper manner. Office holder staff must be economical and efficient in the use and management of public resources. State resources are not to be subject to wasteful or extravagant use.

Camera, video recorder and microphones

(158) Does your ministerial office have the following paid by your ministerial budget:

- (a) Handheld camera?
- (b) Handheld video recorder?
- (c) Microphone?
 - i. If yes to (a) to (c), how much is each worth when purchased?

Answer

I am advised:

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 form part of the Premier's Department Annual Report.

Media releases and statements

(159) Are all the ministerial media releases and statements issued by you publicly available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases?>

- (a) If no, why?

Answer

I am advised:

The Department of Customer Service (DCS) is responsible for managing www.nsw.gov.au/media-releases and the publication of media releases.

Purchasing Card (PCard) Policy

Policy Number:	POL24/6	Version:	2.0
Authorised by:	Angus Begg, Chief Financial Officer	Authorised date:	30 May 2024
Issued by:	Finance, Procurement, Property and Fleet	Effective date:	30 May 2024
Category:	PCard	Review date:	30 May 2026

Policy Statement:

This policy specifies the requirements for using purchasing card (PCards) and virtual purchasing cards (VCards) within the Department to be known as the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPIRD) from 1 July 2024 and related Agencies to ensure that resources are used efficiently and maintains public trust, as the department's Code of Ethics and Conduct requires.

For this document, references to PCards includes VCards.

This policy takes a risk-based approach and is intended to meet the requirements for the Use and Management of NSW Government Purchasing Cards set out in [Treasury Policy Paper TPP21-02](#)

Scope:

Only permanent and temporary employees are eligible for a PCard. Casuals, contractors and volunteers are not eligible for a PCard.

This policy applies to all employees of the department who hold a PCard. It also applies to employees of all portfolio entities that have people employed in or through the Department.

Policy:

The key requirements for the use and management of PCards are:

1. Use of PCards
 - 1.1 Personal use of PCards is not permitted under any circumstance.
 - 1.2 Purchasing alcohol with PCards is not permitted under any circumstance.
 - 1.3 Use of PCards is the preferred method on all business purchases (i.e. not for employee entitlements) under \$10,000 (inclusive of GST) where practicable and where the card limit permits.
-

2. Issuing PCards

- 2.1 PCards will only be issued by an officer with appropriate financial delegation.
- 2.2 PCard transaction limits will be approved to align with the officers general financial delegation, special delegations held, and other business needs.
- 2.3 PCards are issued to individual employees, but the ownership of the PCard and the responsibility for payment to the card issuer is the agency's responsibility.
- 2.4 Staff should only be provided with a PCard where a legitimate ongoing business requirement can be demonstrated.

PCards are issued to the officer individually for the role that they are employed to undertake at the time of issue. Any changes to the officer's attendance, role or division of employment within the department or agency may require the PCard to be returned and closed and, where appropriate, re-issued for the new role.
- 2.5 Employees must enter into an agreement (Appendix 1) with both the department and the card issuer about the use of that PCard.
- 2.6 Merchant types are restricted, based on advice from Citibank and NSW Treasury.

3. Approvals

- 3.1 A register of PCards will be maintained to allow oversight of all PCards in use by the department and agencies.
- 3.2 An audit of the PCard register will be undertaken, at minimum, on an annual basis.
- 3.3 Assurance processes must be developed to detect inappropriate card use.
- 3.4 Cardholders are expected to acquit and approve cardholder transactions within 28 days using Expense8.
- 3.5 Cardholders who fail to acquit their transactions within 28 days will be sent reminders with their manager notified. After 3 months failure to acquit can result in the card limit being set to zero and their Executive Director notified. While using their PCard staff are expected to apply the standards of ethical behaviour set out in the Code of Ethics and Conduct. If those standards are not met, the department may take action for misconduct against the staff member.

Procedures:

Operating procedures are available in the [CS Connect Knowledge Base](#)

Roles and responsibilities:

Role	Responsibilities
Agency head (Secretary of DPIRD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ultimately responsible for the proper management and administration of PCards within the Department (Mandatory Core Requirement TPP21-02). • Ensuring that an effective and appropriate PCard policy and associated procedures for the use and management of PCards are developed and implemented by DPIRD Corporate.
Cardholder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding this policy and being accountable for the responsible use of their PCard (Mandatory Core Requirement TPP21-02). • Completing training and demonstrate understanding of the policy and its requirements as part of the application process. • Complying with the terms and conditions of the PCard issuers. • Understanding and acknowledging the cardholder Statement of Responsibility (Appendix 3). • Ensuring the security of their PCard and account details, including storage of the PCard when not required for official business, such as when the employee is on leave. • Knowing the administrative conditions of their PCard and account, including relevant limits, thresholds and restrictions. • Ensuring that credit limits and delegation authorities are not exceeded (purchases must not be split to negate the credit transaction limits). • Familiarising themselves with user guides for the card expense management system. • Obtaining and retaining relevant documentation relating to all transactions over \$30. Transactions under \$30 should have a receipt to assist managers with approval of transactions. Expense8 will allow exceptions to ensure acquittal of all transactions. This should not be done on a regular basis. • Timely acquittal of transactions within 28 days, otherwise the PCard limit may set to zero.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accurate acquittal of transactions to correct GL code, cost centre and wbs code. • Reporting lost or stolen PCards to the card issuer and Finance Shared Services. • Timely reporting of unauthorised transactions.
Finance Shared Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining a central register of purchasing cards. • Ensuring a quality assurance process is in place that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – analyses PCard uptake and usage patterns and – detects inappropriate PCard use. • Managing the relationship with the card issuer, including interactions between the cardholder and the card issuer.
PCard Program administrator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that responsibilities allocated to the Finance Shared Services team are discharged appropriately. • Collating and confirming card accounts for the Secretary and executive members (senior executives reporting directly to the Secretary), as delegated by the Executive Director – shared services. • Preparation of regular credit card expenditure reports for the Secretary or Secretary’s delegate, detailing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – the oversight of credit card expenditure and usage for levels and types of use – any known or identified instances of inappropriate or fraudulent use and – the appropriateness of credit limits. • Providing advice and instructions on action required where there is evidence of misuse or concerns about the appropriate use of a PCard. • Ensuring the effective implementation of controls and oversight mechanisms for the PCard Program across the department and portfolio agencies.
Supervisor/ manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring PCard use. • Reviewing and approving reconciliation procedures as well as ensuring compliance with the processes detailed in this policy and the associated procedure. • Supporting increased use of purchasing cards through procurement processes to ensure more timely payment of small business vendors. • Assessing the business need for the retention of a PCard for an existing cardholder who is commencing a new role within their business unit.

-
- Arranging cancellation of the card with Finance Shared Services if the PCard is no longer applicable for the employee.
 - Exercising their duties in accordance with this policy. In the event of a breach by a supervisor, the department or the agency may choose to withdraw the supervisors' delegation or commence internal disciplinary action.
 - Notifying Finance Shared Services of the need to change a cardholder's existing credit limit and facility if required.
-

Delegations:

- DPIRD financial delegations for PCard use and Local Land Services financial delegations apply to all cardholders. The PCard may only be used for the purpose for which it is issued and in accordance with DPIRD and NSW Government Policy or Direction of the Treasurer.
 - Issue of PCards requires the approval of a delegate level 3 or higher in the financial delegations.
-

Definitions:

- **Cardholder:** Employee who has been issued with a purchasing card.
 - **Card issuer:** The government-nominated service provider for the administration and provision of purchasing cards.
 - **Employee/Staff:** Includes 'government officers' as defined at s. 2.9 *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*
 - **Financial services:** Financial services as defined at s. 6.6 *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*.
 - **Internal Controls (also controls):** Refers to the systems, policies, procedures, and processes that are designed to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of objectives in the following categories:
 - effectiveness and efficiency of operations
 - reliability of financial reporting and
 - compliance with laws and regulations.
 - **Legitimate ongoing business requirement:** Expenditure has been undertaken for a purpose that is in direct connection with, or as a direct consequence of, the cardholder's role and responsibilities.
 - **PCard register:** Register referred to in section 3.2 – Key requirements.
 - **Purchasing Card (PCard):** A credit card issued by a bank, building society or credit union which is used by cardholders to engage in transactions relating to the purchase of goods and services on behalf of the agency. Purchasing cards are also known as corporate cards, government cards, and procurement cards.
 - **Virtual Card (VCard):** Virtual version of a PCard, which works in the same way as a PCard without the physical card being issued. In this policy, the term PCard also denotes a reference to a VCard, for example the virtual PCard attached to the FCM travel booking system.
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Legislation

- *Government Sector Finance Act 2018*
-

Related Policies

- DPIRD Travel Policy
 - DPIRD Code of Ethics and Conduct
 - NSW TPP21-02 Use and Management of NSW Government Purchasing Cards
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Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Cardholder Statement of Responsibility
-

Superseded Documents

- DRNSW Purchasing Card (PCard) Policy version 1.0
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Appendix 1 – Cardholder statement of responsibility

The Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development has approved the issue of a NSW Government purchasing card (PCard) to you (the cardholder). As a cardholder you are required to read and comply with this statement which outlines your responsibilities regarding the use and management of your PCard whilst employed by the department. You must understand and agree to the following terms and conditions:

Safety and security

- I sign my PCard, which is only to be used by me.
- I understand that I am the only authorised user of this PCard.
- I am personally responsible for the security and safe keeping of my PCard and the relevant card account details, including my personal identification number (PIN) and card number.
- If my card is stolen or lost, I will immediately report it to the card issuer and Finance Shared Services.

Official business use

- I will only use the PCard for business purposes in accordance with the guidelines detailed in this policy and associated policy documents and the card issuer's conditions of use. "Business purposes" means that the expenditure has been undertaken for a purpose that is in direct connection with, or as a direct consequence of, my role/position responsibilities within the Department.
 - I will comply with the department's policies, processes, and procedures for authorised expenditure.
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- I understand that all expenditure charged to my PCard is subject to examination and approval by a delegated employee of the department.
- I understand the relevant expenditure categories which are authorised for PCard expenditure.
- I will collect and retain the required documentation to support all transactions made with the PCard. Where the required documentation to support a transaction has not been retained, I will complete a business declaration (MyExpenses) or a statutory declaration (Expense8) detailing the nature of the expense and confirming that the expense was for business purposes only.
- I will acquit and submit my PCard transactions to my manager in accordance with prescribed deadlines.
- I understand that I must not make cash withdrawals or seek cash advances using the PCard.
- I will not exceed my credit limit on the PCard unless I have obtained prior documented approval.
- I will not split transactions on the PCard to avoid exceeding transaction limits.
- I will not make deposits into the PCard account.

Disciplinary sanctions

- I understand that if I use the PCard for purposes other than business purposes, or in a manner which is inconsistent with the conditions of use, I may have my PCard withdrawn, and/or suspended or cancelled. I understand that I may also be subject to the consequences as detailed in the breaches section of this policy and associated procedure.
- I understand that in the event of loss or theft through negligence or non-compliance with the conditions of use, I may be responsible for any liability incurred.

Change of Employment Conditions and/or Extended Leave

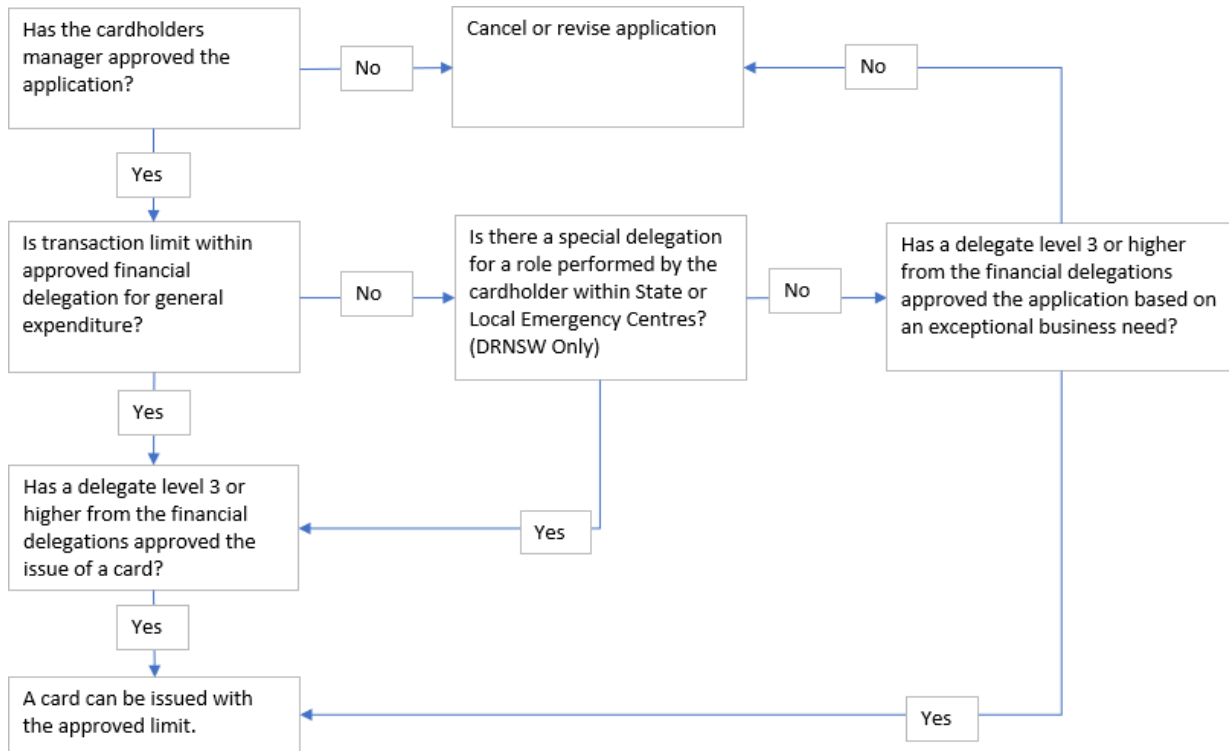
- I agree to notify and return my PCard to the Director Finance Shared Services in the following circumstances:
 - if I leave my employment of my own accord.
 - if my employment is terminated.
 - if I am suspended pending an investigation into my conduct (whether related to PCard use or not).
 - if I go on extended leave for more than 60 days.
 - if I am reassigned to a role or position where a PCard is not necessary to the performance of my duties.

Privacy

- I am aware that my personal information has been collected and will be held by the department on an ongoing basis to meet the various requirements in relation to the administration of PCards. I understand that department may need to disclose my personal information to any party that is legally entitled to access the information.
- I am aware that any personal information related to the administration of PCards will be collected, retained, protected and disposed of by the department under the provisions

of the *Privacy and Personal Information Act 1998*, and in line with the department's privacy management plan.

Appendix 2 – Decision tree to approve PCard limits



Title	FCNSW Card and Employee Expense	Version	3
Policy No.	P 2019/11	Effective date	27/11/2019

1. OVERVIEW

This policy is to manage Forestry Corporation (FCNSW) Credit Card (Card) use and employee expenses (such as out-of-pocket expenses and limited allowances) for FCNSW.

2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all FCNSW employees (including casual staff where relevant) and should be read in conjunction with FCNSW Card and Employee Expense Procedures.

3. POLICY

3.1. Cards

3.1.1. Issue of Credit Cards

Cards will be issued to pre-approved employees based on their roles and business requirements for purchasing of goods and services within approved limits. All Cards are managed by Finance and reviewed by the Chief Financial Officer. All Cardholders will need to sign a Cardholder Agreement.

3.1.2. Limits

Credit limits will be set to balance risk and effective use. Limits will be determined by roles and responsibilities.

There are two types of limits. Total monthly limit and per transaction limit.

3.2. Allowances

FCNSW has a number of allowances in accordance with the Forestry Corporation of NSW Enterprise Agreement (EA). Some allowances are processed through FCNSW Expense Management System (EMS), whilst others are processed through payroll.

3.3. Out-of-pocket (OOP) Claims

Purchases using personal finances will be reimbursed via EMS. Where expenses are a direct debit e.g. top up of public transport account, or a mixture of business and personal, claims should be processed as an OOP.

4. BUSINESS EXPENSE CRITERIA

The expenditure must be:

- necessary to perform a valid business purpose; and
- reasonable expense that is not excessive; and
- appropriate expense for purchasing on a Card or via OOP; and
- comply with the eligible expenditure table in the Credit Card & Employee Expense procedure document.

5. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. Common to Cardholder and OOP Expenses

- All claims are to be acquitted within one month after the purchase date.
- For all transactions (excluding allowances), a compliant tax invoice must be obtained at the time of the purchase.

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5.2. Cardholder

- All expenditure is the responsibility of the Cardholder
- The physical security of the card is the Cardholder's personal responsibility. Under no circumstances should the PIN (personal identity number) be shared with a third party.

5.3. FCNSW

Business approvers must:

- Check validity of claim
- Check transaction fields have been entered correctly including costing and GST.
- Check appropriate document is attached
- All claims are to be actioned within one month after the claim has been submitted in EMS.

Finance will:

- ensure there are appropriate administrative procedures in place to support the EMS users and approvers.
- monitor unreconciled and unapproved claims.
- review and approve business approved claims on an appropriate basis.
- assist periodic compliance audits with the EMS policy and procedures.

The Chief Financial Officer has the responsibility to ensure appropriate procedures are in place to support the Credit Card and Employee Expense Policy.

6. FINANCIAL DELEGATIONS

The FCNSW Financial & Administrative Delegations Authority provides approval to purchase and approve expenditure on behalf of FCNSW. However, if cardholders and business approvers do not have financial delegation under the current authority:

- Cardholders are hereby granted financial delegation as per their relevant transaction limit.
- Business approvers are hereby granted delegation to approve claims up to their direct report's transaction limit.

Claims outside this delegation will need to be forwarded to a business approver with appropriate delegation.

7. LATE ACQUITTAL OF CLAIMS

7.1. OOP & Allowances

Any claim that is submitted more than one month after the event may be rejected. Any claim older than six months will be rejected unless there a justifiable reason.

7.2. Cardholders

Any claim that is outstanding for two months from transaction date will have their Card suspended unless a justifiable reason is supplied.

8. BREACH OF POLICY

Any employee who becomes aware of a breach of this Policy must immediately report the breach to their supervisor. A breach of this Policy will be considered in the context of the FCNSW Code of Conduct and action may be taken in accordance with relevant policies.

Fraudulent use of Cards will be subject to investigation and may result in one or more of the following outcomes; cancellation of the card, disciplinary action, legal action, dismissal, criminal prosecution.

9. RELATED LEGISLATION

- A New Tax System (Goods and Services Tax) Act 1999 (the GST Act)
- Government Sector Finance Act 2018
- NSW Treasury Policy - TPP 17-19 Use and Management of NSW Government Purchasing Cards

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10. RELATED POLICIES

- BP2018/01 FCNSW Code of Conduct
- P2017/24 FCNSW Procurement Policy
- B2019/06 FCNSW Travel Policy
- P2019/01 FCNSW Mobile Phones & Mobile Devices Policy
- P2016/05 FCNSW Alcohol and Other Drugs
- P2019/08 FCNSW Motor Vehicle Policy
- P2017/11 FCNSW Travel for Staff on Common Law Contracts

11. RELATED DELEGATIONS

- FCNSW Financial and Administrative Delegations of Authority

12. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- FCNSW Procurement Manual
- FCNSW Card and Employee Expense Procedures

13. POLICIES REPLACED

This policy replaces and supersedes the following documents:

- P2016/03 – Credit Card & Employee Management Policy

14. CONTACT OFFICER

Account Payable

Anshul Chaudhary – Chief Financial Officer



Chief Executive Officer

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