

Questions from The Hon. Chris Rath MLC, Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council

Local Roads Government Assessment

1. How will the government ensure sustainable long-term funding to assist councils facing growing infrastructure backlogs?
2. Is there a plan to review and adjust the Disaster Recovery Funding Arrangements to expedite support for local councils post-newly established Tripartite Agreements?
3. What steps will the government take to strengthen governance frameworks for local councils to ensure transparency and effective road asset management?
4. Will there be more stringent guidelines or oversight introduced to ensure councils adhere to Integrated Planning and Reporting (IP&R) requirements?
5. How does the government plan to ensure equitable allocation of resources to rural and regional councils with limited revenue bases?
6. Will the government introduce a statewide framework for monitoring and reporting on council road asset performance and KPIs to improve accountability?

ANSWER:

1. I am advised:

The Minister for Local Government referred the funding issue of local governments to the Standing Committee on State Development, through the *Inquiry into the Ability of local governments to fund infrastructure and services*.

This fulfills an election promise by the NSW Government to review the financial model for councils facing rising costs.

The inquiry received 129 submissions, 2 supplementary submissions with the committee holding 10 public hearings across NSW. The committee tabled its report on 29 November 2024.

The NSW Government is reviewing the report's recommendations and has until 28 February 2025 to respond. In the meantime, the Government will continue to progress reforms to improve financial sustainability and financial transparency in the local government sector.

2. I am advised:

This is a matter for the Ministers administering the NSW Reconstruction Authority (Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Emergency Services).

3. I am advised:

The Audit Office of NSW recently examined and reported on road asset management in *Road Asset Management in local government*, making detailed findings and identifying key lessons for the local government sector.

The report can be found at <https://www.audit.nsw.gov.au/our-work/reports/road-asset-management-in-local-government>.

There are no recommendations made in the report for the NSW Government.

4. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 3.

5. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 1.

6. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 3.

Financial Sustainability

7. Will the Government align statutory fees and charges with the rate peg to reduce the financial burden on local councils?

ANSWER:

7. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 1.

Code of Conduct

8. The submissions period for the Code of Conduct discussion paper ended in November. How has the feedback informed the proposed changes, and what are the immediate next steps to ensure these reforms are prioritised?

9. What specific measures are being considered to address ongoing issues with councillor misconduct under the current framework while reforms are being finalised?

10. How does the department plan to ensure the new Code of Conduct improves both accountability and efficiency in dealing with complaints?

ANSWER:

8. I am advised:

The Office of Local Government released a discussion paper inviting input from the sector regarding future directions for the Code of Conduct.

Feedback to the discussion paper was sought over a 12-week period. 227 submissions were received. These submissions are being reviewed.

The Office of Local Government will work with the sector and key stakeholders in 2025 to advance necessary reforms to the Code of Conduct.

9. I am advised:

This question was answered by Mr Brett Whitworth, Deputy Secretary Office of Local Government at the hearing on 5 December 2024 (see pages 10-11 of the transcript).

10. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 8.

Conflict of Interest

11. Has the Office of Local Government provided guidance or recommendations to councils regarding proactive management of conflicts of interest for councillors, particularly those involved in multiple roles or external directorships?

12. What specific improvements are being proposed to strengthen conflict of interest policies within the new Code of Conduct?

13. Given recent cases, has the Office of Local Government reviewed its oversight mechanisms to prevent and address conflicts of interest at both council and parliamentary levels?

ANSWER:

11. I am advised:

The Model Code of Conduct for Local Councils in NSW contains provisions that prescribe the circumstances in which a councillor will have a pecuniary or non-pecuniary conflict of interest in a matter (including where they have a 'conflict of duties'), and their obligations in declaring and appropriately managing conflicts of interest in each of these scenarios.

The Office of Local Government has published resources for councillors to assist them to understand their obligations under the Model Code of Conduct, and to assist them to identify and appropriately manage conflicts of interest and to proactively disclose their private interests in their returns of interests. These are available on the Office of Local Government's website.

Following the recent local government elections, the Office of Local Government has delivered a series of "Hit the Ground Running" webinars to assist councillors to understand their roles and responsibilities and to exercise their functions effectively

and appropriately. One of the webinars had a specific focus on councillors' ethical obligations including in relation to the disclosure and management of conflicts of interest. The Independent Commission Against Corruption also delivered a webinar as part of the "Hit the Ground Running" series on corruption risks for councillors.

12. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 8.

13. I am advised:

Refer to the answers provided to Questions 8, 9, and 11.

Apprenticeship Programs

14. The first round of the apprenticeship program saw strong uptake. What specific measures are in place to address regional inequities and ensure all councils, including smaller or disadvantaged ones, can fully participate?

15. How will the program address potential attrition rates and ensure apprentices transition into long-term roles within local government after their training ends?

16. What lessons from round one of the program are being applied to improve the process for the second round in March 2025?

17. Has there been any framework developed to evaluate the impact of the apprenticeship and trainee program on local workforce development, particularly in regional areas? If so, what are the key performance indicators.

18. What specific arrangements have been made with TAFE and other training organisations to ensure adequate geographic coverage and availability of programs for apprentices, especially in remote areas?

19. How is the allocated \$252 million being distributed to councils, and what percentage of this funding is directed toward on-cost versus direct training and salary support?

20. What provision are in place to support apprentices in rural areas who may need to travel significant distances or require accommodation to attend training programs? Is funding allocated for these additional costs?

21. The Minister mentioned in the Budget Estimates that councils will have autonomy to choose apprenticeship types. How is the program ensuring alignment between council selections and broader skill shortages in critical areas such as planning, engineering and childcare?

ANSWER:

14. I am advised:

Round 1 of the *Fresh Start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets Program* saw applications from 125 eligible local government organisations, with approximately 62% of those applications coming from rural and remote areas.

The Government is liaising with individual councils about their applications and announcements will be made shortly.

Eligible local government organisations that decided not to submit an application did not refer to issues of inequity or incapacity to recruit in rural and regional areas as a reason not applying. Most cited the need for more time to plan for new recruits and expressed their intention to apply in future rounds.

15. I am advised:

The \$252 million *Fresh Start for Local Government Apprentices, Trainees and Cadets Program* is the largest state government investment in the direct hire of new apprentices in recent memory.

The program aims to support a 15% increase in the local government workforce through new apprentices and trainees, starting with 1,300 new roles across metropolitan, rural and regional NSW councils.

The program will be monitored by the Office of Local Government through SmartyGrants, in line with best practice and the NSW Government's Grant Administration Guidelines.

The Office of Local Government will be monitoring and reporting on the program's effectiveness as future rounds roll out, ensuring funded positions are meeting the gaps that councils need filled and that councils are equipped to support recruits through their training and nurture these new careers. This monitoring includes ongoing engagement with Training Services NSW and TAFE NSW.

This monitoring will inform future initiatives, such as trade recognition programs and apprentice and trainee supervisor workshops, to ensure councils have the right skills and experience to hire more of these new recruits in the future and bring much needed expertise back in-house.

16. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 15.

17. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 15.

18. I am advised:

The Office of Local Government established a dedicated team to administer the Apprentices and Trainees Grant Program.

The team regularly engages with TAFE NSW, Training Services NSW and other training providers to administer the program. A large part of this cross-government

collaboration involves sharing information of new trainee and apprentice hires across the state to ensure councils' training needs are fully supported no matter where they are.

19. I am advised:

The program funds 100% of the granted positions consistent with the base salary payable for the relevant role under the NSW Local Government (State) Award 2023.

Each position is further supported with an additional 15% payment of on-costs associated with the role.

20. I am advised:

These details are covered in the program guidelines that are available at <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Apprentices-and-Trainees-Grant-Guidelines-October-2024.pdf>

21. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 20.

Animal Welfare and Enforcement

22. The \$12.5 million funding for animal welfare enforcement was announced recently. How will the Office of Local Government ensure these funds are used effectively and transparently?

23. With increased euthanasia rates and rising numbers of animals entering pounds, how will the funding to RSPCA and Animal Welfare League address systemic issues in rehoming and animal shelter capacity?

24. The RSPCA has previously highlighted funding gaps for enforcement programs. Are there plans to ensure sustainable funding beyond FY 2024/25 for these essential services?

25. How does the OLG ensure that both the Minister for Local Government and Minister for Agriculture is thoroughly briefed and provide information when both departments provide shared responsibility between OLG and DPI. How will the funding responsibility ambiguity be resolved as it appears at times that that Minister for Agriculture is misinformed or does not have all the details?

ANSWER:

22. I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Regional New South Wales, and the Minister for Western New South Wales.

23. I am advised:

The purpose of the \$12.5 million in enforcement grants is to support approved charitable organisations to carry out Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979 enforcement and compliance activities for the current 2024/25 financial year. The funds are used to:

- Fund animal welfare inspectors who play a crucial role in enforcing NSW animal welfare laws.
- Investigate animal cruelty complaints, protecting vulnerable animals from harm or distress.
- Carry out enforcement action on those people doing animals' harm.
- Provide a one-off upgrade to AWL operating systems for streamlined compliance data and reporting.
- Cover vehicle operating and legal expenses.

The NSW Government will consider funding to support pound activities as part of the review of the Companion Animals Act.

Further questions should be directed to the Minister for Agriculture, the Minister for Regional New South Wales, and the Minister for Western New South Wales.

24. I am advised:

Decisions about ongoing funding will be considered as part of the NSW Government's commitment to review funding arrangements for RSPCA NSW and the Animal Welfare League as enforcement agencies under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*, with a view to developing and implementing a sustainable long-term model.

25. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 24. Further funding requirements related to companion animal management will be considered as part of the upcoming review of the *Companion Animals Act 1998*.

Questions from The Hon. Abigail Boyd MLC

Performance Improvement Orders (PIOs)

26. What are the elements required to be included in a Performance Improvement Order in order for it to be legally issued?
27. Is it a requirement for a PIO to state what actions the Minister may take if a PIO isn't complied with?
- (a) In the case of the Performance Improvement Order issued to Central Coast Council, what are the actions the Minister may take if the PIO is not complied with by the newly elected council?
 - (b) For the PIO that was issued to Central Coast Council, what is the reason for there not being an element describing the enforcement activities that will be undertaken if the order is not complied with?
 - (c) For the PIO that was issued to Wingecaribee Shire Council, what is the reason for there not being an element describing the enforcement activities that will be undertaken if the order is not complied with?
 - (d) For the PIO that was issued to Balranald Shire Council, what is the reason for there not being an element describing the enforcement activities that will be undertaken if the order is not complied with?
28. What is the standard process required for approval before a PIO is issued?
29. Is a PIO typically subject to legal review, to consider whether the order complies with the Act from a technical perspective, regardless of the merits of the order?
- (a) Was the PIO issued to Central Coast Council subject to a legal review prior to being issued?
 - (b) Was the PIO issued to Wingecaribee Shire Council subject to a legal review prior to being issued?
 - (c) Was the PIO issued to Balranald Shire Council subject to a legal review prior to being issued?
30. During evidence, Mr Whitworth referred to "a briefing note that set out the concerns about the council falling back if the trajectory of reform wasn't maintained".
- (a) Please provide a copy of the briefing note.
 - (b) Was the briefing note created at the request of the Minister?
 - i. If yes, what was the date of this request?
 - (c) When was the briefing note created?

(d) When was the briefing note provided to the Minister?

31. What alternative options were considered in relation to managing the orderly transition out of administration for the above councils?

(a) Were any of these options presented to the Minister?

32. During evidence, Mr Whitworth said that the questions being asked had "neglected to talk about the legislation - so the head of power. The head of power talks about the Minister being able to take action if he feels that there is a need to ensure the ongoing performance of the council." Section 438A of the Act states that "The Minister may issue an order in respect of a council if the Minister reasonably considers that action must be taken to improve the performance of the council."

(a) Does the Office of Local Government hold the position that these two statements have the same meaning? If no, would you like to correct your evidence to the Committee with relation to the contents of the Act?

33. Does the Office of Local Government hold the position that a PIO can be imposed preventatively, to pre-empt any potential deterioration of performance by a Council?

34. In the case of Central Coast Council, the draft PIO was considered during an Extraordinary Council Meeting held on 6th September. This meeting, including formalities, had a total duration of 4 minutes. Does the OLG consider this perfunctory meeting to fulfill the consultation and feedback requirements under the Act?

35. Did the OLG receive any public submissions on the PIO?

36. Was consideration given to waiting until after the Council elections, or indeed after the Councillors were sworn in, to issue the draft PIO, in order to receive a more meaningful engagement from the community?

37. Is the OLG concerned that the issuance of a PIO immediately following the election of a new council, before any activities were undertaken by those councillors, could set a precedent for Ministerial intervention in local government affairs?

38. Is the OLG concerned that the issuance of a PIO immediately following the election of a new council, before any activities were undertaken by those councillors, demonstrates a degree of distrust towards the incoming elected Council and their ability to manage local affairs effectively?

39. Is the OLG concerned that the PIO's restrictions on councillor-staff interactions and requests, appear to limit the councillors to effectively represent their constituents and to hold the administration accountable?

40. Does the OLG agree with the characterisation by the administrator of Central Coast Council, that "The discipline regarding staff interaction and councillor

requests will ensure that resources can remain focused on delivering adopted plans and not be unduly influenced by unreasonable councillor demands.”?

ANSWER:

26. I am advised:

The Minister for Local Government formed the view in each circumstance that the requisite elements existed in order to give notice of his intent to apply Performance Improvement Orders (PIOs) on three councils exiting administration, based on consideration of advice received from the Office of Local Government. That advice identified the history of the three councils (Wingecarribee, Balranald, and Central Coast Council), actions already taken, and the matters needed to be undertaken to continue to improve their performance. Each of the councils considered the notice and accepted the Minister’s reasoning and did not request any modifications to the PIOs.

In the case of Central Coast Council and its need for continued improvement, it is important to understand the history. In October 2020, Central Coast Council informed the Government that it no longer had available funds to meet ongoing operations, including paying staff salaries. As a crisis measure Council had used externally restricted funds without approval to meet salary costs and was negotiating an emergency loan but the lending institutions required a \$100M letter of comfort from the NSW Government. Following a public inquiry the Council was subsequently dismissed and an Administrator appointed to establish a series of financial, structural, governance and corporate planning reforms to enable the Council to become financially viable again. It was only in January of 2024 that the Council was able to relinquish the letter of comfort and to focus on maintaining financial sustainability.

Clearly, from the Administrator’s response to the notice of intent, there was a view that ongoing improvements to the performance of the Council were necessary.

The Minister felt that it was important to ensure while the democratically elected councillors in the three Councils exiting Administration are finding their feet, that there was a framework in place to ensure stable and strategic governance. The Performance Improvement Orders that were issued were not intended to be critical of incoming councillors and were timed before the election so any new councillors had the opportunity to understand the issues their council faced and collectively determine their own response.

The Performance Improvement Orders do not limit the ability of the councils to take actions, make decisions and plan for their first budgets, although some decisions will need the concurrence of the Deputy Secretary. Instead, the PIOs provide that the councils must follow best practice for local councils, including consulting their Audit, Risk, and Improvement Committees before taking actions such as restructuring the organisation or making deleterious changes to their budgets, abide by the Model Code of Meeting Practice, and ensure the safety of staff by adhering to the model Councillor Staff Interaction Policy.

27. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 26.

28. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 26.

29. I am advised:

Mr Brett Whitworth provided testimony at page 13 of the transcript regarding the discussions that he had in preparing the advice provided to the Minister.

30. I am advised:

The Minister for Local Government, with responsibility to regulate the local government sector, asked for advice on the preparation of a Performance Improvement Order for the three councils coming out of administration. Consistent with ensuring the effective exercise of the agency's functions, it is not appropriate to provide a copy of the advice given by the Office of Local Government via briefing notes.

31. I am advised:

It is a routine practice for advice from the Office of Local Government to canvass the options available to the Minister, as well as the risks of any options or actions recommended.

32. I am advised:

The Office of Local Government refers to Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 1993* and the performance improvement criteria set out at clause 413D of the *Local Government (General) Regulation 2021*.

At the hearing on 5 December 2024, Mr Brett Whitworth (Deputy Secretary, Office of Local Government) provided advice on the relationship between ongoing performance and improvement through a reference to a "trajectory of continued reform" (see page 14 of the transcript).

33. I am advised:

It is a matter for the Minister for Local Government to decide whether to issue a PIO in accordance with the Local Government Act and Regulations.

34. I am advised:

This is a matter for Central Coast Council.

35. I am advised:

Part 6 of the *Local Government Act 1993* provides that a council must be invited to make submissions in respect of the proposed performance improvement order. However, there is no mechanism for public exhibition or receipt of submissions from the public.

36. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 26.

37. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 26.

38. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 26.

39. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 26.

40. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 26.

Wamberal Sea Wall

41. Manly Hydraulics Laboratory (MHL), in association with the Water Research Laboratory (WRL) of UNSW Sydney and Balmoral Group Australia (BGA) was commissioned by Central Coast Council to undertake the Wamberal Terminal Coastal Protection Assessment in 2020.

(a) Did the Wamberal Beach Seawall Advisory Taskforce (the Taskforce), the Central Coast Council or its Administrator provide drafts of this document to the OLG? If so, please provide those drafts.

(b) Did the OLG provide any comments or feedback on any draft of this document prior to it being finalised?

42. Stage 6 of this work undertaken by MHL/WRL/BGA involved "cost benefit analysis and distributional analysis of options" (the MHL CBA).

(a) Was the OLG informed as to why the MHL CBA was not released for public review in the same way that reports from other stages of this work were?

(b) Did OLG provide any comments or feedback on the MHL CBA report, or communicate with the Taskforce, Central Coast Council or its Administrator in relation to the process for consulting on that stage of the work?

(c) Is the OLG aware that significant changes occurred through successive drafts of the MHL CBA before it was finalised? Did the OLG receive any of those drafts? If so, please provide those drafts.

(d) Does the OLG support the decision of the Taskforce and/or the Administrator to privately consult with select property owners but not the broader community in relation to the MHL CBA, given that it changed significantly from the author's first draft and is now being relied on in

submissions being made in relation to seawall DAs being considered by the Hunter Central Coast Regional Planning Panel?

(e) Does OLG accept that insufficient oversight of this process was a result of there being no elected councillors, only an Administrator, for Central Coast Council?

(f) What actions will OLG now take to ensure full transparency over the process that was undertaken in relation to this work? Will OLG ask Central Coast Council to immediately release to the public all draft documents?

ANSWER:

41. I am advised:

A search of the Office of Local Government's records did not find a draft copy of the Wamberal Terminal Coastal Protection Assessment or any record of providing comments or feedback on the draft document.

The Draft Wamberal Terminal Coastal Protection Assessment would have been prepared as part of the then Minister for Local Government's obligations under the *Coastal Protection Act 1979*. The then Minister would have received advice from the Environment and Heritage Division of the then Department of Planning and Environment, which is now part of the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water.

42. I am advised:

Refer to the answer provided to Question 41.

Puppy farm reforms

43. Has the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development provided any estimate of how much they will fund NSW OLG to undertake new responsibilities associated with the recently passed Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Act 2024?

44. In relation to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Act 2024, given that many of the changes necessary to implement the Act are planning matters and animal welfare matters, how will NSW OLG work with NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, RSPCA NSW and AWL NSW to ensure that these reforms are implemented successfully?

45. Has NSW OLG received any advice on the legal implications associated with delays of the rollout of the Pet Registry and/or the Link My Pet functionality for rescue groups with delayed council processing (6 months and up to 12 months)?

(a) When will NSW OLG have a timeline for these necessary fixes?

ANSWER:

43. I am advised:

The *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Act 2024* was only passed on 15 November 2024 and assented to on 21 November 2024.

Discussions are currently underway between the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and the Office of Local Government regarding funding requirements, and are still to be finalised.

44. I am advised:

The Office of Local Government is working closely with the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development and other key stakeholders to ensure successful implementation of the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Amendment (Puppy Farming) Act 2024*.

45. I am advised:

The pet registration system in NSW continues to operate using the existing Companion Animals Register while the new software platform is being delivered.

The second stage of the new registry, Link My Pet, is scheduled to be released in early 2025 (also provided in evidence by the Deputy Secretary on page 17 of the hearing transcript).

RSPCA NSW deed of agreement

46. In the hearing on 5 December, Mr Whitworth said there is a deed of agreement between RSPCA NSW and the NSW Government in relation to the \$20.5 million provided to RSPCA NSW. How does the NSW OLG monitor specific improvements undertaken to ensure better outcomes for animals?

(a) Who monitors these initiatives and plans?

47. What specifically are the other "multiple grants" made to RSPCA NSW referred to by Mr Whitworth? Please specify amounts, purpose and grantor.

ANSWER:

46. I am advised:

The RSPCA submits quarterly reports to the Office of Local Government, detailing progress against identified milestones and providing an expenditure breakdown for each quarter as part of the funding agreement. At the end of the funding agreement, the RSPCA completes and submits final reports, which the Office of Local Government reviews as part of the acquittal process.

This issue was dealt with by the *2023 Inquiry into the operation of the approved charitable organisations under the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979* undertaken by Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW. A Government response is due on 28 February 2025 into the findings of that inquiry, and will explain the Government's position in more detail.

47. I am advised:

The grants referred by Mr Whitworth is with respect to specific grants administered by the Office of Local Government for capital works and infrastructure projects. These grants were administered prior to the introduction of the NSW Government's Grants Administration Guide.

They include:

- RSPCA Capital Grant 2019 – 2021 – Yagoona Animal Shelter - \$12M
(details at <https://www.treasury.nsw.gov.au/news/media-release-perrottet-and-hancock-12-million-rspca-shelter-expansion>)
- RSPCA Capital Works Planning Grant – June 2021 - \$10.5M
(details at <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/MMR-Multi-million-dollar-boost-for-RSPCA-NSW-shelters-02032021.pdf>)

Council pounds

48. How does NSW OLG monitor requirements of pounds to 1) give written notice to at least two rehoming organisations that an animal is available for rehoming and will remain available for at least 7 days from the date of the notice, and 2) take reasonable steps to advertise on a webpage or through a social media platform that animals are available for rehoming?

(a) Does NSW OLG monitor euthanasia rates at specific pounds in relation to these requirements?

49. Has NSW OLG undertaken any type of audit on council pounds to determine adherence and compliance with the requirements under the Companion Animals Amendment (Rehoming Animal) Act 2022?

(a) If yes, what were the results of the audit?

50. How many complaints have been received by NSW OLG during 2024 to date in relation to the condition of NSW council pounds or animal welfare issues regarding the treatment of impounded animals, and what are the outcomes of those complaints?

51. From 1 January 2024 to date, which NSW council pounds have been impacted by outbreaks of parvovirus?

(a) Which councils have had multiple outbreaks?

(b) How many puppies have died or been euthanised as a result of a parvovirus outbreak?

(c) How many adult dogs have died or been euthanised as a result of a parvovirus outbreak?

ANSWER:

48. I am advised:

The NSW Government is currently considering the report from the Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service Pounds in New South Wales inquiry, which recommended measures regarding the enforcement of Council-managed pounds.

The NSW Government has until 17 January 2025 to respond.

Data on council management of council pounds and euthanasia can be found on the following website under Animal Seizures – Pound Data Reports:

<https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/dogs-cats/responsible-pet-ownership/pound-and-dog-attack-statistics/>.

Complaints about the welfare of impounded animals are the responsibility of enforcement agencies under the *Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1979*.

49. I am advised:

No. However, the NSW Government is considering whether this is an area for the Office of Local Government to address as part of the Government's response to the Pounds in New South Wales inquiry.

50. I am advised:

While the Office of Local Government (OLG) does not record complaint data to a level of detail that allows the delineation of pound management or other specific animal welfare issues, OLG received a total of 67 complaints about councils in FY2023-24 which were classified as 'Companion Animal' matters.

51. I am advised:

The OLG's pounds data reporting requirements do not include statistics on parvovirus.