

The Hon. Ron Hoenig MP

Leader of the House in the Legislative Assembly
Vice-President of the Executive Council
Minister for Local Government



Ref: M024-0684

The Hon. Emma Hurst MLC
Chair
Portfolio Committee 8 – Customer Service
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000

Via email: portfoliocommittee8@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Chair,

Correction of prior Estimates answers

I write in relation to an answer given to Supplementary Question 3, including parts (a) and (b), provided to the Secretariat on 3 October 2024 as part of the initial round of Budget Estimates in 2024.

Following the receipt of correspondence from the Hon. Sue Higginson MLC and based on a more detailed review of the answers provided, I wish to advise of a correction to address an incorrect answer.

I would also like to apologise, noting that I am advised the incorrect answers arose from a combination of human error, a loss of continuity in staff within the Office of Local Government (OLG) between 2020 and 2024, and a difference in naming conventions between Hornsby Shire Council and the OLG as part of the reporting process.

I have asked the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure to commission a review of both the manner in which the incorrect answer was provided, as well as further advice on the administration of grants to Hornsby Council.

INCORRECT:

3.	Did Hornsby Shire Council receive any additional funds from the NSW Government under any funding stream and allocated to the Westleigh Park development?
	ANSWER I am advised that if Hornsby Shire Council received additional NSW Government funds for Westleigh Park, those records are not administered by OLG.
3a.	Was there additional funding through grants made available to Hornsby Shire Council in June 2020? i. What projects were these funds allocated to?

	<p>ii. How many of these projects have had the State funding committed to them?</p> <p>iii. How many of these projects have commenced?</p> <p>iv. How many of these projects have unspent funds?</p> <p>v. What is the total value of the funds that were given to the Hornsby Shire Council in the form of grants between March 2019 and March 2023?</p> <p>vi. What is the total remaining value of the funds that have not been spent?</p>
	<p>ANSWER</p> <p>See answer to question 3.</p>
3b.	<p>Will the Government be seeking to recover uncommitted or unspent grant funds from Hornsby Shire Council that were allocated to the Council in 2020?</p> <p>i. Will the Government be seeking to recover interest generated by the Council on unspent grant funds?</p>
	<p>ANSWER</p> <p>See answer to question 3.</p>

CORRECT:

3.	<p>Did Hornsby Shire Council receive any additional funds from the NSW Government under any funding stream and allocated to the Westleigh Park development?</p>
	<p>ANSWER</p> <p>I am advised:</p> <p>Hornsby Shire Council received \$19.5M in funding for a number of sporting field projects as part of 2019 State election commitments. Included in these projects was \$1.5M for synthetic sporting fields at Westleigh Park (but reported by Council to be Mills Park).</p>
3a.	<p>Was there additional funding through grants made available to Hornsby Shire Council in June 2020?</p> <p>i. What projects were these funds allocated to?</p> <p>ii. How many of these projects have had the State funding committed to them?</p> <p>iii. How many of these projects have commenced?</p> <p>iv. How many of these projects have unspent funds?</p> <p>v. What is the total value of the funds that were given to the Hornsby Shire Council in the form of grants between March 2019 and March 2023?</p> <p>vi. What is the total remaining value of the funds that have not been spent?</p>
	<p>ANSWER</p> <p>I am advised:</p>

	<p>The \$19.5M in election commitment grants was allocated to Council in June 2020 and paid over three instalments.</p> <p>i. The projects were: Upgrade Mark Taylor Oval, Sports Field at Westleigh Park (Council reporting call it Mills Park 6 synthetic sports fields), Upgrade of Ron Payne Reserve, Oval and Playground (Edward Bennet Oval playground), Berowra Waters Accessible Path and Viewing Platform, East Asquith Bushland Trail Links, Hornsby Heritage Steps Restoration – Stages 2 and 3, Mambara Track Accessibility Improvements, Pennant Hills Park Bushland tracks, GNW Thornleigh Oval – Establishing links and bushland tracks, Brooklyn Boardwalk Upgrade, Bushland Regeneration, Chilworth Reserve, Beecroft, Pyes Creek Connectivity Trail, Quarter Sessions Road Lookout, Rofe Park Bushland Links and tracks, Carrs Park Boardwalk, and Expansion of mountain bike trails and provide capital and maintenance to trails in Hornsby including Hornsby Quarry and Westleigh.</p> <p>ii. All of the projects above have all received State funding.</p> <p>iii. There are 18 projects and as of 30 June 2024, 17 have commenced. The only un-commenced project is the Hornsby Heritage Steps Restoration.</p> <p>iv. As at 30 June 2024, six of the projects have unspent funds (Upgrade Mark Taylor Oval, Sports Field at Westleigh Park, Oval and Playground (Edward Bennet Oval playground), Hornsby Heritage Steps Restoration – Stages 2 and 3, Mambara Track Accessibility Improvements, and Expansion of mountain bike trails and provide capital and maintenance to trails in Hornsby including Hornsby Quarry and Westleigh).</p> <p>v. \$19.5M for the 2019 election commitments.</p> <p>vi. As at 30 June 2024 the unspent funds are \$9,480,154.</p>
3b.	<p>Will the Government be seeking to recover uncommitted or unspent grant funds from Hornsby Shire Council that were allocated to the Council in 2020?</p> <p>i. Will the Government be seeking to recover interest generated by the Council on unspent grant funds?</p>
	<p>ANSWER</p> <p>Council is obliged under the funding agreement to commit to projects by the second anniversary of funding being provided. The last tranche of funding was provided on 23 December 2022 and Council now has three months from 23 December 2024 to return any uncommitted funds. The Office of Local Government will write to Council to commence this process should the funds remain uncommitted.</p> <p>i. The Government has decided not to recover interest generated by the Council on unspent grant funds in relation to Westleigh Park.</p>

Thank you for the opportunity to update and correct the record.

Yours sincerely,

24 JAN 2025

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