



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 8 – CUSTOMER SERVICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025

Supplementary questions

Portfolio Committee No. 8 – Customer Service

Local Government

(Hoenig)

Hearing: Friday 28 February 2025

Answers due by: 5.00 pm Thursday 27 March 2025

Budget Estimates secretariat

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BUDGET ESTIMATES 2024-2025
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

Questions from Hon Mark Latham MLC

To OLG

- (1) When did Brett Whitworth become the head of OLG?
 - (a) What action did OLG take on the Saravinovski matters before this date?
- (2) Who prepared the Departmental Report on Saravinovski that became the basis of the March 2024 referral to NCAT?
- (3) How many times did OLG and the Department Secretary use section 11 of the ICAC Act on the Saravinovski matters?

To the Minister

- (4) Given that you spoke to no one (you claimed in evidence to the Committee) about the NCAT referral and the matter was not public knowledge, how, to the best of your knowledge, did the ALP know to take Mayor Bill Saravinovski off its 2024 Bayside Council election ticket?
- (5) Why did you fail to declare an interest in the Saravinovski matter, given your 30 year association with your Labor colleague representing a district where you had also been a long time Mayor?
 - (a) Why instead did you tell Mr Whitworth to get a criminal barrister in 2023 and expedite the matter in 2024?

Questions from Hon Chris Rath MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)
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Compliance with the Code of Conduct on Gifts

- (6) Minister, under the Code of Conduct for Council Staff, accepting gifts or benefits can create a perception of undue influence and is generally discouraged. Given this, do you acknowledge that your decision to present a gift to a young apprentice may have been a breach of the Code or, at the very least, displayed poor judgment?
- (7) The Code specifically states that council officials must not accept gifts that could be seen to influence their decision-making or create a conflict of interest. Do you accept that, by presenting this gift, you have set a poor example for staff who are bound by these rules?

Ministerial Discretion and Public Perception

- (8) Minister, as a senior member of government, you have a responsibility to uphold public confidence in the integrity of local government. Given that council staff are prohibited from accepting gifts in most circumstances, do you believe it was appropriate for you to act contrary to the principles set out in the Code?
- (9) Do you accept that this action may have set an inconsistent standard for council staff, who are expected to comply with strict gift acceptance rules?

Accountability and Future Conduct

- (10) Given the precedent this sets, will you commit to issuing formal guidance to councils and staff regarding gift-giving and acceptance, to prevent future inconsistencies in the application of the Code of Conduct?
- (11) In hindsight, do you believe this was an error in judgment, and will you be reviewing your approach to such matters in the future to ensure consistency with governance standards?

Financial Sustainability of Local Government

- (12) Minister, you previously stated that the Government's response to the financial sustainability inquiry has been delayed due to further discussions with the Auditor-General and IPART. Given that councils are struggling with financial sustainability and cost-shifting, what specific interim relief measures are you considering for councils facing immediate financial distress?

Local Government Procurement and Corruption Risks

- (13) Minister, you acknowledged ICAC's concerns regarding procurement and transparency issues in local councils, particularly in light of Operation Mantis. You mentioned reviewing statutory provisions under the Code of Conduct. Can you outline specific changes you are considering to ensure procurement processes are both transparent and supportive of local economies?
- (14) Given the ongoing concerns regarding corruption risks in local government procurement, will your department implement mandatory auditing of council procurement contracts exceeding a certain threshold?

Code of Conduct Reforms

- (15) Minister, you stated that local government needs a “cultural change” regarding governance and misconduct and that you are facing pushback from councils on open meetings and banning private briefings. Given this resistance, will you commit to legislating mandatory transparency measures rather than relying on voluntary compliance?
- (16) You acknowledged frustration with NCAT’s handling of serious misconduct complaints. Given this, will you push for legislative reforms to provide more efficient and enforceable disciplinary actions for councillor misconduct?
- (17) The Model Code of Conduct and the Staff Code of Conduct emphasize the importance of integrity and preventing abuse of power. Given the Canterbury-Bankstown findings, will you mandate external integrity audits for councils found to have repeated governance failures?
- (18) In relation to your yet to be finalised reforms to the Code of Conduct investigation process, will not having matters “dealt with by a councillor’s peers” still result in an inherent conflict of interest and the Code of Conduct being weaponised by political competitors or partisan persons?
- (19) Instead of having political competitors and/or partisan persons investigate and determine penalties for Councillors’ conduct, why have you not considered a system similar to the NSW Supreme Court’s Costs Assessment process and its Costs Assessors? To ensure independence and prevent fee gauging, the Office of Local Government could appoint, on a flat fee basis, a suitably qualified Investigator to investigate conduct complaints, and failures to disclose non pecuniary and pecuniary conflicts of interests. Costs for such investigations could be charged back to the respective Council. Will you undertake to consider this system and by what date do you expect the Code of Conduct and investigatory process to be finalised?
- (20) In view of State and Federal Members of Parliament being given access to legal representation when they are accused of misconduct and/or must appear before the Independent Commission Against Corruption, the National Anti Corruption Commission and a Court, will you ensure that Councillors appearing before NCAT, any other investigatory body or court, are given the same legal support and reimbursed for reasonably legal expenses?
 - (a) If not, why not?

- (21) Can you explain the process of mayors and councillors setting their remuneration levels? Is this something looked at as part of your review?
- (22) Can you explain the process when a councillor submits a complaint against a General Manager or mayor? Is this process being reviewed as there are situations when it is not an effective manner of dealing with such complaints?
- (23) Is the new Code of Conduct framework looking at promoting transparency, integrity and public participation? Will this include matters such as NSW Government leasing arrangements of Local Council owned or managed properties?

Governance and Transparency

- (24) Minister, you mentioned that Canterbury-Bankstown Council does not livestream its meetings and indicated that you would include mandatory transparency measures in the new Code of Meeting Practice. Will the Government legislate a requirement for all councils to livestream and archive meetings for public access?
- (25) Given concerns raised about council transparency, will you require councils to publish detailed expenditure reports, including breakdowns of discretionary spending, on a quarterly basis?

Office of Local Government Funding

- (26) Minister, you mentioned an additional funding allocation of \$37.4 million to the Office of Local Government and "I think you will find that the Office of Local Government is restructuring itself":
 - (a) How many complaints did you and or the OLG received in the past Financial Year and how many were actually investigated?
 - (b) How many complaints actually investigated resulted in disciplinary action of a Councillor?
- (27) As a Barrister, you would be aware of case law, that delays in investigations can amount to serious breaches of procedural fairness – how many investigations in the last financial year by the Office of Local Government took over:
 - (a) Six months to resolve?
 - (b) One year to resolve?
 - (c) Two years to resolve?

- (28) It has been reported that the Office of Local Government has stated “Councils are expected to be prudent managers of their finances”.
- (a) What sort of assistance is provided to Councils to be prudent managers of public funds, particularly when you consider they often have budgets worth hundreds of millions of dollars and hundreds of employees?
- (29) Can you provide a list of all Councils with approved SRVs for the past five financial years and the current financial year to date showing the percentage increases in Rates by Council?
- (30) It is widely acknowledged that the Councils with the greatest relative disadvantage are generally rural and remote councils with small and declining populations, limited capacity to raise revenue and greater responsibility for declining roads and infrastructure. Our rural and regional communities deserve the same facilities and services that our larger centres enjoy.
- (a) When the GPC (General Purpose Component) grant is allocated based on population increases/decreases, what have you done to advocate for a fairer share of the GPC to Councils in rural and remote NSW?
- (31) Of the various reviews and inquiries, are the processes and procedures of the Office of Local Government being looked at for the most efficient and sustainable functioning?

Residents of Jerrabomberra

- (32) Residents of Jerrabomberra, NSW, have written to the Minister for Local Government, Planning & Environment, Premier, Shadow Minister for Local Government, Local Government Ombudsman, Office of Local Government, Queanbeyan-Palerang Regional Council GM & Mayor, and Councillors. The residents allege QPRC have abdicated their obligations under the Planning Act and perverted the process of DA assessment. As the proposed project is above \$30 million, the assessment is through the Southern Regional Planning Process. However, there are questions as to QPRC’s obligations under the Planning Act.
- (a) Can you advise on this matter and how it is being addressed?

Northern Beaches Council

- (33) I refer to your statement in relation to Northern Beaches Council’s expenditure on alcohol for Councillors “Providing they're acting in accordance with the law” - Does a breach of a Policy, made pursuant to the Local Government Act, ie the Councillor Expenses and Facilities Policy not amount to a breach of the law? If not, why not?

- (34) Since June 2024 to the present:
- (a) How many complaints have you or the Office of Local Government received about Northern Beaches Council and requests for an investigation?
 - (b) How many requests have you or the Office of Local Government received for a Public Inquiry into Northern Beaches Council?
 - (c) How many Petitioners have signed Legislative Assembly Petitions (submitted by Stuart Gold and David Smith) directed to you as Minister requesting an Investigations and/or Public Inquiry into Northern Beaches Council?
- (35) In relation to your statement regarding the obvious breach of the Councillor Expenditure and Facilities Policy at Northern Beaches Council - “I’ll request Mr Whitworth to look at it”
- (a) Will you ensure this is a formal investigation?
 - i. If not, why not?
 - (b) Will you also ensure a formal investigation into all the complaints received by you and the Office of Local Government about the conduct of management and certain councillors at Northern Beaches Council, particularly the conduct of certain Councillors at Council meetings on 28 January 2025 and 18 February 2025 where it has been recorded by TV, Radio and print media that certain Councillors attacked members of the public objecting to the SRV application as “running misinformation campaigns”, “running Trump like” campaigns and being “neo Liberalists”? Will you also cause an investigation into those Councillors, at those meeting who have told other Councillors (as published by TV , Radio and print media) to shut up and “Poff” during these meetings?
 - i. If not, why not?
 - (c) Will you ensure a formal investigation into the Mayor of the Northern Beaches, Sue Heins who at these meetings, clearly abused her power and failed to accord with the Code of Meeting Practice and Code of Conduct by abusing and making improper inferences towards members of the public and certain Councillors and allowing members of her Party and faction to bully and harass certain Councillors?
- (36) Minister, the behaviour and mismanagement by Management and Councillors at Northern Beaches Council has been the subject of National TV, Radio and print media as well as several Petitions and letters calling on you to act:

- (a) Why have you failed to appoint a temporary financial controller pursuant to your powers?
- (b) Why have you failed to cause the issuance of a Performance Improvement Order on the Council in relation to the management of their finances, failure to uphold policies, serious waste of public funds and conduct that continues to bring the Council into disrepute and loss of confidence and trust by the community?
- (c) Why have you failed to cause a section 430 Investigation? Is it because of your personal relationship and long time friendship with Ray Brownlee, who presided over the financial mismanagement of the Council while he was CEO of Northern Beaches Council? Have you ever acted as a Referee for Mr Brownlee for any employment position?
- (37) In relation to Performance Review Committees for Council General Managers, that also make recommendations as to salary increases, do you not think it is an inherent conflict of interest for General Managers to be able to appoint a Councillor (to represent their interests) to those Committees? Will you undertake to abolish this?
- (38) You stated during the Hearing that Northern Beaches residents agreed to “Northern beaches agreed to 10.7 per cent. That's rare” – can you please confirm on what date and how residents agreed to a 10.7 per cent rate increase?
- (39) Reference is made to my question regarding the Daily Telegraph’s article of Tuesday 11 February 2025 where it was reported: “Premier Chris Minns indicated yesterday he would leave any audit of council expenditure to IPART. "They assess everything," he said.

At the Hearing, you stated “They will certainly be assessing their expenditure to ensure that the councils can justify their application. I can look at the basis of the application by, say, Northern Beaches and North Sydney and I can see the increases in expenditure. Sure, IPART will be quizzing them in relation to it because that's the whole purpose of their determinations for SRVs.”

Noting the IPART’s IPART fact sheet "Is your council talking about a Special Variation?" dated 17 September 2024 which states: “We do not assess the merits of council spending decisions or spending priorities, such as how a council has decided to allocate its funds for future projects. We also cannot audit council finances as part of our assessment process as this is not part of our delegated functions - How can the community and this

Parliament have confidence in the process if it appears that the Premier has stated the IPART has powers it does not possess and you too stated “They will certainly be assessing their expenditure to ensure that the councils can justify their application” when it the IPART does not undertake such assessments? Have you mislead the Committee?

(40) It is again noted that since 6 September 2010, after the then Minister for Local Government, The Hon Barbara Perry MP, delegated to IPART statutory powers to vary rates, gaming of the rating system by councils began immediately, in view of your comments at the Hearing and given your statements on ABC Radio Sydney, NSW Local that you had told councils they needed to be “extremely cautious” about issuing “ridiculous” demands “because we’re in a cost-of-living crisis and now is not the time for councils to be asking for excessive rate increases when people are struggling to make ends meet”, will you remove your delegations to IPART and reject what you see as “ridiculous” demands by certain Councils with their SRV applications?

(a) If not, why not?

(41) You testified at the Hearing in relation to the Northern Beaches Council that “The funds that they're seeking to justify their application, from what I can determine, are in staff costs and infrastructure spends. They don't look like immediate infrastructure spends that they need to fund, but IPART will work that out.”:

(a) Are you aware that Northern Beaches Council in every year since amalgamation, except in this last year, following it undertaking a mere desk top re-evaluation of two asset classes, had met the great majority, if not all of its Office of Local Government’s Benchmarks, the NSW Auditor General certified that Northern Beaches Council has no liquidity issue, particularly considering that it has over \$200 million in cash and investments and over \$5.6 billion in property, plant, equipment and infrastructure? Given that the Council failed to release its desk top re-evaluation to the public and Councillors as well as the report by a company Asset Technologies Pacific ATP, will you cause an independent investigation into the methodology used to justify a rate increase of almost 40%, in particular, the Asset Management Plan and Long Term Financial Plan prepared by the Council or its consultants Morrison Low and Asset Technologies Pacific Pty, that included \$251m in additional depreciating assets, \$13.4m of which was in the first year, indexed thereafter into future years, to overstate depreciating assets acquisition, yet failed to explore efficiency and cost savings? Will you ensure that Northern Beaches Council has not

deliberately, improperly and misleadingly overestimated its assets and future maintenance costs, in order to improperly support, using your own words - a “ridiculous” SRV application?

i. If not, why not?

(b) Are you aware that in the last two years, the company, Morrison Low, with its “Capacity to Pay” reports, have been behind and supported the North Sydney Council's 87% proposed increase, the Northern Beaches Council's 40% proposed increase, Strathfield Council's 93% approved increase, and Canada Bay's 32.5% approved increase and that Northern Beaches Council has refused to have Morrison Low’s Report independently reviewed or peer reviewed? Given that at Northern Beaches Council, it has been revealed by Council on 27 February 2025 that every year since 2019 every there have been over 12,000 residents unable to pay Council instalments on time and that in 2023/24 this increased substantially to 13,938 and that as at 31 January 2025 the total amount of interest remaining outstanding is \$1,108,898 million and that Council has last week advertised for a new “Rate Collector” position, will you cause will you cause an investigation into Morrison and Low, Northern Beaches Council and those other Councils that have relied upon Morrison and Low to ensure that the reports from that company have not being improperly misleadingly in order to improperly support, using your own words - a “ridiculous” SRV application?

i. If not, why not?

(c) Will you also cause an investigation into Morrison Low’s role in the gaming of the rating system by certain Councils over the years? If not, why not?

(d) Given you have stated that some Councils are asking for too high and ridiculous rate increases, will you revoke your delegation to IPART to set council rates and make these decisions yourself?

(e) When will you actually admit to ratepayers that you are ultimately responsible for approving rate increases and merely hiding behind IPART, which you could revoke your delegations to at any time?

(42) Are you aware of the Petition submitted to the NSW Legislative Assembly by Mr Stuart Gold signed by 5150 Petitioners since its submission on 5 January 2025 calling on the Government to:

- Ensure that Northern Beaches Council is prevented from introducing a Special Rate Variation

- Ensure that the Minister issues an Improvement Notice under the Local Government Act
 - Ensure the Minister introduces a mandatory salary scale in line with community expectations for CEOs and senior staff in order to prevent excessive salaries and waste
 - Ensure the Minister initiates changes to electoral legislation so that it falls in line with State and Federal legislation prohibiting registered political parties from misleading the public and using the word “Independent” in party names like the ‘Your Northern Beaches Independent Team’ registered political party
 - Ensure the Minister initiates stronger and more efficient monitoring procedures for the Council regarding the management of projects to prevent cost and timing blowouts and independent management of projects
 - Ensure the Minister adopts recommendations of the NSW Parliament’s “Ability of Local Governments to fund infrastructure and service” and amends the Act to restrict and have more specificity on services (with a greater emphasis on core services)
 - Ensure the Minister initiates reform so that Councils and the IPART have set consultation procedures, not perform any public consultation over a holiday period and MUST have regard to the outcome of community consultation results
 - Should the Council continue to fail to meet the community’s expectations, require the Minister for Local Government to cause the appointment of an Investigator under section 430 of the Local Government Act.
- (a) Will you accede to each of the above mentioned requests?
- i. If not, why not?

Councillor Safety

(43) In relation to candidate safety, the NSW Local Government Association and Councils following Resolutions have written to you on several occasions calling on you to amend legislation to what it was, whereby a Local Government Candidate can put their PO Box instead of address on authorisation of Electoral material to ensure candidate safety.

You have responded in writing claiming that candidates can put the address of their “workplace” which still poses a safety risk to candidates and some can’t put their work address if they are employed by the NSW or Federal Governments.

There are no exemptions, even for those protected by AVOs.

While noting the Electoral Commission's advice to you, you are ultimately the Minister with portfolio responsibility for the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 and are well aware that Local Government candidates and Councillors are very different to State and Federal Candidates and State and Federal elections by way of funding caps, most don't have campaign offices and many are not Party candidates that can use the address of Party HQ.

You were asked to change this legislation immediately upon assuming office as Minister and by the State's Local Government representative body as it is seen as a major deterrent, particularly for women to stand for election.

(a) Why have you failed so badly to respond to these serious safety issues and shown such a lack of care?

(b) Will you undertake to urgently amend this legislation in your area of portfolio responsibility to ensure safety?

i. If not, why not?

(44) 39. Noting that your Office of Local Government has also responded to Councils refusing their requests to amend the Local Government (General) Regulation 2021 to be purportedly consistent with the State legislation – Electoral Act 2017 and Commonwealth Electoral Act 2018, why then has the Office of Local Government continually refused to bring into line the NSW legislation when it comes to State and Federal legislation which prohibits the use of the word “Independent” in the name of a registered political party?

(a) Will you ensure that NSW legislation is urgently amended to prohibit Parties from misleading the public by using the word “Independent” in Party names?

i. If not, why not?

Bayside Council

(45) You attested to the committee in relation to investigations into Bayside Council, its Councillors, staff and certain associates that you are “in possession of a variety of documents that have been provided to me on the undertaking that I do not disclose them” and that “The matters are not concluded and are ongoing”:

(a) Can you confirm that your statement is correct? Is it the Office of Local Government or ICAC that have ongoing investigations?

(b) Why have you continued to receive information and documents about the Council and investigations into Bayside Council when it is clear that you have a significant conflict of interest in the matter with your wife being an employee of that Council?

(c) In view of the matters raised above, in 14 and your long association and personal relationships with the former Mayor of Bayside Council, certain Councillors, certain staff and that your wife is employed at Bayside Council can you please confirm whether you have complied with the Independent Commission Against Corruption Amendment (Ministerial Code of Conduct) Regulation 2014 and reported your obvious significant conflicts of interest to the Premier, on what date and will you Table a copy of such disclosures to the Committee?

(d) Can you confirm that all times you have not:

- i. Concealed a conflict of interest from the Premier and/or the Parliament in relation to any ICAC or OLG investigation into Bayside Council, its Councillors, staff or persons under investigation?
- ii. That you received written approval from the Premier, on what date/s to continue to participate in relation to matters pertaining to Bayside Council, its predecessor Councils, Rockdale and Botany and will you table a copy of any approvals to the Committee from the Premier, to make or participate in the making of any decision or take any other action in relation to Bayside Council, its Councillors, staff or persons under investigation?
- iii. Failed to disclose to the ICAC your conflict of interest in relation to any investigation into Bayside Council based on your wife's long term employment with that Council and preceding Council, and your relationships with certain Councillors, staff and persons under investigation by the ICAC? On what dates were those disclosures made and will you table copies of those disclosures to the Committee?

Special Rate Variations

(46) In Estimates, the Minister referred to IPART determining whether to approve special rate variations and there was discussion of the community and media outcry over the significant SRV sought by North Sydney Council. The Minister also acknowledged that IPART does not assess Council spending decisions and spending priorities, even when excessive SRVs are proposed.

At what point does the Minister for Local Government in NSW act to ensure that local government, in this case North Sydney Council, ensures that ratepayers have recourse over council spending decisions and priorities?

(a) The Minister has referred to the democratic process as a means of accountability for Councils. Considering that North Sydney Council is proposing the almost double rates over two years, and this SRV will be completed more than a year before the next local government election can impose any democratic accountability, will the Minister OLG commence an investigation or public inquiry into North Sydney Council's financial management in order to ensure community confidence in local government?

General questions

CFMEU meetings

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

ETU meetings

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

Ministerial disclosures to The Cabinet Office

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

Department(s)/Agency(s) Employees

(50) How many redundancies were processed by each Department(s)/agency(s) within your portfolio responsibilities since 28 March 2023?

(a) Of these redundancies, how many were:

i. Voluntary?

ii. Forced?

(b) What was the total cost of all redundancies in each Department/agency within your portfolio responsibilities?

(c) On what page are redundancies published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports?

Department(s)/Agency(s) Annual Reports

- (51) On what date were the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio published?
- (52) Were the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio printed?
- (a) If yes, what was the printing cost(s) for each department / agency?
- (53) Did the annual report(s) from 2023-24 for each department / agency in your portfolio use in part or full an external production / body / consultant to draft?
- (a) If yes, what was the cost(s) for each department / agency?
- (54) In what month will the 2024-25 annual report(s) for each department / agency in your portfolio be published?
- (55) Will the 2024-25 annual report(s) for the department / agency in your portfolio include a printed copy?
- (a) If yes, how much is budgeted for printing in 2024-25 for each department / agency?

State Records Act

- (56) 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?

Advertising

- (57) On what page is advertising published in the respective Department(s)/Agency(s) annual report(s)?

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

- (58) 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 website URL?

Ministerial staff disclosure of gifts and/or hospitality

- (59) Does your ministerial office keep a register of gifts and/or hospitality for staff to make disclosures?

- (a) If yes, what is the website URL?
- (60) 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?

Ministerial Code of Conduct

- (61) Since 28 March 2023, have you breached the Ministerial Code of Conduct?
 - (a) If yes, what was the breach?

Credit Cards

- (62) 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?
- (63) Do public servants in your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) been issued with department/agency credit cards?
- (64) If yes, what is the website URL of the credit card policy?

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

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

Senior Executive Drivers

- (66) As at 1 February 2025, how many senior executives in your portfolio department(s) / agency(s) have a driver?

GIPA Applications – Ministerial Office

- (67) Has your Ministerial Office received a GIPA Application(s) since 28 March 2023?
 - (a) If yes, how many?
 - (b) If yes, what is the website URL of the disclosure log?

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

- (68) 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)?

GIPA Act – Disclosure Log Website URL

(69) What is the website URL for the GIPA Act disclosure log each of your portfolio department(s) / agency(s)?

TikTok

(70) Are you on TikTok?

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

Signal

(71) Are you and/or your ministerial staff on Signal?

(a) If yes, do you and/or your ministerial staff access Signal from a NSW Government device?

(b) If yes, does Signal comply with the State Records Act?

Training

(72) 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?

Cabinet documents

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

Parliamentary Secretary

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

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

(76) Has your Parliamentary Secretary ever used your Ministerial Vehicle?

Media releases and statements

(77) 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?

Overseas Travel

(78) As Minister, do you approve overseas travel for public servants from your portfolio department(s)/agency(s)?

Data Breaches

(79) Does your portfolio department(s)/agency(s) keep a register of data breaches in accordance with the Privacy and Personal Information Protection (PPIP) Act?

(80) If yes to 79, what is the website?

Discretionary Fund

(81) As Minister, do you have a discretionary fund?

(a) If yes, what department(s) / agency(s) administer it?

(b) If yes, what is the website URL detailing expenditure?

Qantas Chairman's Lounge

(82) Are you a member of the Qantas Chairmans Lounge?

Local Government Councillors

(83) How many of your Ministerial staff is a local government councillor(s)?

Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

Responsible Pet Ownership Reference Group

Has there been any progress made in setting up the Responsible Pet Ownership Reference Group?

Pounds

(84) The government response to Recommendation 15 of the pounds inquiry indicated the government will commit to the development of a code of practice for rehoming and rescue organisations. Can you provide a timeline for this?

(a) Recommendation 15 referred to the creation of a code with standards for pounds regarding the care and housing of companion animals and the construction of pounds. Will you be developing this, and can you provide an anticipated timeline?

(85) How many council pounds are promoting or advertising animals on either a website or social media platform?

(a) Who is responsible for monitoring councils' compliance with this?

- (b) Where non compliance is identified, what action is taken by NSW OLG?
- (86) Does OLG monitor or oversee whether any council pounds are still using shooting as a method of euthanasia?
- (87) Why is the NSW government reluctant to introduce laws to outlaw the shooting of animals in council pounds?
- (88) Does OLG monitor or oversee how many council pounds currently don't accept cats?
- (89) In relation to incidents at Queanbeyan Queanbeyan-Palerang Council and Moree Plains Shire Council where large numbers of dogs and puppies died or were euthanised during outbreaks of parvovirus, are you aware of the number of dogs who hadn't tested positive and weren't showing symptoms but were euthanised regardless?
- (a) Has OLG conducted an audit or review to investigate this?
- (90) What action has been taken by OLG to address the formal complaint lodged with Moree Plains Shire Council by Animal Liberation regarding animal welfare concerns at the council pound?
- (91) Does the Minister or his office ever receive reports or advice from RSPCA NSW, AWL NSW or the NSW Ombudsman in regards to animal welfare issues and/or non-compliance in NSW council pounds?
- (a) If so, can you please provide details of such reports or advice received since March 2023?

Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs)

- (92) At the 2022 Local Government NSW Annual Conference, councils overwhelmingly supported a motion calling on the NSW Government to legislate a ban on the retail sale of Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs), change rodent management practices on state-owned properties and advocate for a national ban on SGARs. What actions or steps has the Government taken in response to this motion, and will it commit to implementing these recommendations?
- (93) Given the significant environmental harm caused by Second-generation Anticoagulant Rodenticides (SGARs) to native wildlife, including threatened species like Powerful Owls, and recognising the advisory role of OLG in supporting councils to implement biodiversity conservation strategies, will the Government work with LGNSW to develop standardised

guidelines or model clauses for local government tender processes that explicitly prohibit the use of SGARs?

- (94) How will the Government support councils in implementing these measures to align procurement practices with biodiversity conservation goals under the Biodiversity Conservation Act 2016?

Pet registry and greyhounds

- (95) In the March 2024 Budget Estimates hearing, Mr Whitworth indicated that the new pet registry could have the ability to look at tracking greyhounds, specifically to address the gaps regarding greyhounds exiting the greyhound racing industry. Has there been any progress on this functionality?

(a) Will there be any ability to extract data from the pet registry regarding the number of greyhounds on the pet registry, their age, etc?

OLG animal welfare division

- (96) In relation to OLG's newly formed animal welfare division, how many staff are now employed under this and what are their roles?

(a) How many are existing staff?

(b) How many are new positions filled?

(c) Do any of these staff have experience or expertise in animal welfare?

- (97) Can you explain the roles and responsibilities of the division?

- (98) Will the division have responsibility for overseeing compliance and conditions in council pounds?