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The CHAIR: Will the Government commit to rectify this egregious situation by committing to a significant public memorial and event to recognise AC/DC's globally significant contribution to the arts and life of our city, our State, our nation and humanity generally?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: And humanity generally? Well, look, you know—

The CHAIR: The most successful rock'n'roll band in the history of humanity.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Are they?

The CHAIR: Yes, they are. The largest selling—you don't know that?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: More than the Rolling Stones?

The CHAIR: They've sold more albums than the Rolling Stones. The biggest ever concert—

The Hon. MARK BUTTIGIEG: What about The Beatles, Chair?

The CHAIR: Yes, more.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: More than The Beatles?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Well, for those who are about to rock—

The CHAIR: Hundreds of millions of records. Their music is still played in stadia, in cars and in houses all over the world, every day. Is it part of the cultural cringe and snobbery in this State that we recognise other artists, but we don't recognise AC/DC because they're seen as bogans and working class?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I love AC/DC. I don't know why I'm being fitted up as anti-AC/DC. I've come here to answer questions, and all of a sudden I'm some kind of—

The CHAIR: What have you done to recognise their contribution to our society and the arts?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't think I've done anything, but that doesn't mean I don't appreciate them.

The CHAIR: What are you going to do?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: In addition to the motion moved by the Legislative Council, I'm sure that Angus Young and Brian Williams would be—I don't even know if they know. Perhaps we should let them know that this has happened. We can send them a memorial, Mr Chair—a plaque. Maybe you should let me know what you want me to do.

The CHAIR: I've said there should be a public memorial. We have statues to forgotten Scottish poets in the Domain. Yet the most successful musical and artistic act in Australian history—there's not a plaque, not a mural, not a sign anywhere. Melbourne has got AC/DC

Lane and a big mural. There's a statue of Bon Scott. It could be a significant tourist boon because there are hundreds of millions of—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Is Bon Scott from Adelaide or Melbourne?

The CHAIR: Bon Scott was from WA. I think they're all Scottish, but the Youngs grew up in Burwood and it just didn't get recognised.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I know the Youngs. I love AC/DC. Perhaps I could take it on notice, but it sounds like a good idea.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Public memorials are complex and sensitive projects involving extensive consultation and a significant investment of public resources.

The NSW Government has contributed to several public memorials, which sadly in recent times, have been established following significant human tragedy. Such memorials have been considered critical in terms of supporting community resilience and recovery following acts of violence and terrorism.

The Premier's department is exploring if there are appropriate ways to recognise AC/DC.

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The CHAIR: Thank you, I'll follow that up. Premier, last year in a decision in the High Court called *Bird v DP*, the High Court found that church bodies and other volunteer-based organisations will not be held vicariously liable for the abuse by priests and other non-employees. The High Court has invited State legislatures to deal with this issue. Will you act to redress this situation whereby those responsible for historical child sexual abuse crimes are not at the moment, because of the High Court decision, held to be liable?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I take that question very seriously. I wouldn't just automatically dismiss it. Given the nature of it, I want to make sure I've got a considered reply. Perhaps I can take it on notice and report back to the Committee with a comprehensive response.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to the answer on Page 48 of the uncorrected transcript provided by the Secretary of the Cabinet Office, Ms Kate Boyd.

Page 11

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I want to move on to another issue. Officials from the Premier's Department have stated in sworn evidence that a spreadsheet prepared in your office and given to them by Cherie Burton on 28 July 2023 is "the source of truth and the only evidence taken into account in advising the Special Minister of State that a project meets the key criterion for a Local Small Commitments Allocation grant having been nominated as an election commitment prior to the March 2023 election". Did a version of this spreadsheet exist in your office prior to the election?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: A lot of these small commitments were election commitments that the then New South Wales Labor Opposition made prior to the election. I presume there would have been a rendering or a list with the accumulated promises made across the 93 electorates. We were making an attempt to ensure that we weren't pork-barrelling public money into a single electorate, primarily because we've seen such an egregious example of it under the previous Government. The worst one was the bushfire recovery grants, where 26 of 27 projects went to Coalition seats, notwithstanding the fact that much of the bushfire damage was in Independent, crossbench and Labor electorates.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The Local Small Commitments Allocation program was run out of your office prior to the election?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We didn't have any bureaucracy.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: So it was run from your office. Did your office approve the commitments that members were promising in each of the electorates?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Whether it was my office or one of the campaign committees, I'll just have to take it on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The member is asking about election commitments made prior to the 2023 election.

The purpose of Budget Estimates hearings is to inquire into and report on the conduct of government and their policies for expenditure of public monies authorised by Parliament.

The referral by the House to Portfolio Committees for inquiry and report on 20 June 2024 relates to the Budget Estimates and related papers for the financial year 2024-2025 presenting the amounts to be appropriated from the Consolidated Fund.

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The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I want to move on to some commitments in the electorate of Sydney. There was evidence given by officials from your department showing that between July and December last year, changes were made to the amounts allocated for projects in the electorate of Sydney, including one project originally listed with an allocation of \$10,000 subsequently being approved for \$100,000. Are you aware of that change?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't know the ins and outs of hundreds of local small commitments. The nature of disaggregating this money by electorate means that I'm not aware of all of the circumstances of it.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Did you or anyone in your office consult with the member for Sydney about these changes?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I didn't consult, but I can't speak on behalf of all the members in my office.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take that on notice and see if anyone from your office did have a conversation with the member for Sydney about those changes?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Sure.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

My office regularly engages with members of the Legislative Assembly and Legislative Council crossbench.

Page 17

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You keep making the point repeatedly, Premier, that this isn't pork-barrelling because all electorates get the same amount of money—\$400,000. Is that correct?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Sure.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you know how much the electorate of Sydney received under the program?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't know what they got.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: They got \$425,000.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Oh, we're giving too much to a non-Labor seat now.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's listed on the grants website.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Can you believe this? We're getting stitched up because we're going over.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's a genuine question, Premier.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'd understand if it was to the seats of Prospect or Kogarah, but now we're getting stitched up for putting it into non-Labor seats.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Premier, you have said everyone gets \$400,000.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I can imagine the National Party are amazed by this—"Why would you give it to a non-Government seat? That's crazy!"

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Are you done?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't know; I'm intrigued.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you are consistently saying every seat gets \$400,000, and it's fair and equitable, can you explain why \$425,000 was allocated to the Sydney electorate and where that extra money came from?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We've got to cop it on the chin: We're pork-barrelling non-Government seats now. Is that the accusation you're making?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm asking you why that electorate got more.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't know, I'll have to take it on notice. But you're really stretching credulity here, Mr Chair.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to Premier's Department Secretary Simon Draper's and Deputy Secretary, Delivery and Engagement Group Ms Kate Meagher's evidence at pages 59-60 of the uncorrected transcript.

Pages 19-20

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'm not going to ask you about the LSCA program, because it makes me cranky, but I will ask you why you are blaming young people for increasing pressures on our workers compensation scheme?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'm not.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: You were quoted on Monday as saying: Most often claimed are stress or burnout, bullying or harassment. I am not saying that doesn't happen in workplaces, I am sure it does, but there has been an exponential growth, particularly young people claiming this payout, and as a result, premiums for government and business are hugely rising. Why did you say that?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't think that you can draw the inference that I'm blaming young people.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: But you're saying, "Exponential growth, particularly young people claiming this payout". What evidence do you have that that is the case?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: There is an exponential growth in psychosocial claims amongst young people, particularly in the icare sector.

ABIGAIL BOYD: Did icare tell you that? It's not in their icare report. The icare report says it's over 50s.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't have the information, but I'm happy to report back to the Committee.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

iCare claims data records the proportion of workers compensation claims for psychological injuries in workers under 40 years old has increased by 90% from 2020 to 2024.

Pages 26- 27

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Premier, I want to move to a new issue now. You picked Moree as the location for a trial of a range of measures to tackle regional crime. I think it was almost 12 months ago. On 12 March 2024 you made a series of announcements in Moree, one of which was around the place-based response in Moree. You said there will be an action plan within six months to optimise service delivery in that community. Has that been completed?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: The bail accommodation service hasn't—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That wasn't my question. It was about the community action plan. You said within six months there would be a community action plan devised. I'm asking if that has been completed.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I think the plan has been devised, but we haven't—I'm just being completely transparent.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's a genuine question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We haven't met—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That time frame?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: —the agreed-upon time frame for a bail accommodation service in Moree.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'll come to the bail accommodation in a minute.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: But the plan is in action and ready to roll out.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If that's the case, would you be able to provide—and I'm happy for you to take it on notice—a copy of the plan? It's not anywhere publicly available that we've been able to find.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'll take it on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could, I would appreciate that.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to evidence on Page 49 of the uncorrected transcript provided by the Secretary of the Premier's Department Mr Simon Draper and the Deputy Secretary, Delivery and Engagement Group Ms Kate Meagher.

Page 31

The CHAIR: Excellent. Thank you, Premier. I turn to a question now on water. It's quite a long one, so bear with me. In August 2024, IPART issued a similar price determination for Sydney Water Corporation and Hunter Water Corporation that was due to commence in September 2024. This determination proposed a price increase to customers' bills. At the time, you issued a letter to the chair of IPART exercising powers under the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act to require IPART to consider a number of matters prior to imposing those price increases, including cost of living, existing rebates and their effectiveness to manage societal impacts. Will you use the same powers you exercised under section 13 (1) (c) of the Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992 to require the tribunal to consider the following matters: the cost-of-living impacts on increasing the cost of rural and regional bulk water charges on rural water users, and the effectiveness of existing rebates to manage the societal impact of these price determinations?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Can you just repeat the last one?

The CHAIR: The two parts are the cost-of-living impacts on increasing the cost of rural and regional bulk water charges on rural water users, and the effectiveness of existing rebates to manage societal impacts of the price determinations.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'd have to be confident that the existing provisions under their independent determination for the ability to pay isn't covered already. I know that that's a central element of IPART. It's why we have IPART: so that corporations or governments, heaven forbid, don't automatically charge consumers for the cost of capital or the cost of renewal or the cost of depreciation or even enabling infrastructure for new home development, which is where the significant charges are coming from at the moment. We need to make sure that we get the balance right between having enough of the mains infrastructure in place to meet housing targets and goals whilst also not levying households way too much money for something as basic as water. So I accept the premise of your point, but I just I don't know what the implications would be if I mucked around with the IPART Act.

The CHAIR: You've written to the IPART saying they should consider that in terms of Hunter. Will you do the Hunter and Sydney Water? Will you do the same in terms of the proposed price increases in the Murrumbidgee, Murray and other rural areas where they are dependent on bulk water allocations?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Let me take it on notice. I wouldn't rule it out, Mr Chair, but I just need to make sure that I was fully aware of what the consequences would be.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The letter for Sydney Water and Hunter Water was sent to IPART because of the potential bill impacts to individual customers across Sydney and Newcastle.

In regional NSW, where two IPART price reviews are being undertaken, affected customers are large businesses as well as agricultural water users, town water suppliers and environmental water holders. IPART have noted that the ten largest water licences affected by their determinations in regional NSW account for 31% of all water entitlements in NSW.

If IPART's draft report due in March shows that there is a detrimental effect on individuals in regional NSW, then I will consider whether I need to issue further directions under section 13 of the *Independent Pricing and Regulatory Tribunal Act 1992* (NSW).

Page 32

The CHAIR: When will the Government respond to the Connectivity Expert Panel report, the blueprint to fix the Darling/Baaka River that has been implemented and is designed to stop some of the catastrophic fish kills we have seen in that water system, and will the Government respond to each recommendation?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Which report was that?

The CHAIR: The Government's Connectivity Expert Panel report.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: When was that commissioned and released?

The CHAIR: You've got me there. I don't know. I'll have to ask Helen Dalton. Maybe take it on notice.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'll take it on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Government is completing further hydrological, economic and environmental analysis on the recommendations from the Connectivity Expert Panel's final report and will consult on that analysis and the findings of the Connectivity Expert Panel. A response will be issued to the report.

Pages 32- 33

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I go to quite a few people's favourite topic at the moment, which is the Dubbo sports hub. I asked Minister Moriarty about this yesterday. Getting away from the political tit for tat of who's to blame for this funding being retracted or the hub not being built, the fact remains that Dubbo needs a sporting facility, not just for the kids who want to play sport at a competitive level but also in terms of a diversionary strategy for rural crime. What are we going to do to make sure Dubbo gets this sporting facility that they need? Notwithstanding the arguments around whether it's a variation or a new project, the fact remains that they need this sporting facility. What are we going to do to make sure they get it? That's my main concern.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I appreciate that. I won't get into the history of it. I think that would probably test the Committee's patience. My Government included, we have to be really aware that when we commit money we've got to try to get it out the door as soon as possible, because the cost in escalation of construction just makes these projects unviable. In the past, when you had cost of construction rising with or slightly higher than inflation, governments would build in lag times. They'd say, "This project is to be announced. Construction will begin in two years time. It will be completed in three years time." If you've got cost of construction lifting at a bit above inflation, it's probably well within the Government's envelope. What we're dealing with now, as a result of input costs as well as labour increasing, is we've got to get on these projects as soon as possible because delay means eventually it evaporates.

That's all I'd say about the history of the PCYC. When it comes to the future, I recognise Dubbo's a growing community. I know the mayor and, to be fair to him, the local MP has been very tough on everybody in relation to this. They want the project up and running. I do commit to working with both of them about how we can get the facilities Dubbo needs, particularly when it comes to athletic centres like this PCYC centre.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Given PCYC have now stamped a flag on the ground and actually bought a different site with the intention of developing it, are you committed to quarantining those funds until a proposal can be put to government, and not sending this money elsewhere?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Probably I'll take that on notice because the budget's coming up. Labor has been accused in the past of making commitments and not following through on it, and I'm just an absolute stickler for it. I'd rather get accused of taking my time when it comes to a commitment rather than renege later on. Let me take it on notice. I'll look closely at the project. I don't want politics to get in the way of this either.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: The community is just rightfully concerned that, while they're getting this new proposal organised, the money will go somewhere else. So that's why I put that question to you.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Fair enough.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The allocation of any remaining funds is considered through the NSW Government's ongoing budget processes.

PAGE 33

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Picking up on what you were discussing with Mr Buckingham's question over tariffs and steel and aluminium, has the Government done any modelling on what the impact of this tariff could mean for New South Wales?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: We have. I'll try to endeavour to get as much information as I can to the Committee and the public.

KATE BOYD: We can provide that this afternoon.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

NSW Treasury has considered the likely effect of the announced US tariffs, and the announced retaliation from China, Canada and Mexico, having regard to modelling work undertaken by economist Warrick McKibbin of the Australian National University.

Treasury is planning to undertake more detailed modelling of the effects of tariffs in May, prior to finalisation of the Budget forecasts, when more information will be available about the policy decisions of the US and other nations.

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Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Would you consider introducing a New South Wales Independent Commissioner for First Nations children and young people? Because there's a desperate need for one right now. Because it is First Nations kids that are being most impacted, and you know that.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'm happy to take it on notice. We don't have plans for it at the moment, notwithstanding the fact—

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The NSW Government is continuing conversations with the Commonwealth, states and territories and the Safe and Supported Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Leadership Group regarding the proposal for nationally-agreed Minimum Requirements for an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commissioner. I understand these proposed requirements will be further discussed by interested parties at the next Safe and Supported Shared-Decision Making Committee meeting.

The NSW Government is committed to reducing the number of Aboriginal children and young people in out-of-home care and will continue to consider the reforms needed to ensure that Aboriginal children and young people have appropriate oversight within the system.

Pages 36 -37

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Premier, you said earlier that you try to visit regional communities most weeks when Parliament isn't sitting. Is there a reason why you didn't go to Kempsey on Sunday to join about 700 locals at a community crime rally that you were invited to attend?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I had family business on.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Did you ask any other Minister to attend in your place?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I asked a departmental official to go.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Are you able to tell me who that was, who represented you at that event?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: No.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Could you take that on notice?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Sure.

the Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Also, what time they arrived in Kempsey and when they left as well?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'll see. I'm happy to take it on notice and I'll see if I can give you an answer.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to the answer provided during the hearing on pages 47 and 48 of the uncorrected transcript.

Pages 38- 39

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Premier, I am. Does it concern you that Sheikh Wesam Charkawi, who is a signatory to the United Muslim Community statement, was approved for a \$100,000 grant under your local small commitments program?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Look, it may well be the case that whether it's local small commitment grants or the Lebanese Muslim Association getting millions of dollars under the previous Government, I can't speak to all of the grants going out the door. What I would say is that the Government's view in relation to this has been unambiguous and clear right the way through. In relation to the rise of antisemitism, there needs to be a united front. There needs to be a clear and unambiguous signal from the New South Wales Government that we won't tolerate hate speech. We won't tolerate people dividing Australian against Australian. Now, I understand that you want a review into these organisations. I think the more relevant question for the New South Wales Opposition is why did you water down our hate speech laws when they were introduced into Parliament last week when they were designed specifically and precisely to confront antisemitism in the community?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Well, Premier, the question is why are you funding Sheikh Wesam Charkawi \$100,000—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I just explained to you—

The Hon. BOB NANVA: Point of order—

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: —under the Local Small Commitments Allocation?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Interestingly, you won't answer my question.

The CHAIR: Order! There is a point of order.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: I'm not debating or quarrelling with the substance of the question that has been put, but there is a procedural element to this. There is a series of questions, the subject matter of which may adversely reflect on a third party who is not here. Under the procedural fairness guidelines, paragraph 13, I would ask that you rule the question out of order.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: To the point of order: There's a public statement by an individual who has received money from the New South Wales Government. I should be allowed to ask questions about that.

The Hon. BOB NANVA: To the point of order: Chair, the Hon. Chris Rath is soliciting evidence that might adversely reflect in a personal or reputational way on a third party or an organisation who cannot be afforded procedural fairness under the resolution that established a budget estimates inquiry.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: To the point of order: Chair, all of the documents that the Hon. Chris Rath is referring to are public. That's a public Facebook page. The granting of this funding with this individual as the contact for the organisation is also publicly available, so there is nothing here that is not in the public domain.

The CHAIR: I do not uphold the point of order, but I remind all members that adverse mention of third parties is to be avoided. These are matters that are in the public domain. It does relate to the expenditure in this portfolio area. I will allow the question.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Chair, I just want to make it clear that anyone who receives public funds has to abide by the conditions in which they've been granted. If there's any breach of that, of course the New South Wales Government will deal with them immediately. But the position of the Government couldn't be clearer: We have an unambiguous and clear legislative reform to smash hate speech where we see it, particularly the rise in antisemitic behaviour in New South Wales, whether it's our restrictions in relation to protests out the front of synagogues and religious places of worship, our hate speech laws, or our changes to the exhibition of a swastika or Nazi memorabilia.

I make the point that it's very galling for me to take a lecture from a member of the New South Wales Opposition from the upper House when we introduced laws specifically and precisely to confront hate speech, and they were particularly watered down by you and your colleagues—not even a review but a three-year termination of the legislation and a whole bunch of changes to how it will be implemented by the police. So it is galling for me to hear from you that all of a sudden you've had a change of heart when there are questions in the upper House Committee.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Well, Premier, thank you but that wasn't my question. Sheikh Charkawi has been ordered to work from home for breaching the education department's code of ethics by making inflammatory social media posts about the Bankstown nurses. Do you know what this \$100,000 grant was for?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'm not sure about the circumstances. I'm happy to take it on notice and if there's any information that you have in relation to it, you should provide it. But it sounds like disciplinary matters have already been taken in relation to this individual by the department.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to evidence on page 47 of the uncorrected transcript.

Pages 39- 40

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: The funding was approved by your Minister to "meet 100 per cent of the costs for delivering the Who Am I? initiative in the New South Wales schools across Granville, Guildford and Merrylands". So are you going to act to cancel this funding?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't know the circumstances of the grant. I'm not sure about it. What I can say is the Government has a comprehensive package when it comes to confronting antisemitism and it would have been good to have had the support of the New South Wales Liberal Party when it moved through Parliament.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But, Premier, now you've been made aware of this specific example, can I ask—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Well, I haven't been made aware of it. I've been given a single sentence by the member.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We're telling you that there's a local small commitments grant going to an organisation headed by this individual, which is about initiative in schools. At the same time, the Department of Education has ordered this individual to work from home, so there's a concern here. Now that you've been made aware of it—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: No. Unfortunately, that's—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: —will you take it on notice to have a look at that grant, where the money's going to, and will you look to cancel it?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'm happy to take that on notice but that's not enough information just being provided in a haphazard way by the Opposition.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's not haphazard.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I need more information than that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We found it with very limited resources in Opposition.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Well, that's your problem, not my problem.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But my point is, Premier, we found it. Why are you not looking into it—

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Again, I'm relying on your word, which I'm—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: —and, now that you've been made aware of it, why won't you look?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I'm relying on your word, which I think it would be unwise to do. If you've got information, you can provide it.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It's your public document.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Premier, I'll provide it. Before the election you committed—and I'll table this—

The CHAIR: I think you've got to seek leave to table it.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to evidence on page 47 of the uncorrected transcript.

Page 40

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: —\$100,000 to Sheikh Wesam Charkawi. That was your election commitment.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Was it to him individually?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: He was the contact person.

Mr CHRIS MINNS: What was the name of the organisation?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: It says, "NSW Labor will deliver up to \$100,000 to Sydney Youth Connect towards their building capacity through mentoring and engagement program"—with the sheikh as the contact person. I've got copies for members. There's the assessment from the Local Small Commitments Allocation, your assessments that you've been talking about today, where the project and also the approval of that project—which I can also table and circulate to members—as well as the signatory on the statement from Sheikh Wesam Charkawi. So what we would like to know is does this concern you?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: Again, I'm happy to take it on notice. I don't know the circumstances other than what you've provided, and I'd like to look at it closer.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to evidence on page 47 of the uncorrected transcript.

Pages 40- 41

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: He hasn't even started it.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I haven't finished the question.

The CHAIR: I uphold the point of order. The Premier has taken part of it, the first question, on notice. I think this is a new question, but I will listen intently.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Are you concerned about funding from the New South Wales Government going to organisations and individuals that may have signed this statement from last week?

Mr CHRIS MINNS: I don't know who's the signatory. I'm only being presented this information right now. I'm taking it on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Please refer to evidence on page 47 of the uncorrected transcript.

Page 50

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Did the steering committee for the Great Koala National Park unanimously sign off on submitting the improved native forestry method to the Commonwealth for development?

LUCY HARTAS: I'll take that on notice because I've joined more recently than it being submitted to the Commonwealth. I was on maternity leave for some of last year when I think the method was originally proposed. I'll take on notice as to when and how it was approved.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This question should be referred to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEEW), as the chair of the Great Koala National Park Steering Committee and lead for the development of the Improved Native Forestry Management methodology (INFM).

Page 50

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Given that, you might need to take some of these on notice as well. How was the decision made to send a carbon method to the Commonwealth for the cessation or deferral of public native forestry?

LUCY HARTAS: I'll have to take that on notice as well.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This question should be referred to the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water (DCCEE), as they lead the development of the Improved Native Forestry Management methodology (INFM).

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The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Moving now to some questions around public sector remuneration grades, Mr Draper, there was a question on notice put by my colleague Mr Tudehope about the breakdown of public sector employees by remuneration grades for 2023 and 2024. The response from the Premier directed us to the State of the NSW Public Sector Report 2023 produced by the Public Service Commissioner, but that doesn't have any breakdown by remuneration grades. The public sector report that was produced by your department also doesn't have a breakdown by remuneration grades. Can you advise why this report, which has been taken away from the Public Service Commissioner and I think put under the department now—why they no longer report on the breakdown by remuneration grades?

MARCUS RAY: You're saying the previous one didn't report on it either. Is that correct?

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, but my understanding is that information wasn't provided when asked. I'm asking on behalf of my colleague who can't be here. We were misdirected, effectively, to a report that didn't provide the data that was asked for.

MARCUS RAY: I'm going to have to take—unless you have any more information on that, Samara?

SAMARA DOBBINS: I do recall the question.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I do have a copy of it but I'm trying to find it.

SAMARA DOBBINS: I do recall the question on notice. That is correct. I believe the last two NSW Public Sector and Workforce Profile reports have not broken down the data to that level. Agency annual reports do have remuneration for senior executives but not for the award-grade staff. I can't explain why it may have been in previous reports and not in the last two reports, but that is certainly something that we can look at now we have responsibility.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I've now got question on notice 3186 in front of me, but you said you were aware of it, Ms Dobbins. Again, on behalf of Mr Tudehope, is that breakdown that he was looking for something that can be provided on notice?

SAMARA DOBBINS: Not retrospectively, because I don't believe we collected it as part of the workforce profile, but I can take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised that: The Public Sector Report 2024 was streamlined to improve readability and reduce the overall report length.

A breakdown of employment arrangement by salary as a percentage is available on the NSW Government website in the Additional Workforce Profile Data file.

Pages 52-53

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Ms Dobbins, going back to that report that I was asking about before, I'm told that the 2023 report had the breakdown of that data but the 2024 report didn't. Is that your understanding as well?

SAMARA DOBBINS: I'm going to have to plead ignorance on that one and I'm very sorry. I can take it on notice. You're probably correct. The function has only recently transferred to us, so we certainly didn't make an executive decision not to include that data. But I can look into how, why and whether we'll include it next time.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just to pick up on your answer, if there wasn't an executive decision not to include it, I'm curious as to who made the decision not to have it when it had been there previously.

SAMARA DOBBINS: I'm not sure, I'm sorry. The function didn't transfer to us until September last year. There was significant work already done by the Public Service Commission up to that point. The Premier's Department took it on and completed it. But the people working on that report now report to me. I can look into it.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Public Sector Report 2024 was streamlined to improve readability and reduce the overall report length.

A breakdown of employment arrangement by salary as a percentage is available on the NSW Government website in the Additional Workforce Profile Data file.

Page 53

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: This is probably mostly to you, Ms Boyd, but feel free for anyone else to jump in as well. Has the Premier or anyone in the Premier's office requested information regarding the previous Government's travel?

KATE BOYD: No. Let me clarify that. They've asked for our advice about how certain policies and rules have been interpreted and what the practice has been, but I'm not aware—I mean, it's always open to anyone to lodge a GIPAA. I'm not sure of whether or not that has been pursued by individual members of the Government. I can check that, but they have not come to the Cabinet Office and asked for records or documents relating to specific travel undertaken by previous members. They have asked us for advice about practice, convention and how rules have been interpreted.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

As set out in *M2022-11 2023 State Election - Caretaker Conventions*, by convention, the Government of the day does not seek access to the State papers, and especially to the Cabinet documents, of a previous Government of a different political party.

The Premier's Department supports Ministerial travel arrangements being made with the NSW Government's approved travel management supplier, FCM Travel Solutions. See section 5 of the NSW Ministers Office Handbook.

The Premier's Department regularly receives applications under the *Government Information (Public Access) Act 2009 (GIPA Act)* for information relating to Ministerial travel. Information released by the Premier's Department under the GIPA Act is available on the Premier's Department Disclosure Log on its website.

The Premier's Department proactively releases information about Ministerial domestic travel incurred since 1 July 2023, including flight fares, accommodation and meal expenses, every 6 months.

Pages 53-54

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Mr Ray, with your economic policy remit, there are three big economic issues in New South Wales: productivity, productivity and productivity. Australia's performance has declined rapidly over the past eight years, with our living standards dropping by 10 per cent as a result. People may not like this, but the shining example internationally of strong productivity gains since 2018 is the United States. It has had a 13 per cent increase in living standards, so a 23 per cent gap opening up between our country, our State and the United States. What work have you been doing on a productivity policy for New South Wales to try to turn this around?

MARCUS RAY: Thanks for your question, Mr Latham. The Government obviously has been working on a number of policies: industry policy, innovation policy and a range of different areas. We've been looking at productivity under the housing system as well. I can certainly speak to the reforms that the Government has introduced in relation to housing to improve outcomes and improve housing supply. There has been a great deal of those reforms, most recently in the last week about low-rise and mid-rise housing, and previously in relation to the announcement of transport oriented development, and also various other precincts and renewal rezonings there—increases in dual occupancies and all of those sorts of things—in order to improve outcomes in housing, per se.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Does that relate to labour productivity? Housing stock doesn't necessarily change labour productivity. You have to do some things about the construction of housing, getting rid of BASIX or something like that to make it easier, more affordable and more profitable for the company to build a house per unit of labour. Has that been happening?

MARCUS RAY: Labour productivity has been a very thorny issue, particularly in the construction industry. There has been a recent report from the Commonwealth Productivity Commissioner in relation to that. As I said, the Government is working on that industry policy and working on trade and investment strategy and a range of other policies. Those are matters that are being carried forward by Minister Chanthivong and his administration. We are assisting in the development and bringing different agencies together in the development of those matters.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: My experience is that industry policy sends labour productivity the wrong way. Anyway, maybe on notice you can give us some feedback about the implementation of the national Productivity Commission recommendations about housing.

MARCUS RAY: Yes, absolutely.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

On 14 February 2025, the Commonwealth Productivity Commission released its research paper, Housing construction productivity: Can we fix it? It sets out the Commission's priorities for Commonwealth, state and territory collaboration through key reform areas covering coordinated planning and building approvals, more effective building regulation and quality requirements, supporting housing innovation and improving workforce flexibility.

NSW works closely with the Commonwealth to implement housing related initiatives aligned to the Commission's findings:

- The Housing Taskforce was established in September 2024 to resolve delays in developments that require approvals from various NSW Government agencies.
- The Housing Delivery Authority was established in December 2024 to speed up the assessment of well-located major residential projects.
- A Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) Taskforce was established in November 2023 to demonstrate the potential for off-site manufacturing in NSW Government housing projects, and advocate for the growth and capacity building of the MMC industry and its workforce. As part of this, NSW is trialling the delivery of modular housing to deliver social housing.
- The NSW Skills Plan was launched in November 2024, which will help tackle skills gaps in industries vital to NSW's future such as construction. The Plan outlines actions such as boosting recruitment of skilled workers, enhancing teacher capacity in high-demand fields and driving innovation in the NSW skills system.

The NSW Government is also undertaking a range of other initiatives to support productivity growth, including:

- Signing onto the National Competition Policy late last year, with the first tranche of reforms focused on easing the cost of living and regulatory burdens to benefit Australian consumers, workers and businesses. Key initiatives include:
- levelling the regulatory playing field for modern methods of construction and simplifying certification processes
- improving commercial zoning and planning requirements
- fast tracking the adoption of international product safety standards
- removing barriers to the right to repair.

Launching the NSW Industry Policy on 5 March 2025 to ensure industry support is clear and consistent, driving investment to help build a productive and resilient economy fit for the future.

Page 54

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Ms Hartas, on energy policy, I think late last week the head of Rio Tinto's majority owner in Tomago said that when the coal-based electricity contract runs out in three years, they're expecting their electricity prices to double off the back of renewables. He's casting doubt over whether or not we'll have aluminium smelting in New South Wales at Tomago. BlueScope have said they could halve their energy costs by going to Ohio in the United States, which in part they've done with their investments—again, coal based, and also they've got a nuclear input. What work have you been doing to bring down energy costs in New South Wales so we don't continue this pattern of de-industrialising?

LUCY HARTAS: We are at the pivotal point in time where we need to shift our energy usage. I think Tomago and several others are on historical coal-based energy contracts at the moment. As we're at this point in time where we're transitioning towards renewables, and there's great effort that's going in across government to renewable energy zones—particularly in Central-West Orana, but elsewhere in the other REZs as well—it is at this point in time when it will be the awkward transition period, necessarily.

Work is underway across government to see what could be done to support industries like that, and particularly manufacturing, given the focus on domestic manufacturing in New South Wales. We work really closely in the Cabinet Office with our colleagues in Investment NSW and with the Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water to make sure that we're coordinated across government to see what can be done. I don't necessarily say that we have an answer for Tomago here today, but suffice to say there is work underway within government to see what could be an option for Government consideration.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: On notice, could you give us an outline of the nature of that work?

LUCY HARTAS: Yes, happy to.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The NSW Government is committed to partnering with industry to support the net zero and energy transition, local manufacturing, and housing in NSW. These priorities are outlined in the state's first NSW Industry Policy, which was released on 5 March 2025.

The NSW Government continues to engage with Tomago Aluminium Company and the primary joint partner of the venture, Rio Tinto. The purpose of these meetings is to

understand the current and future challenges facing aluminium smelting at Tomago. The NSW Government will consider all options that support a resilient, sustainable, and productive economy in the Hunter region.

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Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: It doesn't really answer the question as to why it was done that way by the department. Can I turn to safer ground? Apologies, I'm not sure what now fits within the PSC and what fits within the Premier's Department, so if these are actually for the commissioner, let me know. I wanted to know what the progress is on getting all departments and agencies to develop their disability inclusion action plan. I understand there's been huge delays in having updated versions. For instance, Transport for NSW has been saying they're going to have it for multiple years and they still haven't published anything. What is the status of those, and what do you do to hurry people along?

SAMARA DOBBINS: Diversity and inclusion remain responsibilities of the Public Service Commissioner.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I'll have to wait. One of the things that we asked the commissioner last session—and we were told, "No, that's actually the Premier's Department now"—was in relation to the monitoring of the New South Wales public sector gender pay gap. One of the questions we asked was what the gap would be if we reported it on the same basis that the private sector reports, including overtime bonuses, additional payments et cetera. Is that something you're able to tell me?

SAMARA DOBBINS: It is our responsibility now. We are responsible for the Workforce Profile and the Public Sector Report. But I'm sorry, I can't tell you off the top of my head. I'm happy to take it on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Workforce Gender Equality Agency (WGEA) manage the reporting of gender pay gap for private companies. The Premier's Department reports the gender pay gap using both the average and median remuneration based on available payment types in the Workforce Profile. The annual workforce profile collection does not collect all the types of payments that are included in the WGEA calculation (such as superannuation and allowances).

Page 58

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I'm just following up on my last line of questioning about the RFS plan and the SO 52. Ms Boyd, were you consulted with before the Leader of the Government gave notice of the motion for an SO 52?

KATE BOYD: I don't know whether I was consulted before that or not. I definitely was consulted about the scope of the order at some stage, but I can't say whether that was before or after, and I didn't follow the debate, unfortunately, so I'm not sure whether or not that was before, after or during.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Or anyone else in your department—or it was probably with you?

KATE BOYD: I can take that on notice but that would be unusual, given that most standing orders don't originate from the Government. But I can definitely take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Cabinet Office encourages all Members to discuss the scope of orders with relevant Ministers and agencies prior to motions being considered, so that orders for papers are appropriately targeted to the documents sought by the House.

In line with this practice, the Information and Privacy Unit within The Cabinet Office was made aware of the relevant order for papers before it was passed by the House.

Pages 60-61

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: This goes to the questions from Mr Latham and Ms Boyd about Local Small Commitments Allocation. I am looking at a brief from 1 November 2023, which is entitled, "Process for engaging with local MPs and Labor candidates to complete a declaration of any interests in nominated projects". The brief basically goes into detail about dealing with Labor candidates in the 93 electorates. Are you concerned that the Premier's Department essentially now needs to make contact with each of the 93 Labor candidates post the election to try and find out what the election commitments were to each of the groups? Isn't it potentially undermining the independence of the public service if they are only making contact with Labor candidates about election commitments and not all members of Parliament or Executive Government?

SIMON DRAPER: The short answer is no. But the process you're describing I think would relate to where we were asked to specifically check whether there were any conflicts of interests.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: That's right.

SIMON DRAPER: That wasn't all 93; it was, I think, 17. I think the process there was we sought advice on who the contact person was and that was a managed process. We had probity advisers who worked alongside our staff and made those contacts and asked specific questions, so I am quite satisfied that that was an appropriate process.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: I understand that. It says the process will support engagement with local MPs and Labor Party candidates who nominated organisations to apply for funding through the Local Small Commitments Allocation prior to the 25 March 2023 New South Wales election. You said you were dealing with 17, but that is a self-declared process, isn't it? Of the 93 Labor candidates, 17 of them declared a conflict?

SIMON DRAPER: No, the Minister responsible—the decision-maker—said for certain places he wanted to ask some more questions and he wanted to do his own due diligence, and he asked us to undertake another layer of due diligence on conflicts of interest. We contacted those parties and we were asking very specific questions about whether they had a conflict and the nature of the conflict, if it existed.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: What about the balance of the 93 minus 17? Why wasn't an assessment done of those? Why was it only the 17?

SIMON DRAPER: It's kind of a risk-based approach. As Ms Boyd was referring to, we were evaluating use of public funds and making assessment about whether the proposed use of those public funds met the grant guidelines and the guidelines for this particular program

and was a proper use of public funds. That was a very thorough process in itself. The decision-maker—the Minister—asked us to undertake an additional layer of due diligence, as I've said, on conflicts of interest.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Just on those 17?

SIMON DRAPER: On the 17, because issues had been raised or issues had come to his attention and he wanted to assure himself that there wasn't something that he should know about, so we provided that advice. But the contact with those members or candidates was very structured and, as you say, there is a memo about how to go about doing it. It was focused just on the question of conflict of interest and engaging them to disclose any conflicts they may have had.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: But how can we have confidence, with those outside of the 17, that there isn't a conflict of interest between the candidates and the projects in those?

KATE MEAGHER: I might be able to assist with that, Mr Rath. Our understanding is that those conflicts were managed at the point of nomination prior to us administering the program. We were given advice that a conflicts process had been run at the point of those projects being nominated.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: By the Labor Party?

KATE MEAGHER: Correct.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: So basically pre-election conflicts were managed by the Labor Party.

KATE MEAGHER: Correct. That's right.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Post-election conflicts you were told, "Look into these 17 because there might be a conflict there"?

KATE MEAGHER: Correct. We also had our own conflicts process around our assessment panel looking at the projects as well, so there were a number of checks along the way.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Who gave your agency the advice that those conflicts had been looked at prior to the election by the Labor Party?

KATE MEAGHER: I'll take that on notice. I can't recall. I'll check with Ms Morgan.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This information was provided verbally.

Page 61

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: In the guidelines for the local small commitments, we saw that, originally, there was a foreword from the Special Minister of State and also one from the Premier that was—

KATE MEAGHER: Sorry, a what?

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: A foreword, like a message from them, and that was in the SO 52 documents that we got that originally had a message from the Premier and a message from the Special Minister of State. Then in the final version that was published, those ministerial messages were taken out. What was the reason for that?

KATE MEAGHER: I'm not sure.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Does anyone have any view on why those messages were taken out?

KATE MEAGHER: I'll have to take it on notice. I'm not sure.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

A foreword from the Premier or a Minister is not required for grant guidelines.

Pages 61-62

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: And who made the decision to take those messages out?

KATE MEAGHER: I don't know, sorry.

The Hon. CHRIS RATH: Perhaps, I'd suggest, that maybe the Ministers didn't want to be associated with the scheme.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I have one question about the advice around the conflicts. Again, I appreciate what you're saying, that that was information that was provided by, I'm assuming, the Labor Party. You are going to take on notice who that came from.

KATE MEAGHER: Yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Are you also able to provide the Committee with a copy of the advice or how it was communicated to the department that there had been a conflict of interest process undertaken prior to the election?

KATE MEAGHER: I'll take it on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This information was provided verbally.

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The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm sure Mr Tudehope will be very happy with that feedback. Again, you might have to take this on notice, Ms Meagher, but that advice around the conflicts of interest that was done pre-election, are you aware if that was provided in a written form or a formal way to the department?

KATE MEAGHER: I'm not. I'll have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Again, I appreciate it is being taken on notice, but if it was, a document of that nature or anything referring to that actually wasn't included in the call for papers that we have done for this particular program, which, again, is potentially concerning if there was some sort of formal advice. If you could take that on notice as well.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This information was provided verbally.

Pages 63-64

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: I guess what we're talking about is the idea or the allegation there's a quid pro quo—you know, "We will give you this money if you do a bit of electioneering for us." But perhaps that's more of an election act issue rather than a conflict of interest issue. Let's leave that there. Can I ask you just a couple of random ones. Contractor and labour hire numbers—I understand, I hope, the Premier's Department is now responsible for the workforce strategy stuff. Do you have any figures for us on how that's trending?

SAMARA DOBBINS: I'll just need to look at my notes. There may have been something published in the last public sector report. Sorry, just give me one second. I do have contingent workforce trend data.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: As of?

SAMARA DOBBINS: As of the last public sector report, so that census date in June 2024 and the report published in December. It is on the website.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Do you have anything more current than that?

SAMARA DOBBINS: No, I don't, sorry.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Could you take it on notice maybe to see if there is unpublished data that is available?

AMARA DOBBINS: Absolutely. Sorry, Ms Boyd, contingent labour and?

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: So contractor numbers and labour hire numbers.

SAMARA DOBBINS: I will do.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This question should be directed to the Treasurer. NSW Procurement within NSW Treasury maintains data on contingent labour use, recorded on Contractor Central, the NSW Government's vendor management system.

Page 64

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Thank you. As you all know, I love looking at eTender. One of the things that leapt out to me—there were two different contract award notice details that came up that were both published around the beginning of July last year. One of them is for Deloitte—I think it's almost \$500,000—in relation to financial and commercial advice to assist with assessment and negotiation of an unsolicited proposal. The other one was for King & Wood Mallesons for the same thing, legal services, advice and connection, with consideration of unsolicited proposal. Are they in relation to Rosehill?

SIMON DRAPER: They are. I believe so, yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: They talk about being relevant to stage two of that proposal. The King & Wood Mallesons one goes up until April this year. Does that mean then that a decision on stage three is imminent?

SIMON DRAPER: No, I think we just set up the arrangements. There had to have some view about how long they were going to run for. They are paid as services are provided, so it's not a fixed amount.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Is it over or are they still going?

SIMON DRAPER: It's still going, yes.

Ms ABIGAIL BOYD: Are you able to tell us how much they are up to so far? Because both of them were for—I think the King & Wood Mallesons one is for \$412,000—so almost \$1 million altogether just for stage two. Would you then be entering into new contracts, presumably for stage three?

SIMON DRAPER: I haven't got those numbers with me but I'd be happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Spend to 28 February 2025 for the Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu engagement is \$220,675 (excl. GST) and the King & Wood Mallesons engagement is \$246,006 (excl. GST).

Both engagements were awarded with the option to make a variation to extend the delivery of services for Stage 3 of the USP process, should it occur.

Pages 64-65

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, great research to bounce off. When will we get some news about stage two and stage three? It seems incongruous that the Premier announced this thing against the guidelines in December of 2023 but no news about stage two or stage three with transparency? What will the ATC members be voting on, do you expect, on 3 April?

SIMON DRAPER: Just in terms of transparency, with you personally we have spent a lot of time talking about this and being very transparent about it. Stage two is still underway. Obviously we don't go to stage three until—there's no fixed timeline associated with these things. But, yes, there is a milestone coming up with the ATC. They've got an extraordinary general meeting, a vote coming up, which I think starts in mid-March and goes through to early April. That's for them to canvass their membership on willingness to proceed with the transaction, in particular, I think, in relation to disposal of the Rosehill site, because there is more than one site involved. That's obviously a significant milestone. But there's lots of other work going on in terms of what is the development capacity of the site, the master planning of the site, how that would integrate with the metro station and the financial feasibility of it all. All of that work is going on in the background. That's part of the work of the advisers that Ms Boyd was referring to a moment ago.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sure, but will stage two be completed by mid-March or 3 April when that voting is underway?

SIMON DRAPER: We can't really complete stage two until the ATC has gone through the steps that we were just talking about and they can confirm that they are ready to proceed and the basis on which they are ready to proceed.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Okay, but that is something of a paradox, isn't it, that the members will be less reluctant to vote for uncertainty, not knowing what stage two looks like, but you can't complete stage two until the members vote? That is classic catch 22.

SIMON DRAPER: I don't want to speak on behalf of the ATC, but my understanding is there is a sort of a threshold question about whether their members are willing to countenance the idea of disposing of that site, or turning it over to another use and relocating their racing functions somewhere else. I think that their members are likely to need a certain amount of information to make that decision, but it probably doesn't need to be a final deal that we can present to our Cabinet and they can present to their members. That may come later.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: At stage two, is it broader than just the Rosehill site? Does it take in all of Camellia with the Rosehill Camellia Landowners Alliance, involving outfits like Billbergia?

SIMON DRAPER: At the moment we are assessing the proposal that was received to go into the stage two process. There was a scope to that. That involved the Rosehill site. It involved other sites at Horsley Park, Warwick Farm. It's that package.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Not the Brickpit at Homebush? Has that has been ruled out now?

SIMON DRAPER: As far as I know, that's not part of what is being proposed.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Who is doing the due diligence from the racing side? Because it is said that Racing NSW dropped out when the Brickpit dropped out. Who is doing the due diligence?

SIMON DRAPER: Who are their advisers? Is that the question?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes.

SIMON DRAPER: I am not sure. I will have to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Does it involve Bondi Partners Racing, this new entity created in October? If you can take that on notice—

SIMON DRAPER: Yes, sure.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The ATC's advisers are a matter for the ATC, The ATC is required to inform the State of all adviser engagements in relation to the Rosehill Gardens Racecourse Unsolicited Proposal. The State has not been advised of any engagement by ATC of Bondi Partners Racing.