

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – BUDGET ESTIMATES BUDGET
ESTIMATES MARCH 2025**

ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS AND TREATY, GAMING AND RACING,
VETERANS, MEDICAL RESEARCH AND THE CENTRAL COAST

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg 5-6

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: —those declarations, if in fact they exist, and what the board would have done about this extraordinary property arrangement? A land deal selling this property to Racing NSW for \$1 raises an obvious suggestion that there has been an attempt to avoid stamp duty here. Is that something else that you can check, please?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I said we'll look into it

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Are you aware that the property today is not used for any racing purpose? It's just rented out to tenants like any other property might be, so this has been done for a non-racing purpose. Can that be investigated as well, please?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes, we'll take that on notice

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Also, can you look into the way in which this was done by a sitting board member, not an employee of Racing NSW—as opposed to employees told to do it and someone gives them the money to do it, and they might feel obliged to. Would you investigate the ethics of a board member purchasing a property and then selling it on to the organisation for which she is a board member for \$1?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes. I'm not sure whether we can investigate ethics, but we'll look at the whole issue.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

- Racing NSW has advised that:
 - the property was purchased by Racing NSW under a bare trust arrangement in accordance with relevant provisions of the *Duties Act 1997* (Duties Act)
 - Dr Cooke acted as an agent of Racing NSW under the arrangement
 - Racing NSW paid all applicable stamp duty when it became the beneficial owner of the property on settlement (31 July 2021)
 - as beneficial owner, Racing NSW managed the leasing of the property, collected and retained all rent received and incurred all expenses relating to the property
 - Dr Cooke received no income in relation to the property and, as such, no disclosures were required in relation to pecuniary interest declarations
 - Disclosures in relation to the payment of the deposit (2021 Annual Report, page 70) and payment of the balance of the purchase price (2022 Annual Report, page 68) were disclosed by Racing NSW in its annual reports
 - Racing NSW applied, and received approval, for an exemption relating to the subsequent transfer of title from the trust to Racing NSW from Revenue NSW.
- The Department sought advice from Revenue NSW in relation to the information provided by Racing NSW, with Revenue NSW confirming, in relation to the following matters within its jurisdiction, Racing NSW's statements on:
 - the bare trust arrangement
 - that the correct stamp duty was paid in relation to the initial purchase of the property
 - approval of a concession in relation to the subsequent transfer of the property.
- Revenue NSW noted that the relevant provisions of the Duties Act provide for a concession from stamp duty (not an exemption).

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg 6

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Have you been able to track the \$3.7 million grant that was given to Bathurst race club by the former Government in October 2020, to see if the money was actually spent for the purposes that were specified?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Were you aware that they provided \$3.7 million to widen the track, and that hasn't happened; provide four new stables, and they've provided just one, knocking down an old barn and rebuilding it; provide four horse walkers, and only two have been delivered; and provide four treadmills and only one has been delivered. It has been put to me by people in and around the race club that \$2.7 million has gone missing.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We'll take that on notice, and we'll look into it. What I have done in terms of that program is—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: That's not Racing for the Regions. This was a COVID emergency grant.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Okay. I have no knowledge of that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: If you can look into whether or not the \$3.7 million for a racing purpose has actually been expended.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Lands and Property, with the relevant grant administered by Crown Lands.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg 7

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Minister, I entirely recognise that it's not easy. Thank you for letting us know that you were at a meeting the other day dealing with strategies and implementing programs to deal with recidivism. Does that mean that there are actually no strategies or programs currently in place if you're still meeting and talking about doing this?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: No, what is happening right across communities in New South Wales are programs already in place.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Can you give us examples of three programs actually happening now in Moree that are addressing Aboriginal youth reoffending?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll take that on notice specifically, but I do know that there is a lot of work going on with the local health service and others—

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The NSW Government has invested \$13.9 million towards the delivery of a range of initiatives in partnership with local community groups in Moree. This includes:

- development of a bail accommodation service
- increasing availability of after-hours activities and collaborating between Aboriginal organisations and all levels of government.
- The NSW Government has committed \$9.8 million to expand Justice Reinvestment in NSW to Mount Druitt, Moree, Kempsey, Nowra, Toomelah and Bathurst.
- \$4 million has been committed to support place-based efforts in Bourke and Kempsey to match the Commonwealth Government's investment in the Stronger Places, Stronger People program.
- More than \$2 million in additional funding has been committed to youth engagement with the aim of reducing crime and improving family safety

Three local Aboriginal organisations including Miyay Birray Youth Service, Pius X Aboriginal Medical Service and SHAE Academy will collaborate to deliver a new youth bail accommodation centre and after-hours patrols for Aboriginal children in custody.

Youth Justice has also awarded a five-year contract to Miyay Birray to provide a Casework Support Program (CSP) in Moree commencing in April 2025.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg 7

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: With respect to that response and with respect to Dubbo, for example, the Attorney General acknowledged in estimates that there had been no new programs introduced in relation to drug and alcohol offending in Dubbo. Can you give us details of three programs that you've introduced to address drug and alcohol issues for Indigenous offenders and Indigenous youth?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: If you understand the portfolio of Aboriginal Affairs, there is a coordination role but we don't directly implement a lot of these programs. It's DCJ, Corrections, juvenile justice—all of those different things. I'm happy to take it on notice, but it doesn't mean we would have clear oversight of every program in New South Wales that's currently being implemented.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: But I think you see the thrust of my questions, Minister. We have figures that tell us that we are failing, yet we have no details of programs that we are putting in place to address these issues. That is deeply concerning because we all want to see—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I said I'm happy to take that on notice and get you examples of programs that have been put in place.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Centre for Alcohol and Other Drugs and NSW Ministry of Health will be running a tender for a non-government organisation to establish and operate a new alcohol and other drug residential treatment service in Dubbo.

The Dubbo community has been active in achieving support for establishing a Dubbo residential treatment service which includes people impacted by alcohol and other drug use as well as representatives from Aboriginal Communities and non-government organisations.

Further questions should be directed to Minister for Health.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg 10

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: You mentioned the role that the State Government plays in employment. How many veterans were placed into full-time roles in 2024 through the Veteran Employment Program?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I might ask Caroline if she wants to give the specific numbers on that. Do you want them now or this afternoon?

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I will get them this afternoon. The follow-up question would be how many regional veterans have been placed in roles under the same program.

ANSWER:

See response to Question on Notice on page 45 of the session transcript.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg 11-12

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Thank you. Minister, who undertook the probity check on Saranne Cooke as the new chair of Racing NSW?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: It would have been the probity adviser to the recruitment panel. I can take that on notice because it was a year or so ago, but it would have been an external probity provider.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, would you expect them to bring this \$1 land deal to your attention as something that needed to be explained, at a minimum, by the deputy chair?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It's hard for me to—as I said, I didn't know anything about this until today. We'll make inquiries, as I've committed to, and find out if that was—I would assume that if it had come up in the probity investigation, it would have been in the report.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Would you have expected to be notified of a \$1 land deal of this nature, so unorthodox, by someone already on the board as deputy chair—would you have wanted to be notified of this and get an explanation about it?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I would expect that any probity check was detailed.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: In your investigations about this, can you also look at whether or not a finder's fee was part of the arrangement, given that Saranne Cooke lives in Bathurst and might have found this property and a finder's fee is sometimes part of these real estate arrangements?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes, if I can, I will

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you also, Minister, have a look at the 2021 and 2022 annual reports of Racing NSW? They're supposed to provide a full account of their finances. Are you aware that there's no mention of this \$1 land deal in any of the work by Racing NSW, as ticked off by their auditor?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes, it's before my time. I wasn't aware of it, so I wasn't looking for it.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I've looked for it and it's not there. How could you explain that, given your responsibility for making Saranne Cooke now the chair of Racing NSW?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We'll look into it, and we'll get back to you, Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Are you aware of concerns of current and former employees of Racing NSW that the auditing process there is not genuine—that things like this are not reported in their annual reports, an extraordinary \$1 land deal, and the auditor basically just ticks off whatever is provided to them? Furthermore, isn't this an argument for the New South Wales Auditor-General to look at this and other arrangements at Racing NSW?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I can't comment on the specifics because I wasn't aware of it. What I would say is that the expectation is that any annual report correctly reflects what the organisation does and spends. As I said, we've taken this on notice, and we will look into it more deeply.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Would you normally expect an organisation like this to have in its annual report that it purchased a property for \$1 off its deputy chair?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: As I said, I can't go into specifics. It was before my time. I have an expectation that, in reporting their operations, they're accurate and truthful.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: If you find this to be inaccurate, will you now ask the New South Wales Auditor-General to look at this, but also the other 50 properties that Racing NSW has purchased in the last five years?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll take that on notice. I'm not sure of the legalities of whether that's possible or not, but I will look into it for you.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Are you aware that at the Bathurst race club, the original \$3.7 million COVID emergency grant, there's been no accounting to the directors of how the money has been spent?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll have to take that on notice.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Are you further aware at the Bathurst race board that Saranne Cooke's been involved on the selection panel to put directors in and there's a general perception that she has a pretty good relationship with the Bathurst club of her hometown?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We'll have to look into all of that, Mr Latham. I'm not aware of any of the things that you're describing, so it's very hard for me to have an opinion. I take it, as you're always truthful with me, that these are all facts, but without doing an investigation I can't comment on whether it's right or wrong or otherwise.

ANSWER:

See response to Question on Notice on pages 5-6 of the session transcript.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg 15

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Minister, I have two quick follow-ups from the questions before. I believe you were talking about veteran services west of the Great Dividing Range. You gave the example of a community service in Wagga that was now being funded by the State. Is that right?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: No, I didn't say funded by the State; I said the Federal Government funds hubs.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: So there is no State funding of anything west of the Great Divide?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I can take that on notice. I think that's a very broad question. As I said, Veterans is a very small department. It has traditionally had a very defined role, and other departments have responsibility.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Australian Department of Veterans Affairs has funded the establishment of Veterans' and Families' Hubs in locations around the country, including in NSW. The NSW Veterans' and Families' Hubs are operated by RSL LifeCare in Nowra and the Central Coast, with new hubs to be opened in the Hawkesbury region, the Hunter region, the Tweed / North Coast region and Queanbeyan. There are additional Veteran and Family Hubs operated by RSL LifeCare at Wagga Wagga in the Riverina and on the Northern Beaches.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg17

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Given the importance of this and noting the lack of support in regional areas, is this something that we can look into—how we get more support for these events?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Firstly, I reject that you say that there's a lack of support for people in regional areas.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: State-funded support.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: What I would say is that we would be happy to have a look at it. It may be something that I can advocate to colleagues on their behalf. As far as I'm aware, we've never received a letter, so we can't do what we don't know about. But where we are made known about different events, we do our best to find support.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Absolutely. Thank you. I know the local member up there, Michael Kemp, is a veteran. If you are free on 22 March, we'd love to have you up there for that day. Minister, in relation to the gold card concession, my understanding is that a lot of pensioners receive a gold card, which gives discounts through Transport for NSW, for instance, as well as licences and driving tests. However, veterans, despite being gold card carriers, are not eligible for discounts on council rates as other carriers are. If that understanding is correct, will you take that up with the local government Minister to see if we can provide equity with this support?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: As I said, we've got a whole-of-government committee looking at a range of issues from a whole-of-government perspective in responding to the royal commission. I think that's a first. It has not existed before. I'm pleased to refer that to them to have a look at. I think the role of the State and the Commonwealth is evolving and it's still at its very early stages. As I said, the report was only released in September last year and some of these things will take some time.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: That's five or six months ago.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Well, you've got holidays and the whole thing. You've obviously never been in government—

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Not true.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: —and understand that the term "fast-track" is used very loosely.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, how often does that whole-of-government committee meet?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: What level is that? Is it ministerial?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It's at quite a high level, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Can we take on notice how often that has met?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I can take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I refer the member to page 67 of the session transcript.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg18

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, there is obviously a lot of talk around funding for reducing homelessness and building new homes. Within the Government's affordable housing agenda, how many homes have been reserved specifically for veterans?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'd have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Housing and Homelessness.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg18

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, there is obviously a lot of talk around funding for reducing homelessness and building new homes. Within the Government's affordable housing agenda, how many homes have been reserved specifically for veterans?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Along the same vein, how many for regional veterans?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Housing and Homelessness.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg18

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Are there any State Government funded emergency accommodation programs specifically for veterans?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We are working with organisations like New South Wales LifeCare to explore and assist them in furthering some of those sorts of initiatives, but I can take it on notice specifically. But, as I said, it has not been a responsibility of State governments.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, in November you stated changes would be made to the Community War Memorials Fund for 2025. Are they major changes?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll take that on notice. I don't think they are major changes

ANSWER:

I refer the Member to my response on pages 44-45 of the transcript.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg18-19

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: As we see the majority of veterans moving to regional areas, are we able to look within that strategy at a plan to address the disparity in funding between regional areas and metro areas for a lot of these programs?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: You make an assumption in your question. I don't know if that's true or not.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: We'll find out this afternoon, for instance, about the employment program and those sorts of things.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: A number of regional councils are involved in the employment program—signed up.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Can you name a couple? Which of those

Mr DAVID HARRIS: There is a list. I'm happy to take that on notice and give you the full list of every single council.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This information is publicly available at: <https://www.vep.veterans.nsw.gov.au/local-governments/>.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg20

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, can you provide an update for us on how the veterans' health centre at Concorde is going? I believe it's a collaboration with NSW Health.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It is. It's actually a great success story. When you ask how it's going, I'd have to take that on notice and know more specifically what you mean.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Just an update of its status.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Sure.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

This is a question for the Minister for Health and Regional Health.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg20

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: On this question raised by Ms Boyd about the head of GWIC coming over to head Greyhound Racing NSW, we have a cooling off period whereby Ministers aren't allowed, straightaway, to go into employment where they take some of their ministerial knowledge and use it to advantage. Minister, don't you think we need a similar cooling off period where a regulator can take specialised knowledge into the operational arm of a racing code and take advantage of it?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It's a suggestion that has merit and it will be looked at in the context of what the Drake report recommends to us.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: If it has merit, is it too late to veto the Griffin appointment?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I think retrospectivity is a very difficult thing. I don't know the legalities of it, so I can't comment.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: When is it expected that he will start at Greyhound Racing NSW? You said he was leaving GWIC in May.

TAREK BARAKAT: I believe he has started, Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You thought he was leaving in May, but it's earlier.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: He has resigned. We can get back to you on notice the exact timeline. He resigned from GWIC and took leave. I'll get you the exact dates. He has started his new employment.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But you will look at the cooling off period as a future—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We're looking at everything in regard to this.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The appointment of a CEO to Greyhound Racing NSW is a matter for the Board of that organisation. I am advised that the appointment of Mr Steven Griffin as CEO of Greyhound Racing NSW commenced on 3 March 2025. The NSW Government will await any relevant findings and recommendations from the inquiry into Greyhound Racing NSW led by the Hon Lea Drake regarding the appropriateness of arrangements for the employment of key personnel within Greyhound Racing NSW.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg22

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Is the Greyhounds As Pets program transferring pet dogs to the USA still continuing?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My understanding is, yes, that's currently continuing.

The Hon. ROBERT BORSAK: Are you aware of how many dogs are currently in that program?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I can take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Greyhound Racing NSW reports greyhound rehoming numbers, including in relation to the US rehoming program, in its annual report.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg24

Mr DAVID HARRIS: That was in regard to the Wye issue, that there was an examination of GWIC's role in that. More broadly, of course if the recommendations come back from the Drake inquiry that says that there needs to be a further look at some of these issues, then we will do that. There's a big difference. GWIC is obviously a government statutory authority. Greyhound Racing NSW is not, so the approach is different.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: But obviously the Drake inquiry is set up under GWIC.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It's not under GWIC. It's parallel.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: But it's under the powers of GWIC.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes, correct.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: It can't really investigate itself if it's—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It wasn't required to. That wasn't in the terms of reference.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: That's right. That's what I'm saying, that's not in terms of reference.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: That doesn't mean that issues may not come up through testimony et cetera that there may be things that need to be looked at.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: My understanding is that no-one from GWIC has actually given evidence at the inquiry. Is that correct?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'd have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Neither Greyhound Welfare & Integrity Commission staff or Commissioners have given evidence at public hearings of the inquiry led by the Hon Lea Drake.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg25-26

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Minister, I understand that you've now finally appointed the three treaty commissioners for that process. How will they report the results of their work?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes, they'll do that through reporting. I had a very good meeting with the three commissioners last week.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: How will they report the results of their work?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: They'll write a report to the Government.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Will Aboriginal communities have a role in assessing that work?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Absolutely. This is Aboriginal designed and led.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: What's the process for that?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The actual commissioners are designing the process, not the Government. The Aboriginal commissioners—

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: In terms of Aboriginal designed and led, I understand that you contracted with Naree Pty Ltd to consult on free, prior and informed consent. When did that consultation begin?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: That was a precursor.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: When did it begin?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The department now has—when did it actually—

SHANE HAMILTON: I'd have to get the exact date.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We'll take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

Naree was contracted prior to the appointment of Commissioners to undertake consultation on Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). The start of this work was initially delayed due to logistical issues, which meant that it had not commenced before Commissioners commenced as originally intended.

Consistent with the commitment to Commissioners leading the design of consultation, Commissioners have instead opted to take a different approach and will roll the work on FPIC into the work they are leading prior to consultation rather than continue with a separate contracted project.

The contract with Naree commenced on 13 August 2024 and was concluded early on 5 December 2024.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg27

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, on 1 June 2023 you wrote to the chair of Racing NSW, John Williams, requesting an explanation for a series of complaints. Are you able to take that on notice and table that letter for us?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I don't think that would be a problem.

TAREK BARAKAT: We'll take it on notice and, if we can table it, that's fine.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: How were you made aware of these complaints?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: As I said, there was a folder with complaints that was in my office when I arrived, which had been sent. Then there were subsequent complaints from other parties that fed in to that. That resulted in a referral to ICAC. I asked the board to investigate. I think that was the purpose of the letter.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: A folder sent by who?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It was sent anonymously.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: I'm trying to visualise. As you walked in on day one, there was a blue folder sitting on your desk as the number one priority for you to deal with, and it was an anonymous list of complaints?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: They were very detailed. It was also followed up by multiple sources including the media. **The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT:** Did you receive a response to your letter to Mr Williams?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Are you able to table that on notice as well?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

ANSWER:

I am Advised:

Complaints about Greyhound Racing NSW (**GRNSW**) formed the basis for the establishment of the inquiry into GRNSW, led by the Hon Lea Drake (**Drake Inquiry**). Tabling of these documents, which are currently before the Drake Inquiry, may be prejudicial to the fair deliberation of Acting Commissioner Drake.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg29

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Minister, in budget estimates in September 2024 we understood that there was a commitment for the medical research strategy to be finalised within that calendar year. What is the status of that document?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: As we announced at the cardiovascular awards on Thursday night, it is in the final stages of editing et cetera and then it will be released.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: When?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Next month, we think.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Can you outline the intended priorities for the upcoming plan?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I will take that on notice specifically, because they are quite detailed. I would hate to misquote some of them.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

- the NSW Health Research and Innovation Strategy will be released in the coming months.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg30

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Minister, you would be aware of the NHMRC inquiry into the use of puberty blockers. What is the New South Wales Government's stance on this issue?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: That is a matter for the Minister for Health, I think. It doesn't come under my portfolio. **The Hon. SUSAN CARTER:** It is medical research, especially when you look at all the research papers being produced by Westmead.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: No, it's not covered by our department.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: So you don't know whether or not we are going to continue to administer hormone therapies while they're the subject of review?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: No idea. It's outside my area of responsibility.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: The Lang Walker AO Medical Research Building—are you able to answer questions about that?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: We can take them on notice. I was at the opening, but I don't have specific details.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Lang Walker AO Medical Research Building is under construction with an estimated completion date of late 2025.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg30-31

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Have you looked at the ethical constraints around the use of pluripotent stem cells?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll have to take those on notice because I'm not—

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: Okay. We might come back to that this afternoon.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, in regard to the relationship between yourself and the Minister for Health—and you gave an example before of a research project that wasn't in your portfolio—how does that work when it comes to, say, national strategies of research into cancer treatments? Who determines whether we sign up to those things as a State? Is it you as the Minister for Medical Research, or the Minister for Health?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: It's a bit of a hypothetical. It depends on the situation. Most of the responsibility for national agreements lies with the Minister for Health. The structure that was set up under the previous Government, which is one we're operating with now, is that my role is more about supporting through specific project funding and also working with institutes and local health districts to raise awareness within government about the importance of the work they're doing and obviously try to attract more funding.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: It's just a little bit confusing as to which ones you control. Who sets the overall strategy of where we're headed with our research?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Research comes through the office of medical research and innovation. They develop that strategy. They work within the health department on those things. That's where the strategies come together. It's the model that was set up under the previous Government. In a bipartisan way, we think that it's a model that has great merit. We continue to pursue it.

The Hon. SUSAN CARTER: What's your budget for project funding?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll take that on notice. It's fairly extensive.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The Office for Health and Medical Research's budget for 2024-25 was \$104.7 million.

Information on funded research grants is available at <https://www.nsw.gov.au/grants-and-funding>

Information about the Office's programs and initiatives is available at

<https://www.medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/>

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg36

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Your position is that Greyhound Racing has been subject to an inquiry—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I've received verbal—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: People say things verbally. I haven't received them in writing, is what I'm saying. Lots of people have opinions on a whole range of issues; that doesn't make them right. But when you receive them in writing and there becomes an obvious pattern, I took the view that then you refer.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Well, would you expect that most racing participants, if they've got a problem with Racing NSW—and there are hundreds of them out there—would write to you as the Minister?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can you take on notice how many of those complaints you have received—

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: —to further correct the record from earlier on?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My understanding is we haven't received any. We receive lots of correspondence but as far as I know—when I asked, the reply was we hadn't received anything.

TAREK BARAKAT: I can add, Mr Latham, in response to Mr Portelli, we can get some more information for you, but my recollection was that it was referred to the department and, as you say, the complaints related to the CEO of Racing NSW. Those complaints are appropriately dealt with by the board of Racing NSW. I wrote to the chair of Racing NSW requesting that the chair meet with Mr Portelli. My understanding is that that meeting occurred.

ANSWER:

As Minister, I receive a small amount of correspondence about the NSW racing industry. Where correspondence is received relating to concerns about a racing controlling body, the Department provides advice on appropriate actions, including whether the matter should be referred to the relevant controlling body or other authorities.

Complaints about the CEO of Racing NSW are a matter for the Board of that organisation.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg36

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, but you're the racing Minister. Was there any approval from your office, you, or the Office of Racing that allowed the regulator to run its own tracks and regulate itself?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: My understanding is that a briefing note was sent to my office asking if there were any problems, that the process that had been followed was the correct process—so that's the process.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Right. In asking whether there are any problems, did your office write back with problems?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I'll take that on notice. I wasn't made aware of any

ANSWER:

My office was advised of the decision by the Minister for Lands and Property. As Minister for Gaming and Racing, I have no authority to make decisions about Crown Lands matters, including the appointment of Crown Lands Managers. This authority is with the Minister for Lands and Property.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg38

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Minister, in December 2023 you announced the big, broad cashless gaming trial. How many people took part in that trial?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: There was about 2½ thousand different establishments. As I said earlier—

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: How many people? How many active participants?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The trial we announced was on technology. We announced machines. We didn't announce people. We announced 500 machines and we got a great response from industry, and there were many, many more machines. There was slight complication in that one of the companies had some technology issues, so some of the companies pulled out. Some of them changed providers. We got a very good overview of the technology trial.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: The Independent Panel on Gaming Reform said there were 14 genuine active users. How many of those 500 machines did those 14 people use?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Well, it wasn't 500 machines. As I said, there were 2½ thousand machines.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: How many of those 2½ thousand machines did those 14 people use?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: I will have to take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The number of machines played by participants was not captured as part of the evaluation.

QUESTION ON NOTICE Pg38

Mr DAVID HARRIS: The Government has been rolling out a whole range of issues, which I mentioned earlier for Mr Borsak. The Government has now put out two discussion papers, as I said, which are on the first- and third-party exclusion program and facial recognition. The Government is also doing an economic analysis on any implementation of further regulation, and the Government will make their decisions at an appropriate time in terms of where we will go, moving forward.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: You say you've done a range of measures. Those measures are two more reports and a discussion paper?

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Not at all. I'm happy to give you a full list.

The Hon. SCOTT BARRETT: Maybe you can take that on notice.

Mr DAVID HARRIS: Yes

ANSWER:

I am advised:

The gaming measures delivered since March 2023 are as follows:

- **16 June 2023:** The state-wide cap on gaming machine entitlements was reduced by over 3,000.
- **1 July 2023:** The cash input limit was reduced from \$5,000 to \$500 for all new gaming machines.
- **1 July 2023:** Political donations from clubs with electronic gaming machines were banned.
- **13 July 2023:** The Independent Panel on Gaming Reform was established.
- **1 September 2023:** External gaming-related signage and internal gaming-related signage that can be seen from outside the venue was banned.
- **March 2024 - September 2024:** The NSW Government delivered on our election commitment - completing a cashless gaming trial more than four times the size of the original commitment.
- **1 July 2024:** Responsible Gambling Officers in venues with more than 20 gaming machine entitlements were introduced.
- **1 July 2024:** All venues with gaming machines were mandated to keep a Gaming Plan of Management and a Gambling Incident Register.
- **1 July 2024:** The placement of any signage or advertising relating to gaming machines either on, or visible from an ATM or EFTPOS terminal with cash withdrawal facilities was banned.
- **1 January 2025:** Additional changes to the location and visibility of ATMs were made, including ATMs must be located outside of a 5-metre radius of any entrance to, or exit from a gaming area in a hotel or club. An ATM must not be visible from a gaming machine or entry to a gaming room or area or room where gaming machines are located. Also, a gaming machine or jackpot sign must not be visible from an ATM.
- **15 February 2025:** Consultation papers for a third-party exclusion scheme and also the use of mandatory facial recognition technology to support a statewide exclusion register for NSW hotels and clubs with gaming machines, were published for the community to provide feedback on. The consultations close on 28 March 2025.