

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown**QUESTION 1, PAGE NO 4**

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, I just wanted to ask you this morning about Bankstown TAFE, which I'm sure you'd be aware I probably would ask. Can I just refresh the Committee on this issue, and that is, of course, that a decision was made by the Government to proceed with putting a hospital at the Bankstown TAFE site, and that the whole site would be redeveloped. Bankstown TAFE is going to be seeking temporary accommodation while this rebuild happens on the site there at Bankstown TAFE to accommodate a new hospital. On 18 September, there was an ROI for delivery of temporary accommodation for the TAFE site, I think with a closing date of 15 October, and an announcement set for 16 December. It says on that eTender that you as Minister will make a final decision. So which location has been identified from the tender?

Mr STEVE WHAN: You're right; the ROI did go out. We did have a number of responses to that. I'll ask TAFE to elaborate on that in a minute. TAFE has been undertaking due diligence investigations on those sites. The investigations are actually ongoing at the moment. Obviously, that's a part of the process of working with Health over the planning for the site.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Is that why there's a delay in the announcement? Because it says on 16 December you would announce where the temporary accommodation would be.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll ask Ms Read to elaborate on that, because I'm not sure that I remember saying 16 December.

CHLOE READ: That's not a date I'm familiar with. As the Minister said, we're working through due diligence on a site in Bankstown and hopefully will be able to advise students and staff on that location very soon.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm pretty sure I saw 16 December as the—it's online. You can go and look at it online. It says, "Estimated decision date 16 December 2024." Do you want to have a look yourself?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I didn't make any public comment on that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I can table the document, if you need to see it, but it says the estimated decision date. It's now three months, so I'm just wondering what's the delay in the decision as to where the temporary accommodation is going to go.

CHLOE READ: I might take on notice the difference between the estimated date and where we're at in the discussions. I'm not sure whether they are set as a standard thing, or whether that's indicative of something in particular.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW completed the ROI/RFP phase in February 2025, with additional time required to carry out post-tender clarifications and seek further advice from architectural and other subject matter experts. TAFE NSW is now conducting detailed due diligence including, but not limited to, fit-out investigations and statutory planning investigations. Until these investigations are complete, negotiations with any successful party cannot be finalised as these investigations may materially impact negotiations.

While negotiations are underway, any site identified is commercial in confidence.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 2, PAGE NO 5

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, regarding this eTender, an amendment was made on 26 September and it called for the "removal of conflicting requirement from introduction text".

Mr STEVE WHAN: Sorry, say that again.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: On 26 September there was an amendment made to the ROI, and it called for the "removal of conflicting requirement from introduction text". Why was this amendment made?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'd have to ask TAFE to clarify that or maybe take that on notice.

CHLOE READ: I might need to take that one on notice. It's before my time.

ANSWER

An addendum was issued to further clarify TAFE NSW's requirements for a leased site and the expectation that it would need to be available for operations to begin in time for Semester 1 2026.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 3, PAGE NO 6

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can I ask if you've received a proposal from Canterbury Bankstown council?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Personally, I'm not aware of who we've received proposals from. I suspect that would be commercial in confidence, but I'll ask Ms Read to answer that question.

CHLOE READ: That's right. We wouldn't be able to disclose who's put in a proposal under this process.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: What I want you to take on notice is I want to know when your estimated date will be, given there's a three-month delay to an estimated decision. You've got timelines because you're supposed to have this whole rebuild of the hospital completed—when? By the end of 2026?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'm happy to take on notice the time frames for the relocation, for the process. If we can as a part of that, I'm happy to—I will take it all on notice, obviously.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW is seeking to commence operations at a new site in time for the start of Semester 1, 2026.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 4, PAGE NO 6

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I put on notice that I'd like some more details about when the estimated decision date will be. To make it very clear, I also put on notice that I want to know the reasons the amendment was made to remove the "conflicting requirement from introduction text", which is quite significant—who made that decision and why.

ANSWER

An addendum was issued to further clarify TAFE NSW's requirements for a leased site and the expectation that it would need to be available for operations to begin in time for Semester 1 2026.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: University of Wollongong

QUESTION 5, PAGE NO 7

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Good morning, Minister and officials. It's nice to see you all. Minister, I want to start with something that my colleague asked in relation to the universities. You said that you meet quite regularly with the different university vice-chancellors. Are you able to tell me the last time you met with anybody from the University of Wollongong?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Can I take on notice the date? I did meet in the last months with somebody from the University of Wollongong. I specifically discussed with them issues around international students.

ANSWER

I am advised;

In accordance with the Premier's Memorandum M2015-05 Publication of Ministerial Diaries and Release of Overseas Travel Information, all Ministers publish extracts from their diaries, summarising details of scheduled meetings held with stakeholders, external organisations, third-party lobbyists and individuals.

Ministers are not required to disclose details of the following meetings:

- meetings involving Ministers, ministerial staff, parliamentarians or government officials (whether from NSW or other jurisdictions)
- meetings that are strictly personal, electorate or party political
- social or public functions or events
- meetings held overseas (which must be disclosed in accordance with regulation 6(1)(b) of the Government Information (Public Access) Regulation 2018 and Attachment B to the Premier's Memorandum), and
- matters for which there is an overriding public interest against disclosure. Ministers' diary disclosures are published quarterly on The Cabinet Office's website (<https://www.nsw.gov.au/departments-and-agencies/the-cabinet-office/accessto-information/ministers-diary-disclosures>)

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Former Managing Director TAFE NSW**QUESTION 6, PAGE NO 8**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I just thought it was important to ask on behalf of the Committee. We're thinking of everyone up there and what they're going through. Minister, did Stephen Brady qui or did you sack him?

Mr STEVE WHAN: It was my decision, and I made the decision on a few things. First of all, can I say that Mr Brady, in the period he was there, provided stability to TAFE, which was very much appreciated. He has gone through a number of areas of strong reform in TAFE as we have gone over the last period, where there has been quite a lot of change, with the VET Review, with putting in place a new operating model for TAFE, developing the TAFE Charter. I felt, though, that we had some challenges coming up soon, which needed a different skill set. We all have different skill sets. While I very much appreciated working with Mr Brady, I took the decision that we needed a different skill set to take us forward over the next period, where there is a number of quite significant changes which need to take place at TAFE. I have been very pleased that Ms Read has agreed to be the acting managing director of TAFE and brings to it—as I know you're aware, because you would have worked with Ms Read when you were the Minister—a breadth of experience in the skills portfolio, which can really help us to actually take the next steps forward. Some of those are really important, like bedding down the new operating model, moving us through the implementation of the rest of the VET Review and a whole range of areas like that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Just to be clear, he didn't resign; he was terminated from that position? Is that correct?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Correct.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can you provide on notice any details of the payout that he received as part of that process? I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Certainly will take that on notice. Of course, it was consistent with the legislation under the Government Sector Employment Act.

ANSWER:

In accordance with Schedule 1A Section 3 of the *Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990*, and Clause 11.12 of Mr Brady's contract of employment, Mr Brady was entitled to 38 weeks' compensation payment on termination of his employment, together with other accrued statutory entitlements.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Operating model**QUESTION 7, PAGE NO 9**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: There's media reporting about 80 positions being made redundant. Is that accurate?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I said "up to 80" in an answer in the Parliament in early days. We have not seen 80 positions made redundant, but we haven't finished the process yet either. I'll ask Ms Read to elaborate on that.

CHLOE READ: The current scope of the change—the Minister alluded to some further changes to the operating model to come yet—is a net of 53 positions at the moment. You'd understand, as we work through these processes, we have consultation with staff. We take their feedback on the design and we make sure that the design, where appropriate, reflects those changes. So those numbers will move around during that sort of a process. Then it's just also important to remember that doesn't mean 53 people. It means 53 positions. We still have employees who are in the government mobility process as a result of those changes. So we don't have an answer on the number of staff overall who might—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Because they may go to other positions.

CHLOE READ: That's right.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Would you be able to provide, as best as you can, on notice, if people have accepted redundancies for any of those 53 positions; I'm sure some have—how many and again the costs associated in terms of any kind of redundancy packages?

CHLOE READ: Yes. Because they're still working through that placement, I suspect that there haven't been redundancies. Is that correct, Ms Tickle?

JULIE TICKLE: We'll take on notice the number of redundancies. But, as Ms Read and the Minister have said, we're still in the placement process, so we haven't got final numbers. Quite a number of people have accepted positions with government agencies other than TAFE through the mobility process as well.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Any updates you can provide, that would be great. Ms Read, this is in no way a reflection on you. Having worked with you—and I'll echo what the Minister said—I know you're an excellent public servant.

ANSWER

I am advised that as at 19 March 2025, 31 employees have accepted voluntary redundancy with an estimated cost of \$4,211,085.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Managing Director

QUESTION 8, PAGE NO 10

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: But, in terms of the recruitment process for the permanent position of MD, where is that up to? And when do you anticipate that to be finalised?

Mr STEVE WHAN: It is obviously my decision as to how to progress that, and I'm expecting to make that decision quite soon.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: So there's no process underway at the moment.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll make a decision on that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Will that be publicly announced, that process, or just the successful appointment? What's the plan?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will come back to you on that. I will make some announcements on that in the next few weeks, probably.

ANSWER

I am advised;

The Managing Director will be appointed in line with the Technical and Further Education Commission Act 1990.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 9, PAGE NO 13

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, can I ask you what will be the floor space of the new Bankstown TAFE, compared to the current Bankstown TAFE floor space?

Mr STEVE WHAN: That's not a question I can answer at the moment.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you take it on notice? I'd like to know the current floor space of Bankstown TAFE.

Mr STEVE WHAN: We're still in the planning process for the permanent TAFE. Do you mean the permanent new facility?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Yes, the permanent TAFE.

Mr STEVE WHAN: We'll take that on notice.

ANSWER

The current ground floor area (GFA) at Bankstown Campus is 23,592 m². The GFA of the future campus is subject to final design.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 10, PAGE NO 14

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, you might recall I actually asked you some supplementary questions at the last estimates hearing. I asked you when the business case would be completed, and January 2025 was the answer that you gave me.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Well, obviously that's not the case. I'm sorry about that, but—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: No, another delay.

Mr STEVE WHAN: TAFE NSW is involved in the preparation of the strategic business case, and it will be considered for the future budget.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Will you provide on notice the new date, then, now that it's not January 2025? Can you take it on notice, that you can actually—

Mr STEVE WHAN: We'll take the question on notice.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you provide a date, though?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I don't know yet.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You don't know.

Mr STEVE WHAN: We'll take it on notice.

ANSWER

A Draft Strategic Business Case (SBC) was completed in December 2024, for consultation with Health Infrastructure and other NSW government agencies. A final SBC is being prepared for consideration as part of the 2025-26 Budget setting process.

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Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 11, PAGE NO 14

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How many students are in animal care at Bankstown TAFE?

CHLOE READ: I don't have that number with me, but I'm really happy to take that on notice.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW operates in a competitive environment. Data is not provided by in-year enrolment numbers or location. In 2023, there were 490 students enrolled in Animal Care at Bankstown. 2024 data is being finalised and is not yet publicly available.

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Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Padstow

QUESTION 12, PAGE NO 15

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How many students are currently enrolled at Padstow TAFE, Minister?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll have to get you that figure. I haven't got that specific figure for Padstow. I'll take that on notice.

ANSWER

Response was provided later in the Hearing. Refer to Page 33 of the Transcript.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Pre-apprenticeship Programs**QUESTION 13, PAGE NO 16-17**

The CHAIR: Can I ask you something totally different? I understand that there was a pre-apprentice program between TAFE NSW and the Land and Housing Corporation, where students who were enrolled in a specific pre-apprenticeship trade would have access to work alongside licensed tradespeople as they were demolishing and then building homes for Land and Housing Corporation. But I understand that program has now been cancelled. Is that true?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'm not aware of any pre-apprenticeship programs being cancelled.

CHLOE READ: No. I might see if Ms Schorer—if it was a TAFE program—has anything on it.

JANET SCHORER: Thanks for the question, Chair. Yes, we had a program with the Land and Housing Corporation in three locations across the State. The program has finished. We are at the end of the program. We finished the completion of the houses in most of those locations. We have a maintenance relationship that we continue for a period of time, but there are no further projects.

The CHAIR: I understand that program has been going for 20 years.

JANET SCHORER: Yes, it may have been with Land and Housing, but TAFE NSW is not continuing with the program.

The CHAIR: How long has TAFE NSW been involved with that program?

JANET SCHORER: I will have to take that on notice. It certainly predates me. But we are at the end of the current contract and we didn't take the option to do it further.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW has had a productive relationship with the Land and Housing Corporation (now Homes NSW) for many years and will continue to do so. The arrangement referred to during the Chief Learning and Teaching Officer's evidence was to construct social housing properties in two geographic locations - Western Sydney and Western NSW.

This arrangement is in its final stages and is due for completion at the end of 2024-25. The arrangement includes a one-year maintenance agreement after final completion of the dwellings.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Pre-apprenticeship Programs**QUESTION 14, PAGE NO 17**

The CHAIR: Perhaps we could just narrow this down, then, to a question of how many, in total, pre-apprenticeship programs for construction were there when this program was still going—in total, with all of the different programs—versus now.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I think it's probably better not to look at individual programs but numbers of people.

The CHAIR: That's what I'm asking—numbers of people who were given that pre-apprenticeship opportunity before this was cancelled to now. Is it more or less?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will take on notice that direct comparison there. But I can tell you that in 2024, 800 students in years 10 to 12 were enrolled in VET part-qualifications and 758 of them completed the training. We have seen training in apprenticeships and trainees; as I said, some positive figures on the construction sector over the last—or some positive anecdotal figures with anecdotal information which will be confirmed, I hope, by the figures as we go forward. That is very positive.

The CHAIR: If you could take on notice—

Mr STEVE WHAN: We will take on notice that comparison over time.

ANSWER

There have been no changes to pre-apprenticeship programs as a result of the completion of the arrangement with the Land and Housing Corporation (now Homes NSW).

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Apprenticeship Enrolments

QUESTION 15, PAGE NO 19

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: In terms of the priority in the current environment to the construction industry and skills and training for the construction sector, including plumbers, electrician and carpenters in particular, what do we know in terms of commencement numbers of students enrolled in vocational training for apprenticeships every year and how many are totally enrolled in the TAFE system?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I can probably come back to you on notice with some of the specifics on that.

ANSWER:

Based on the NCVER, Apprentices and Trainees 2024 June quarter report, the number of apprentice and trainee commencements in the construction sector in the 12 months ending 30 June 2024 was 20,375. This is an increase of 2.4% in commencements in the 12 months ending 30 June 2023.

For the year ending 30 June 2024, 71.5% commencements occurred at TAFE compared to other providers.

The construction sector is defined based on occupational group mapping developed internally by the Department of Education and includes plumbers, electricians and carpenters.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Completion Rates**QUESTION 16, PAGE NO 19-20**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Minister, if I could just go back to my question about the completion rates for these trade apprentices by occupation in terms of the plumbers, the electricians and the carpenters—not enrolment; I'm looking at completion rates—what do we know?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Completion rates—obviously, not everybody completes trade. One of the things which we're recognising is that we need to do additional work on completions. We need to provide better wraparound services for people as they go through. But we have seen completion rates in New South Wales which are slightly better than the national average. Total completion rates for training in New South Wales in 2024 was 50 per cent, which was above the most recent national average, and we'd also like that to be better. Ninety per cent of students who finalised a part-qualification who successfully completed—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Sorry, Minister, is this relevant to the identified trades?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Yes.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: So we're saying 50 per cent completion?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Yes. I'll take on notice specific trade completions if you like.

ANSWER

Based on the Completion and attrition rates for apprentices and trainees 2023 NCVER report, the NSW completion rate for apprentices and trainees who commenced in 2019 was 56.4% after 4 years. This is an increase of 0.1% when compared to the apprentices and trainees who commenced in 2018 after 4 years.

The completion rate for construction trades workers commenced in 2019 was 58.1%, an increase of 5.4% when compared to 2018, and 4.2% above the national average.

A copy of the NCVER report is available at <https://www.ncver.edu.au/research-and-statistics/publications/all-publications/completion-and-attrition-rates-for-apprentices-and-trainees-2023>.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025

Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Completion Rates**QUESTION 17, PAGE NO 20**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Minister, how does the TAFE completion rate compare to the completion rates of industry-led, not-for-profit registered training organisations for these trade apprentices?

Mr STEVE WHAN: The latest figures from the NCVER are that the TAFE NSW completion rate is 48 per cent for students who commenced in 2019. That's above the national and New South Wales rates in comparative courses. I think what we recognise is that TAFE has higher proportions of disadvantaged cohorts and they do record higher completion rates for a number of equity groups compared to national rates, including students with disability, students from regional areas and students from non-English speaking backgrounds.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: If I could just redirect: How does that compare to the completion rates of the industry-led, not-for-profit RTOs for the trade apprentices? We're saying TAFE completion at 50 per cent.

Mr STEVE WHAN: There are quite substantial differences in the cohorts that are in there, but I will take on notice that specific aspect.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: So there's no knowledge of completion rates of apprentices led by—

Mr STEVE WHAN: Yes, there is. It often does depend on which NCVER report time period you look at. It does vary and it does go up and down.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Given the urgency on this, would we be able to have this information by the break?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll take the question on notice, but I'll hand over to Ms Read for her elaboration on this.

ANSWER

Comparable data between TAFE NSW and other training organisations is not available.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Apprenticeship Cost**QUESTION 18, PAGE NO 20-21**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Minister, what is the current cost to government for each of these trade apprenticeships attending TAFE?

Mr STEVE WHAN: That is a fairly detailed question and which I'll take on notice. The cost to government, as you'd probably be aware, under the Smart and Skilled system, which TAFE has been a part of, there is a cost established for each of the courses and TAFE gets a share of that. We are looking to move TAFE out of Smart and Skilled, because we believe that—firstly, TAFE is a trusted government provider and I think it's really important for us to acknowledge that. Nationally, ministers have been seeking to acknowledge that as well. Taking TAFE out of the Smart and Skilled system will mean that we can remove a substantial amount of administrative work that our TAFE teachers—head teachers particularly—have had to undertake. That will mean we can focus on education delivery and also on engaging the expertise that our teachers have in curriculum development as well. As part of that, we'll also be putting in place a mechanism to make sure that the unit cost of delivery of a TAFE course is not getting out of proportion with the rest of industry. We're working on that process at the moment. I can take it on notice, if you have some specific courses. I'm not sure exactly whether we'll be able to give you many specific costs, but I'll ask Ms Read to elaborate on that.

ANSWER

Total NSW Government funding for apprenticeships and traineeships in 2023-24 was \$124.2 million, with 87.3% allocated to TAFE NSW.

The cost to the NSW Government for trade apprenticeships under Smart and Skilled includes:

- A government subsidy (covering tuition and, currently, student fees for apprentices)
- Additional loadings for eligible students based on needs or location.

In 2023-24 (the most recent financial year where budget figures are final), apprenticeships are fee free for students, meaning the NSW Government covered both tuition and student fees. This has continued in the 2024-25 financial year.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Apprenticeship Cost

QUESTION 19, PAGE NO 21

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Minister, what is the current cost to government for each of these trade apprenticeships attending an RTO? I appreciate the \$400 million covering both, but in terms of—

Mr STEVE WHAN: The cost to the Government of those would be the Smart and Skilled provision. I suspect we might take that on notice as well, but I'll ask the department if they'd like to speak to that.

MURAT DIZDAR: The bulk of the apprenticeship and traineeship placements are in TAFE. The figure the Minister gave, the \$400 million, close to, expenditure on apprentices and trainees across the State in 2023-24, the bulk of that would be TAFE. But if you're looking for the split, Ms Merton, between other providers and TAFE, let us get that for you.

ANSWER

Total NSW Government funding for apprenticeships and traineeships in 2023-24 was \$124.2 million, with 12.7% allocated to independent providers.

The cost to the NSW Government for trade apprenticeships under Smart and Skilled includes:

- A government subsidy (covering tuition and, currently, student fees for apprentices)
- Additional loadings for eligible students based on needs or location

In 2023-24 (the most recent financial year where budget figures are final) apprenticeships are fee free for students, meaning the NSW Government covered both tuition and student fees. This has continued in the 2024-25 financial year.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Utilisation Rate**QUESTION 20, PAGE NO 21**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: I am, thank you. Minister, what is the current utilisation rate at TAFE campuses?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will ask Ms Read to elaborate on that. You'd be aware TAFE has a lot of assets— 1,700 buildings with an average age of 42, some of them over 100 and many of them over 50 years old. There are 154 TAFE campuses across the State. Whenever I go to a TAFE, they always tell me all their buildings are being used. But there are obviously some areas where there is—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: I'm specifically looking at the physical utilisation on the physical campus, in terms of facilities.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll ask Ms Read to—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: I recognise there's been a move to online, but in terms of physical utilisation.

CHLOE READ: What I would say on that is, as the Minister mentioned, there are 154 campuses and over 1,700 individual buildings. The utilisation of those different buildings will vary greatly depending on the nature of the facilities, the student cohort enrolled and the type of courses that we are offering. I think a statewide comparison will be—not quite meaningless, but won't give you that kind of granularity. I'll take on notice as to what we have in terms of utilisation for TAFEs overall and come back to you on notice with that. I'm just flagging that it really does vary greatly. As you know, some of the courses can be online, some of them can be online or in person, and some of them entirely in person.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW has 154 operational campuses that are actively used for educational delivery and administrative purposes. There are nine non-operational sites that are currently not in operation but in some circumstances leased to third parties for alternative uses. Utilisation rates of individual campuses will vary significantly across the year and for different types of delivery at a campus.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Renewable Energies and Emerging Industries**QUESTION 21, PAGE NO 22**

The CHAIR: Welcome back. I'll just start with some questions. Under the NSW Skills Plan, the six critical skills areas—you have got construction, net zero and energy transition, digital and cyber, care and support economy, agriculture and agrifood, and advanced manufacturing. Net zero and energy transition is, obviously, critically important. It is great to see that in the list. I understand that TAFE NSW offers 25 electrotechnology credentials. Which of those do you consider relevant to the net zero and energy transition critical skills area?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll get TAFE to be more detailed in the answer, but one of the things I'd say about this is that the aim of our manufacturing centres of excellence is to work with industry specifically on the net zero stuff. We have got the traditional apprenticeships in electrotechnology, which, obviously, contribute to housing construction as well as net zero transition and a range of other areas. At the manufacturing centre of excellence, we'll also be working with industry on some shorter quals, assisting people with making transitions, existing qualified people, to skill up to work in the net zero transition sector. We have got discussion going on about those higher apprenticeships that I mentioned before, which are also directed at the sector. We have been working with the PICAC to set up a hydrogen centre of excellence. Government gave it capital funding, and we, obviously, fund through Smart and Skilled for that. That is aimed at some of the plumbing side of the transition. And then there is also other work going on in the Newcastle area. Can I also say Government is working across whole of government on workforce planning for the net zero transition as well. I will just ask Ms Read and TAFE to talk a little bit more about that, and we can come to the specifics of the quals.

CHLOE READ: I don't have the full list of 25 that you might be referring to, but some examples in the microskills space that have been introduced in the last couple of years would be things like training for emergency responders to respond to electric vehicle incidents, introduction to fuel cell electric vehicles, hydrogen energy fundamentals, guides to the wind industry, preparing to work in the renewable energy industry. And then also, as the Minister mentioned, in the manufacturing centres of excellence, the centre focused on net zero and sustainable manufacturing. There is an intent for us to produce the higher apprenticeship in renewable manufacturing and sustainable manufacturing practices. That should be in play in 2026. Then you referred, I think, to, more broadly, there are a number of electro-tech, electrician courses. They would all be highly relevant, I would have thought, but I can take on notice the specifics against a list if you wanted to share that list.

The CHAIR: Thank you. If you could tell us which of these credentials are relevant to grid-scale renewables and which are more for the residential, that would be useful as well.

CHLOE READ: Yes.

ANSWER

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Course	Grid Scale Renewables Relevant	Residential Relevant
Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Career Start) (UEE22020)	YES	YES
Certificate III in Electrotechnology (Apprenticeship) (UEE30820)	YES	YES
Certificate III in Electronics and Communications (UEE30920)	YES	YES
Certificate III in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration (UEE32220)	YES – Industrial cooling of storage systems	YES
CIV Instrumentation & Control (UEE42220)	YES	NO
CIV Industrial Electronics and Control (UEE40920)	YES	NO
Prepare to work in the Renewable Energy Sector - Microskill	YES	NO
Foundation Studies in Renewable Energy and Sustainability (MHE20502D)	YES	NO
Statement of Attainment - Energy Storage Systems (MHE20502C)	YES	NO
Statement of Attainment - Grid-Connected Solar PV Systems Design Accreditation (MHE20502A)	YES	NO
Statement of Attainment - Principles of Electrical Engineering (MHE20502E)	YES	NO
Statement of Attainment - Foundation Studies in Renewable Energy and Sustainability (MHE20502D)	YES	NO
Wind Energy Conversion Systems (MHE20502B)	YES	NO
Battery Maintenance Fundamentals - Microskill	YES	YES
Engineering, Procurement and Construction - Microskill	YES	NO
Wind Turbine fundamentals maintenance - Microskill	YES	NO
Intro to wind farms - Microskill	YES	NO
Grid Scale Battery - Microskill	YES	YES
Statement of Attainment in Grid Connected Photovoltaic Systems – Design and Install	NO	YES
Grid-connected Battery Storage Systems Designer-Installer Skill Set	NO	YES
Statement of Attainment in Standalone Power Systems – Design and Install (Advanced Entry)	YES	YES

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TITLE: Hunter-New England REZ

QUESTION 22, PAGE NO 23

The CHAIR: Thank you. Again I am just going off what I have been told, but I understand that there's, basically, no courses available in the Hunter-New England REZ in relation to being able to skill up in these grid-scale renewable projects. Is that correct?

Mr STEVE WHAN: There is a lot of different areas. I think maybe you are hearing and I am hearing, as well, there's a shortage of people to build the transmission lines at the moment. That is certainly an area which a number of industry groups have been talking to me about. Currently that training is generally delivered by the transmission companies, as I understand it, and industry mainly. They have certainly been talking to us about how to make that more available. I'm not sure if TAFE or the department may know any more about that.

JEREMY KURUCZ: We are happy to take the details on that on notice, in terms of the specific courses that are available. I know that we are also working with TAFE and with others in relation to their workforce needs, from a training and assessment perspective, because part of the challenge that we have is also making sure that we have got enough trainers and assessors in registered training organisations and TAFE to actually deliver these particular qualifications as well.

ANSWER

The NSW Government funds training relevant to the renewable energy sector in the Central Coast, Hunter Valley, and New England and North West regions, which align with the Hunter/Central Coast and New England Renewable Energy Zones (REZs). These include:

- Certificate III in Electrotechnology Electrician
- Certificate III in Engineering, Mechanical Trade
- Certificate III in Civil Construction Plant Operations
- Certificate III in Engineering – Fabrication Trade.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown**QUESTION 23, PAGE NO 24**

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, I quickly want to wrap up the Bankstown questions. I just want to confirm—and I think you are going to answer it by telling me you can't answer it—has the Government received a proposal from Canterbury Bankstown council regarding the temporary relocation of Bankstown TAFE?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I can't answer that, you are right, because it is commercial in confidence at this stage and the process is ongoing.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you will take on notice when you will finalise the tender? From then on, I assume, I can ask some questions. Can I just also quickly ask you whether TAFE NSW has sought advice from Transport for NSW regarding the traffic flow management on Chapel Road North during and after construction of the combined Bankstown TAFE and hospital?

Mr STEVE WHAN: As you know, the overall project management is with Health. It would be Health that would be engaging with other agencies over those things. That is my understanding. Ms Read?

CHLOE READ: Yes, that's correct.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Wouldn't TAFE be involved in that, Ms Read?

CHLOE READ: We may have been. I would need to take on notice whether we have had specific discussions with Transport on traffic. But I would expect that to be Health in the overall master planning of the site and that they would be having those conversations.

ANSWER

This is a matter for Health Infrastructure as the project lead.

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TITLE: OCCUPATION DATA**QUESTION 24, PAGE NO 25**

JEREMY KURUCZ: I'm happy to assist the Committee with this. The way that data was formulated is that we contribute to national annual reporting through the NCVER. That data is based on 91 occupations that link to the housing and construction sector and then we map back, from those occupations, the relevant qualifications from that and so that is the data that is reflected on that page there.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Is there any reason why, if you look at that graph and then go to the next graph where it says, "net zero and energy transition", they are identical? Is there any particular reason why that data would be identical?

Mr STEVE WHAN: There are a number of crossovers in those occupations, but I'll ask for the specifics.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Could you answer that, perhaps?

MURAT DIZDAR: Mr Kurucz might add to this, but I encourage us to look at the vertical and horizontal axis. The vertical axis—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: No, you are putting data in. You are talking about apprentices and trainees and you are putting in data about females, Aboriginal participation, students with disability et cetera. I am just saying the data that you are relying on is identical for net zero and energy transition and housing and infrastructure. It is not for the rest of them, by the way.

MURAT DIZDAR: It is not identical. The vertical axes on those two sets that you are referring to are different. It looks the same, I agree, but the vertical axes on the two sets are very different.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: What about apprentices and trainees?

MURAT DIZDAR: For which one?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: For both. For net zero and energy transition, is that also taking in the data that this gentleman mentioned earlier?

JEREMY KURUCZ: For net zero and energy transition there are 40 occupations, so it's different the 91 occupations for housing and construction that we spoke about earlier.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Does the report specify those 40 occupations?

JEREMY KURUCZ: No, but I'm happy to take that on notice and get that information.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you also provide the occupations for the housing and infrastructure data on apprentices and trainees?

JEREMY KURUCZ: Of course.

ANSWER

The 91 occupation groups linked to construction – housing and infrastructure are listed below:

ANZSCO Code	ANZSCO Description
1111	Chief Executives and Managing Directors
1324	Policy and Planning Managers
1325	Research and Development Managers
1331	Construction Managers

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1332	Engineering Managers
1335	Production Managers
1336	Supply, Distribution and Procurement Managers
2233	Training and Development Professionals
2245	Land Economists and Valuers
2321	Architects and Landscape Architects
2322	Surveyors and Spatial Scientists
2325	Interior Designers
2326	Urban and Regional Planners
2331	Chemical and Materials Engineers
2332	Civil Engineering Professionals
2333	Electrical Engineers
2334	Electronics Engineers
2335	Industrial, Mechanical and Production Engineers
2336	Mining Engineers
2339	Other Engineering Professionals
2341	Agricultural, Fisheries and Forestry Scientists
2343	Environmental Scientists
2344	Geologists, Geophysicists and Hydrogeologists
2422	Vocational Education Teachers / Polytechnic Teachers
2513	Occupational and Environmental Health Professionals
2633	Telecommunications Engineering Professionals
3112	Medical Technicians
3121	Architectural, Building and Surveying Technicians
3122	Civil Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians
3123	Electrical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians
3124	Electronic Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians
3125	Mechanical Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians
3129	Other Building and Engineering Technicians
3211	Automotive Electricians
3212	Motor Mechanics
3221	Metal Casting, Forging and Finishing Trades Workers
3222	Sheetmetal Workers
3223	Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers
3232	Metal Fitters and Machinists
3233	Precision Metal Trades Workers
3234	Toolmakers and Engineering Patternmakers
3241	Panelbeaters
3311	Bricklayers and Stonemasons
3312	Carpenters and Joiners
3321	Floor Finishers
3322	Painters
3331	Glaziers
3332	Plasterers and Renderers
3333	Roof Tilers
3334	Wall and Floor Tilers

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3341	Plumbers
3411	Electricians
3421	Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics
3422	Electrical Distribution Trades Workers
3423	Electronics Trades Workers
3424	Telecommunications Trades Workers
3622	Gardeners
3933	Upholsterers
3941	Cabinet and Furniture Makers
3942	Wood Machinists and Other Wood Trades Workers
3996	Signwriters
3999	Other Miscellaneous Technicians and Trades Workers
5111	Contract, Program and Project Administrators
5995	Inspectors and Regulatory Officers
7111	Clay, Concrete, Glass and Stone Processing Machine Operators
7112	Industrial Spraypainters
7115	Plastics and Rubber Production Machine Operators
7116	Sewing Machinists
7119	Other Machine Operators
7121	Crane, Hoist and Lift Operators
7122	Drillers, Miners and Shot Firers
7123	Engineering Production Workers
7129	Other Stationary Plant Operators
7212	Earthmoving Plant Operators
7213	Forklift Drivers
7219	Other Mobile Plant Operators
8113	Domestic Cleaners
8211	Building and Plumbing Labourers
8212	Concreters
8213	Fencers
8214	Insulation and Home Improvement Installers
8215	Paving and Surfacing Labourers
8217	Structural Steel Construction Workers
8219	Other Construction and Mining Labourers
8322	Product Assemblers
8393	Product Quality Controllers
8394	Timber and Wood Process Workers
8399	Other Factory Process Workers
8993	Handypersons
8999	Other Miscellaneous Labourers

Note audiologists and speech pathologists / therapists occupation group was incorrectly included in the original mapping and was subsequently removed; however, no training activity was reported for this occupation group in the construction sector.
 ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations

The 40 occupation groups linked to Net Zero and energy transition are listed below:

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ANZSCO Code	ANZSCO Description
1324	Policy and Planning Managers
1325	Research and Development Managers
1331	Construction Managers
1332	Engineering Managers
1335	Production Managers
2312	Marine Transport Professionals
2320	Architects, Designers, Planners and Surveyors - nfd
2321	Architects and Landscape Architects
2326	Urban and Regional Planners
2331	Chemical and Materials Engineers
2332	Civil Engineering Professionals
2333	Electrical Engineers
2335	Industrial, Mechanical and Production Engineers
2336	Mining Engineers
2339	Other Engineering Professionals
2341	Agricultural, Fisheries and Forestry Scientists
2342	Chemists, and Food and Wine Scientists
2343	Environmental Scientists
2344	Geologists, Geophysicists and Hydrogeologists
2421	University Lecturers and Tutors
2422	Vocational Education Teachers / Polytechnic Teachers
2513	Occupational and Environmental Health Professionals
3121	Architectural, Building and Surveying Technicians
3122	Civil Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians
3124	Electronic Engineering Draftspersons and Technicians
3129	Other Building and Engineering Technicians
3211	Automotive Electricians
3212	Motor Mechanics
3223	Structural Steel and Welding Trades Workers
3231	Aircraft Maintenance Engineers
3232	Metal Fitters and Machinists
3341	Plumbers
3410	Electricians - nfd
3411	Electricians
3421	Airconditioning and Refrigeration Mechanics
3422	Electrical Distribution Trades Workers
3423	Electronics Trades Workers
3424	Telecommunications Trades Workers
3992	Chemical, Gas, Petroleum and Power Generation Plant Operators
8217	Structural Steel Construction Workers

ANZSCO - Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements Program

QUESTION 25, PAGE NO 26

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: When did the Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements program end?

JEREMY KURUCZ: I believe, from recollection, it was in 2023, but we'll take that on notice and just come back to you. That was a Commonwealth Government employer wage subsidy scheme.

ANSWER

The Commonwealth funded Boosting Apprenticeship Commencements Program (BAC) was introduced in October 2020 and ended on 30 June 2022.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: QUALIFIED TRADESPERSON

QUESTION 26, PAGE NO 27

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes. We've got a specific example—Hyne Timber down in Tumbarumba shared with us an electrical apprentice who finished his qualifications and submitted all the paperwork in November but didn't get the official sign-off until February, so a delay of some months of being able to be both working and paid as a full electrician. Are you aware of some of those delays and the concerns in industry about them?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I certainly hear from individuals at times about delays in either the employer or administrative sign-offs, and we do try to follow those up. I obviously want to make sure that people doing apprenticeships can get the full pay as a fully qualified tradesperson as soon as they are able. I'll declare a small interest: My son-in-law is currently a third-year apprentice, so I'm hoping that he'll be able to get the full pay soon, to support my granddaughter.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: What trade? I'm just interested.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Hopefully he's going to complete it.

Mr STEVE WHAN: He is going to complete it; he has almost completed it. He's a cabinet-maker, which is very good. I'll ask the department to talk about the sign-off process and delays—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm not sure if it's with you or with the Building Commission, but there's some concern about the delay.

JEREMY KURUCZ: We'll look into that.

Mr STEVE WHAN: If there are specific cases, we'd be very happy to look at specific cases as well.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That one was just an example of where it was almost four months from completion versus the paperwork coming through and questions about the delay.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Sure. I understand the frustration. I absolutely understand the frustration.

JEREMY KURUCZ: We'll look into that.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Thank you. Is that something that you've discussed—I'm assuming Minister Chanthivong would have a role to play in that as well. Have you discussed that with him?

Mr STEVE WHAN: In terms of the building sector—and I think we still have that process of sign-off—

JEREMY KURUCZ: Yes, we are meeting regularly with the Building Commissioner, though we will come back to you on that specific example in relation to that too.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you have any data, I am happy for you to provide it on notice, in terms of the average time it takes for that approval process. Again, I appreciate sometimes there are discrepancies. That's one example, but there have been a few others that we've heard from industry about that delay. Obviously, the more builders and sparkies and people we can get out working is what we want.

ANSWER

Under the *Apprenticeship and Traineeship Act 2001* there are a range of obligations for the training provider, employer, apprentice/trainee, and the department that occur after formal training is completed.

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An apprenticeship/traineeship in NSW is not automatically completed when the apprentice or trainee completes their formal training with their training provider.

For an apprentice or trainee to complete they must be awarded a training qualification by the training provider and endorsed by the employer as having completed the Training Contract term.

If the completion is approved the department will issue within 21 days a Certificate of Proficiency (CoP).

Delays may occur when:

- the employer may take time confirming completion of the qualification with the training provider
- the training provider delays issuing the qualification
- the employer fails to confirm with the department completion of the Training Contract term
- the training provider does not advise the department of completion in a timely manner.

As such, it is not possible to provide data on the average length of time apprentices and trainees wait between completion of their formal training and receipt of their CoP.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Waiting Lists**QUESTION 27, PAGE NO 28**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Back to the priority of the construction industry and training, Minister, what is the current waitlist for students in the construction sector who are waiting for a spot to attend TAFE to commence their class-based learning?

Mr STEVE WHAN: We obviously agree to train all apprentices who come through into TAFE. I'm not aware of any—I'm aware that sometimes if a TAFE—and I'm aware certainly in other sectors that there are some areas where we've had to get students to wait. But, in the construction sector, I will ask TAFE if they can provide specific information.

CHLOE READ: I don't have information on a waitlist for construction apprentices. I'm looking down the table to Ms Schorer to see if she might have any information, but we regularly work with the apprenticeship network centres in the department to make sure that there's a really smooth process wherever possible to enrol apprentices in their training, noting that they get employment first, usually, and then come.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: If you want to take that on notice, that's fine. It was just the waitlist relevant to the construction industry for those—

CHLOE READ: Can I see if Ms Schorer has any information on that?

JANET SCHORER: I'm happy to add what I can. We can provide what we can on notice. Generally, there are not waitlists. When a student comes through seeking an apprenticeship with their employer, we endeavour to try to find them a placement as soon as we can. There might be a delay whilst we work out the best location for them, but, in general, we try to secure a suitable placement as soon as the student and the employer is lined up.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW is committed to ensuring that all apprentices and trainees receive the education and training they need to succeed. There are instances where placement in a preferred location or immediate commencement may not be possible due to availability.

In such cases, apprentices and trainees may experience a temporary delay while TAFE NSW works with employers to secure a suitable placement or opening. During this time, TAFE NSW may also explore alternative locations to ensure that apprentices and trainees can begin their education as promptly as possible.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Waiting Lists

QUESTION 28, PAGE NO 28-29

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Minister, I have reports in terms of a student wanting to enrol in cabinet-making—a fine trade.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Interesting.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: The experience being at TAFE was that the application was made, the quota was not met and the course was cancelled. Minister, in light of the demand for skills training in the industry, both shared by TAFE and the industry-led not-for-profit RTOs, is there not a better way to be doing this?

Mr STEVE WHAN: For sure. That is the system that the previous Liberal-Nationals Government left us with. The Smart and Skilled system specifies that if you don't have a certain number of people in a class, it can't continue. Sometimes those classes were cancelled two days before because they didn't get enough people. Obviously we will need to have classes in the long term which are viable, but taking TAFE out of the Smart and Skilled system will give us some more flexibility to actually go to an area, for example, and say, "Look, we haven't got enough for one year but we might be able to make a start every second year and guarantee it," which we can't do at the moment under the Smart and Skilled system. It will certainly give us more flexibility. I'm not going to say that we're going to be running unviable classes, but it will give us the ability to provide that certainty. That is really important. In the case of that individual, if you want to give us a location after the event if you want us to follow up on that person, I'm happy to do that. Ms Read?

CHLOE READ: When those circumstances arise, we would work with the individual students who may have expressed an interest in that course or sought to enrol to see if we can find an alternative location they can attend or an alternative course. Very happy to follow up if you have specifics on that.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW received five enquiries regarding the Certificate II in Cabinet Making and Timber Technology for the Semester 1, 2025 intake at TAFE NSW Newcastle. However, none of these enquiries progressed to enrolment.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Kurri Kurri**QUESTION 29, PAGE NO 30**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Can I ask quickly in terms of time frame—and I just want to acknowledge Dave Layzell, who has been quite strong on this as well, and I know that he and Clayton represent similar areas, so it's something that is probably across the community.

Mr STEVE WHAN: It certainly is.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In terms of any kind of time frame of when you'd maybe hope to see some improvement in that backlog in local—

Mr STEVE WHAN: I recognise it has dragged on. I absolutely recognise that. As I said, when we had the Paid to Learn teachers come in, we thought we were getting on top of it and then we lost a couple of those teachers. Perhaps Ms Read can talk a little more about that.

CHLOE READ: I think that what is needed in this area is some of that engagement with the faculty leads to work with industry on how we can attract and retain some teachers in that area. I know that that work has begun, including the meeting the Minister referenced. I can take on notice if we've got any more specifics on the time frame.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: It is more just time frames or when you would hope to be able to— particularly the concern seems to be about that block lesson requirement. That is where the backlog appears to be. If you can provide anything more on those, that would be great.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW anticipates that the backlog of continuing students studying Heavy Vehicle, Plant Mechanics and Auto Electrical at TAFE NSW Kurri Kurri will be resolved by the end of 2025.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Student Services

QUESTION 30, PAGE NO 32

The CHAIR: I understand, as part of the student services tranche 1 and 2 projects—this was shifting from six regional structures to a statewide model. Tranche 1 and 2 was finalised in October 2022. But I understand that there were six director of student services positions who were supposed to be overseeing that transition that were still employed until January this year. Do you know about that, Minister?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will ask TAFE to answer the specifics of that question.

CHLOE READ: Ms Tickle, do you have something on this?

JULIE TICKLE: I'm not quite sure of the positions you're referring to. Could you say the name of them again?

The CHAIR: It is director of student services positions.

JULIE TICKLE: We've got a lot of positions in student services. There were some that were retained to look after the transition, yes. But I'm not sure about the six and if that was one of them. I'll take it on notice and let you know if that's okay.

The CHAIR: That would be really useful. If you could let us know on notice what those positions—how long they ran for and then, also, what the salary was of each of those positions as well and was there any severance pay or what happened at the end of their employment. That would be really useful.

JULIE TICKLE: Sure.

ANSWER

I am advised that six former Heads of Student Services were retained to support the transition from a regional to a statewide Student Services function and to embed changes, including systems and processes.

These were TAFE Manager Level 5 positions (salary \$202,913 pa).

Three employees accepted voluntary redundancy and were paid standard redundancy entitlements in accordance with the NSW Government Managing Excess Employees Policy.

The remaining three were redeployed into roles in the new Operating Model which stood up January 2025.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: CRITICAL SKILLS - ENROLMENTS**QUESTION 31, PAGE NO 34**

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: This issue of critical skills areas and this issue that they've reduced funding for employers under the Commonwealth program, so that you're seeing that drop after 2022.

Mr STEVE WHAN: There is a new scheme they've recently—there's some new funding of \$10,000.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But have you raised the impact that's having on New South Wales students, because it means that there's not enough apprenticeships in the areas of housing and net zero, your two big-ticket items for Labor?

Mr STEVE WHAN: When the Commonwealth was doing its review of employer incentives, we advocated to them that they should be providing a consistent framework of incentives. One of the responses to that was the recent announcement of funding for students in construction, which was—Mr Kurucz might be able to give me the proper name.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Which would then reflect on the numbers going higher after 2023, because at the moment it's dropping. Your graph says it's dropping.

Mr STEVE WHAN: As I said before, it's my understanding that we've actually had increasing enrolments this year. We'll be able to confirm that soon.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you take that on notice, then, where that's increased?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I haven't got official figures yet, but once we can we will be able to provide that.

ANSWER

Based on the NCVER Apprentices and Trainees 2024- September quarter, apprentice and trainee commencements in the construction sector dropped marginally by 4% from 20,260 in the 12 months ending 30 September 2023 to 19,395 in the same period in 2024. Commencements in net zero and energy transition increased by 5% from 11,135 in 2023 to 11,655 in the 12 months ending 30 June 2024.

The construction sector is defined based on occupational group mapping developed by the NSW Department of Education. The net zero and energy transition is sourced from The Clean Energy Generation Study by Jobs and Skills Australia. There are some occupational overlaps between these sectors.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: CRITICAL SKILLS - ENROLMENTS

QUESTION 32, PAGE NO 34

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: When do you expect the official figures to show that that's increased in that area?

CHLOE READ: End of March.

Mr STEVE WHAN: End of March. When we're looking at the work—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Then you can provide them—

Mr STEVE WHAN: —that we're doing with the Commonwealth, for instance—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: —because you've got 21 days with notice.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Sorry?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You should be able to provide them as part of these budget estimates. Is that right? You've got 21 days for anything that's taken on notice.

Mr STEVE WHAN: We'll take on notice what we can get.

ANSWER

See answer to transcript question 31

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025

Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 33, PAGE NO 35

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Has Minister Clare met with you over Bankstown TAFE?

Mr STEVE WHAN: No, I haven't met with Minister Clare on Bankstown TAFE.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: No representations have been made by Minister Clare with respect to this main TAFE in his electorate?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'd have to take that on notice. I've met with Minister—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you take it on notice, whether he's made any representations?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Minister Clare and I have met on, obviously, issues of portfolio responsibility, particularly in terms of the Universities Accord, and those sort of areas.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But specifically I'd like to know if he's made a representation about Bankstown.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll take that on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised:

I regularly engage with a range of Members of Parliament and stakeholders on issues relating to my portfolios.

Minister's diaries are published in line with Memorandum 2015-05 and is published on the NSW Government website.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: VR Headsets**QUESTION 34, PAGE NO 35**

The CHAIR: I want to take us back again to last estimates, where we were talking about 1,000 VR headsets that had been donated by Meta. I understand that there was a team who was working in TAFE that had been working on making those headsets basically of use to TAFE, and that they had suffered redundancies in that group. I was also assured at the time that those VR headsets would be put to good use and wouldn't have a problem now that that group who was looking after the technology side has been disbanded. What's happened to them?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will ask TAFE to respond specifically to that.

CHLOE READ: I don't have information with me. Ms Schorer might have knowledge of the specifics on this one. If not, we can take that on notice.

JANET SCHORER: The headsets continue to be used, as far as I'm aware. The functions of that sits within my group now.

The CHAIR: Ms Meredith-Sotiris looked like she wanted to say something—no?

Mr STEVE WHAN: No, I think Ms Schorer has covered that. We can find more information for you, though. We'll take it on notice.

The CHAIR: That would be very useful. I'd like to know how many of them are being—not just physically located somewhere but actually still being used on a regular basis for TAFE education.

ANSWER

As previously advised, the 1,000 VR headsets were distributed for use across several campuses, including Bourke, Coffs Harbour, Dubbo, Kingscliff, Murwillumbah, Nambucca, Newcastle West, Scone, Tomaree, Ultimo, Wagga Wagga, Wollongong, Wollongong West, Wauchope, Yamba, and Byron Bay. TAFE NSW does not track the use of particular small equipment, however the Digital Solutions Group retain the remaining headsets as stock and allocate them based on demand and requirements.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Counsellors**QUESTION 35, PAGE NO 35-36**

The CHAIR: Hence the question. Another question I asked last time was in relation to how many TAFEs didn't have an onsite counsellor. I got back on notice a bunch of data. It says all students at TAFE have access to an online or a telephone service. But my actual question was in relation to how many don't have access to a physical counsellor that they can walk in to if they've had some sort of sexual assault or harassment.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Some of our campuses are very small, so they're not all going to have an onsite counsellor. I'll pass over to TAFE for a specific answer.

CHLOE READ: Ms Tickle, do you have that information?

JULIE TICKLE: I covered this question last time in terms of how they access the counsellors. On our campuses, people work between a number of campuses. I think I gave the example of where I'm from, the Mid North Coast, where there's a counsellor that travels across a couple campuses. The question isn't simple to answer because we wouldn't want you to think that they have access to a counsellor five days a week at the campuses that they cover. They do travel around, so there's access to counsellors at some campuses some days of the week. But all students have access to counsellors via Microsoft Teams or the phone across the State.

The CHAIR: Maybe that should have been my question, then. Are there any that have five days a week access?

JULIE TICKLE: We can take that on notice, certainly.

The CHAIR: And how many; that would be good.

JULIE TICKLE: You're asking which campuses have a full-time counsellor that only looks after that campus?

The CHAIR: Yes. I understand what you were saying last time about the moving around, but I'm interested in how many have a full-time—

JULIE TICKLE: Sure.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW Counselling and Career Development Services provides generalist counselling services in the context for support in an educational setting. To assist in assuring a comprehensive support for all students they may also facilitate connections to external professional services.

All current and prospective TAFE NSW students at all locations and online have access to professional services, either face to face on-site, through online meeting platforms or via telephone to the TAFE NSW Counsellor and Career Development statewide network. TAFE NSW's Same Day Response Team is supported by full time and part time counsellors, providing direct assistance to students and staff with an urgent counselling support need.

Some campuses may have one or more full time positions allocated, full time and part time positions or part time only positions over a five-day period in addition to counselling professionals who support multiple campuses by outreach. TAFE NSW campuses with a full-time permanent counselling position allocated are as follows:

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

- Albury
- Bankstown
- Blacktown
- Coffs Harbour Education Campus
- Coffs Harbour
- Dubbo
- Enmore
- Eora
- Granville
- Hornsby
- Liverpool
- Meadowbank
- Moree
- Mt Druitt
- Nepean
- Newcastle
- Nirimba
- Northern Beaches
- Orange
- Petersham
- Port Macquarie
- Ryde
- St George
- St Leonards
- Strathfield
- Tamworth
- Ultimo
- Wagga
- Wollongbar
- Wollongong

TAFE NSW reviews the distribution and allocation of counsellors relative to movement and dynamic nature of TAFE NSW enrolments and to ensure equitable access to services. Where a position is vacant, or support demand exceeds capacity these campuses may also be supported by outreach.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025

Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: NORTH COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE - LAND**QUESTION 36, PAGE NO 36**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Minister, I wanted to ask about the North Coast Community College. I met recently with Ted Nabung, who is their CEO. I think he also might have met with you the week that they—he and Mayor of Ballina Sharon Cadwallader—were in town.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Yes.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: There's a couple things that they raised with me that I want to get your input or view on. One of the things that they are asking for is opportunity to access some more land. They're interested in the Southern Cross School of Distance Education, which I did raise in the Education estimates as well, which Mr Dizdar will remember. Have you had a meeting with them? Did you talk about trying to advocate for them to access a little bit more physical space to roll out their—

Mr STEVE WHAN: I did meet with them. They talked to me about a couple of things, firstly around the provision of some of their fee-free courses. They did also have a map and showed me some areas of land. They talked to me about what they were delivering, and it sounded great. There's obviously a process that the Government is going through in terms of excess land, which is prioritising housing at the moment. I haven't had a follow-up on the specifics of that site. We may have to take on notice whether there's any specific further action that's coming out of that. I'll just ask the department if they know more.

MURAT DIZDAR: On the Southern Cross distance ed site, my recollection is that we committed to follow up with them.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I know that they met with the Minister while they were in town—so I wondered if there'd been any more done on that.

Mr STEVE WHAN: No.

MURAT DIZDAR: Our infrastructure folks were looking at that. I'm happy to come back with any detail.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes. We recognise it's still being used as a school campus as a school of distance ed, but it has quite a large footprint. If there's a chance to make it a co-location educational—

Mr STEVE WHAN: They showed me the maps, the space and everything.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If you could take that on notice, that would be fantastic.

ANSWER

For inquiries about joint use arrangements and shared use licences of school facilities, the community group can contact the Department of Education by email at asset.activations@det.nsw.edu.au.

Further information on shared use arrangements is available on the School Infrastructure website: <https://www.schoolinfrastructure.nsw.gov.au/what-we-do/we-support-communities/shared-use.html>

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: NORTH COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE S&S CAP**QUESTION 37, PAGE NO 36**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: ... Again continuing on with that community college, one of the other issues that they've raised with me was about—and I don't profess to be an expert in this space—the cap on their Smart and Skilled funding and the challenges they have, given they basically went from having a cap of \$271,000 in 2020 and now it's \$120,000. They've had COVID and they've had floods, so they had issues obviously with delivery. They feel that they're being impeded by the cap that they have, and they've asked for a review. What's the process around that or opportunities for them to have more funding to deliver services for the community?

Mr STEVE WHAN: Was it just that or also fee-free places? I thought they'd raised—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: They raised the cap specifically with me.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I'll ask Mr Kurucz to—

JEREMY KURUCZ: Our training services officers work with providers such as the North Coast Community College in relation to their caps. I'm happy to take the specifics on notice. Obviously that's subject to an annual process that runs on a financial year basis where we look at caps within the overall budget allocation envelope that we have, and we look at previous demand and uptake by particular providers. I'll specifically look into the North Coast Community College.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: That would be great. Their concern—and I take your point about previous demand—is they had a couple of years where they weren't operating at full capacity post-COVID and the floods. I think they feel that they're a bit disadvantaged—

Mr STEVE WHAN: By history.

ANSWER

Smart and Skilled operates on annual budgets set at a fixed amount for each financial year.

In late 2022 and early 2023, an open application for Smart and Skilled was conducted. Through this competitive process, North Coast Community College's allocation was re-set for the 2023/24 year. The change in the financial caps for North Coast Community College were as a result of this process, which did not heavily rely on previous cap usage to determine allocations.

The allocation of financial caps for 2024/25 did consider financial cap usage in 2023/24.

North Coast Community College currently has sufficient funding to support its continuing students and the students it has commenced so far in this financial year.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: NORTH COAST COMMUNITY COLLEGE FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS**QUESTION 38, PAGE NO 37**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: —by previous numbers obviously being lower, in the circumstances. If you could take that on notice, that would be great. I have one more question on that particular organisation. Recently, last year, they offered the foundational skills qualification to some disaffected high school kids who now go there, so they have that opportunity. Again, they're having an issues with the places that they can offer because of their funding. They've got demand from students who want to go there and maybe look into that pathway because traditional schooling is not really working out for them. They've got the qualification to offer that foundational skills course but not the funding to have the cohort of students based on demand. The concern especially, coming from the mayor and others, is about anything you can do to keep young people engaged who might be at risk. Is there anything—again, you may need to take it on notice—you can provide in terms of that specific course for that provider?

JEREMY KURUCZ: I'm happy to take that on notice, because they will receive separate funding under the Adult and Community Education program initiative as well. We'll come back to you comprehensively across both.

ANSWER

Adult and Community Education (ACE) providers are encouraged to work with their local schools and collaborate on supports required for disengaged students.

Eligibility under the ACE Program requires that students must:

- Be aged 15 years or older.
- Be no longer enrolled in secondary education unless they are a registered home school student.
- Live/work in NSW.

The ACE program is primarily a pathways program and delivers partial qualifications, units of competency and skill sets up to a Certificate III level. There is provision under the NSW Government's ACE Contract to deliver full qualifications with prior approval from the Department of Education. This is assessed in line with the department's overall budget capacity.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025

Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Mobile Training Units

QUESTION 39, PAGE NO 39

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: How many mobile training units? You just mentioned those, Minister. How many are you looking at delivering for those?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will ask TAFE to answer that question. I'm not sure of the specific number. We might have to take—

CHLOE READ: I only have two or three in my mind. Ms Schorer, do you know the number?

JANET SCHORER: We'd have to take the number on notice. We have a large fleet. As Ms Read said, there is more in development, being fitted out, to support the work of the centres of excellence as well.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: If on notice you can provide some numbers on that, that would be great.

Mr STEVE WHAN: We will.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW has 91 Mobile Training Units as of 31 March 2025. There are new Mobile Training Units planned to support green energy and two on order for the new Manufacturing Centres of Excellence.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Brewing courses**QUESTION 40, PAGE NO 40**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I noticed in some media recently, Minister, that there is going to be TAFE's first artisan brewing course being offered at Ultimo. I thought we would finish on a high note. I thought that was very interesting. Obviously, there is a lot happening in terms of that industry. Do you have any updates in terms of the take-up of that course and how popular it is?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I haven't been asked to taste anything yet.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: We could do a Committee visit, perhaps.

Mr STEVE WHAN: Yes, do that. I will ask Ms Read to—

CHLOE READ: I'm disappointed to relay that I'm not able to give you more information on this one, unless Ms Schorer might have something. But I will certainly take it on notice.

JANET SCHORER: Apart to say that we do have a number of courses around brewing and winemaking and other things that are related to those hospitality and food industries. We can very easily provide you with the numbers on those.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I'm genuinely interested in the take-up and also the geographic spread of students.

Mr STEVE WHAN: I think it should be very popular.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: My understanding is that it is not all face to face. I would be interested to know. There seems to be a lot, particularly in regional areas, where you have craft brew houses coming that are great for our local community, and we're happy to support them.

CHLOE READ: We're very happy to take that on notice and conduct investigations into what we are doing.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW operates in a competitive environment, with 2024 enrolment data subject to final validations. In 2025, the Certificate IV in Artisan Fermented Products is planned for Semester 2 at TAFE NSW Ultimo.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025

Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Manufacturing Centre of Excellence

QUESTION 41, PAGE NO 41

The CHAIR: Can I ask you, Minister, the Illawarra Heavy Industries Manufacturing Centre of Excellence, which defence industry partners have been selected for that?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will have to ask TAFE if they can answer. I've seen a list of some of the tertiary partners but I haven't seen if there's a defence. We may have to take that on notice.

CHLOE READ: We might need to take that on notice, I think. Yes, I will take that one on notice.

ANSWER

I am advised that there is no defence industry partner for the Illawarra Heavy Industry Manufacturing Centre of Excellence. TAFE NSW will work with industry and community to ensure education reflects the skills the region needs to support industries such as defence.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025

Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Renewable Energies and Emerging Industries**QUESTION 42, PAGE NO 41**

The CHAIR: Thank you. Some others for you to take on notice, just in this last minute: Back on those renewables courses, if I could get from you what the enrolment rate is, how many people are on the waitlist for those courses and where—

Mr STEVE WHAN: The full suite that might be relevant to renewables?

The CHAIR: Yes.

Mr STEVE WHAN: There are quite a few—or the ones that we mentioned?

The CHAIR: The ones that TAFE considers relevant to the net zero and energy transition critical skills area.

Mr STEVE WHAN: We'll give it a go.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW operates in a competitive environment. Enrolment figures are not provided by location. TAFE NSW provides enrolment data as part of its annual reporting, which is publicly available on the TAFE NSW website.

Statewide 2023 enrolment data is available for the following:

Course	Enrolment
Certificate II in Electrotechnology (Career Start)	1820
Certificate III in Electrotechnology (Apprenticeship)	9500
Certificate III in Electronics and Communications	150
Certificate III in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration	1700
Certificate IV Instrumentation & Control	30
Certificate IV Industrial Electronics and Control	4
Statement of Attainment - Energy Storage Systems	2
Statement of Attainment - Grid-Connected Solar PV Systems Design Accreditation	13

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Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Waiting Lists

QUESTION 43, PAGE NO 41

The CHAIR: Very good. Also, in terms of that waitlist, whether people have been dropping off because of the waitlist, particularly if they have done, say, one year and then they're waiting to do the second but the course isn't available.

Mr STEVE WHAN: My understanding is if someone started on the process, unless there's something outrageous like a pandemic, we wouldn't be delaying their second year. Perhaps TAFE could confirm that.

CHLOE READ: Yes, I would be surprised. Let's take it on notice what we know about any waiting list there may be. Many of the courses that I referenced earlier are online, shorter courses with actually probably minimal waitlists. But let's take it on notice and see what we can find for you.

ANSWER

There are no active waitlists for identified courses.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Beauty Course Facilities

QUESTION 44, PAGE NO 42

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Fantastic. Just a quick one to finish: I noticed, Minister, you were again back at Ultimo with the beauty training facility upgrade recently. I thought it was interesting that your media release talked about the growth in enrolments in beauty courses over the last five years. Are there any other plans at other campuses to upgrade any of those facilities across the State?

Mr STEVE WHAN: I will take on notice the specifics. I've certainly visited a number of upgraded facilities around the State in my travels and seen some of the interests in those areas, but I will take on notice any specific other upgrades in beauty facilities around the State.

ANSWER

In addition to the Ultimo upgrade, the following works are underway:

- GyMEA Beauty Upgrade (est. completion June 2025)
- Western Sydney Hygiene and infection control improvement works to upgrade hand basins in hair and beauty facilities across Western Sydney (est. completion December 2025).

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Waiting Lists

QUESTION 45, PAGE NO 43

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: In terms of TAFE, I raised in the morning session about the waiting list, and it was framed just in terms of the priority to meet the skill demand in the construction industry. I was wondering, Ms Read, if you might be able to elaborate a little bit more the waiting list or trying to meet this demand.

CHLOE READ: I'm not sure about the waiting list part of it; I think we undertook to find out on notice if there were.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW is committed to ensuring that all apprentices and trainees receive the education and training they need to succeed.

There are instances where placement in a preferred location or immediate commencement may not be possible due to availability.

In such cases, apprentices and trainees may experience a temporary delay while TAFE NSW works with employers to secure a suitable placement or opening. During this time, TAFE NSW may also explore alternative locations to ensure that apprentices and trainees can begin their education as promptly as possible.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Facilities**QUESTION 46, PAGE NO 45**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: My understanding is that there are some situations where industry bodies do use TAFE facilities currently. Is there a formal policy for that? How does that get worked out? Is it per campus? How do you manage that?

CHLOE READ: As I said, I know that there are certainly some arrangements in place where I've come across them and been briefed on them. An example would be, when I was visiting Kingscliff, they were doing motorcycle training in one of the areas of the campus not delivered by TAFE, delivered by somebody else. The industry liaison, I think, would be specific to particular arrangements that have been negotiated over time. Ms Schorer, do you have any more information on—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Not necessarily even just industry but just like a different provider other than TAFE using a TAFE facility to run—like the example you gave. Is there a policy that covers that? How does that work in practice?

JANET SCHORER: There is either in development or live—I couldn't tell you which off the top of my head—basically a licensing policy, so the ability for us to make those sorts of local arrangements particularly at a local community level. That was some very clear feedback from the VET Review as well about TAFE campuses and TAFE facilities are public assets and for us to be able to make them much more open and available—whether that's for other providers or for other community colleges, other sorts of organisations to partner with us. If that licensing policy isn't available, it is imminent. I'd have to just take that on notice but—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Yes, if it's available, maybe just a copy of it—

JANET SCHORER: —that's absolutely the intention, yes.

CHLOE READ: Then, just to round out the conversation there, there is also community use of TAFE facilities. There are over 150 short-term hire arrangements in place and then there are some other long-term licences too. But that—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Maybe if on notice you could just provide what you can in terms of how that works in the different—

CHLOE READ: Yes, very happy to.

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Ms Read, that would be good on notice. We're really looking for some examples where there is a partnership there in terms of the industry, not-for-profit RTOs utilising TAFE facilities, working with TAFE in this. I preface that by saying some of the feedback that we're receiving from the industry groups is discussions have been held, TAFE then say to the not-for-profit registered training organisations, "It's got to be commercially viable for TAFE to share or provide facilities to you." If we could see some examples of what's taking place—

ANSWER

TAFE NSW is developing new leasing and licensing policies and procedures. Once finalised, they will be published on TAFE NSW's website as public documents. Some examples of partnerships include:

- Stay Upright - using Campbelltown and Loftus campuses for rider training.
- Nepean Community College - using Katoomba campus.
- Murcotts Driving Excellence - using Blacktown campus.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025

Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: International Students

QUESTION 47, PAGE NO 45-56

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: If I could look at international students studying at NSW TAFE, how many international students came to New South Wales to undergo TAFE studies? I was looking at 2019 to 2024 if that might be available, or take it on notice.

CHLOE READ: So you'd like from between that period of 2019 to 2024?

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Yes, I was looking at every year from 2019 to 2024, if available.

CHLOE READ: We would need to take that on notice to go back.

ANSWER

International learner data, per financial year, is available in TAFE NSW Annual Reports.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 48, PAGE NO 47

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: What I want to know—the Minister mentioned the 5,400 students. We don't know what the current figure is. It may be less; it may be more; it might be the same. I think you took it on notice that you'll get me a more accurate figure, because I think that was the end of 2023 figure. Is that right— 5,400?

CHLOE READ: Yes, that's correct.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: At that time, you also indicated 80 courses. Is that right? I believe from my memory of what was raised this morning it was 80 courses.

CHLOE READ: I believe that sounds about right.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'd like to know if the whole full 80 courses are going to be accommodated in the relocation.

CHLOE READ: Obviously, as we talked about this morning, the courses that relate to animal care will be moving.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: There's not many of them, though, at Bankstown.

CHLOE READ: No, but just to be precise.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I think there's only one or two.

CHLOE READ: Then we can take on notice about the remainder of the 80, because obviously the 80 is the figure at the end of 2023. So what we could do is come back on notice with the courses that are currently being—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: If you can take on notice what changed in 2024, in terms of what courses are enrolled at Bankstown—it may be different from 2023. Then I'd like to know what courses are available in 2025, this year, at Bankstown, and what you expect will be moving forward into the relocated TAFE site.

CHLOE READ: Very happy to, noting that there's a process that pretty much annual that reviews that course profile.

ANSWER

In 2023 over 80 courses were delivered at Bankstown. This included four Animal Care courses. Data for 2024 and 2025 is not yet published.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown**QUESTION 49, PAGE NO 47-48**

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: As long as it doesn't affect any commercial in confidence, but I can imagine the courses themselves may not. Can I also ask, then, in relation to the relocated TAFE site—or not so much the site but the proposal of having the site relocated for a number of years—have we got a specific number of how long we think the relocation will be for?

CHLOE READ: That's a good question. I believe that the request for a premises was for five years.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Do we know if that five years has any kind of possibility for an extension beyond the five years? It's a five-year minimum; is that what it is?

CHLOE READ: That would depend on the procurement itself, so I couldn't comment on the specifics. It would be fairly—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: If you can find out whether you can comment—if you can clarify whether that is public knowledge that it's five. I believe it is for five years. I've seen that somewhere.

CHLOE READ: I'm happy to clarify that. It would be fairly standard in an arrangement to have some options for extension, but I don't know that I'll be able to comment specifically on those at this point.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you comment on whether you're looking at different sites, or is it just one site, to accommodate the relocation?

CHLOE READ: My understanding of the request for proposal is that it went out to more than one site, but I can confirm that.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So whoever is the final respondent, or whoever finally is given this tender, they can provide several sites? That's what I'm asking.

CHLOE READ: I see.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: They may have a building on one site and a building somewhere else. Is that an option that is being considered?

CHLOE READ: I believe we're looking for a single location.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Was that specified in the public documentation?

CHLOE READ: I'd need to take that on notice.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I don't think it was. Can you take that on notice and let me know?

CHLOE READ: Yes, I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Whether it was very specific—whether it was a single site or there was a possibility of multi-site use for the TAFE.

CHLOE READ: Yes, I'll take that on notice.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW's site and lease term preferences were outlined the ROI. As of 28 March 2025, the ROI documents are still accessible at

<https://buy.nsw.gov.au/prcOpportunity/F315DE74-AACD-4470-8F0EE82C0DECCE1B>

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Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 50, PAGE NO 48

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you also take on notice—and I think I asked it earlier but I just want to double-check—what aspects of the cost that we can have made publicly available in relation to this relocation?

CHLOE READ: Yes, happy to.

ANSWER

Answered by the Minister during the hearing, page 5.

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TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 51, PAGE NO 48

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: And the tender itself—the costs associated with doing that process up to date.

CHLOE READ: Yes, happy to take that on notice too.

ANSWER

The tender costs are funded by Health Infrastructure as part of the planning phase.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 52, PAGE NO 48

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Will they have parking in the relocated site?

CHLOE READ: I'll need to take that on notice and come back.

ANSWER

This is currently part of the ongoing investigations with the preferred bidder.

Budget Estimates 2024-25 Hearing – 10 March 2025**Transcript Questions**

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: SMART AND SKILLED PRICING REVIEWS**QUESTION 53, PAGE NO 49**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: I have. The industry are saying that material costs have risen 30 per cent. It's public information, in terms of meeting some of the challenges of housing costs. It's in light of that cost that they're then asking about the Smart and Skilled funding level.

MURAT DIZDAR: I'll get Mr Kurucz to tell you how we examine the pricing provisions we give and how we update that.

JEREMY KURUCZ: Ms Merton, I'm happy to take the details on notice and provide them to you. We undertake regular pricing reviews, which is essentially the level of funding that the department provides to individual providers, whether TAFE or private providers, for particular qualifications. Last year we did increase the price for a number of qualifications. Providers—TAFE or otherwise—that are delivering qualifications under Smart and Skilled received additional funding from government. I'm happy to take on notice what those particular qualifications are. We are constantly looking at whether or not the qualification, funding and the price that we have reflects the cost of delivery because we do often get that feedback from industry as well.

ANSWER

Qualification prices increased for two reasons in 2024:

1. Price indexation of 2% was applied to all qualifications on the NSW Skills List, with the revised price applying to all students commencing training in 2023/24.
2. Price updates in response to national changes to qualifications and their requirements.

There is a national process for reviewing qualifications which results in the release of new (superseding) versions of qualifications. Periodically, the NSW Department of Education reviews the prices of superseding qualifications by checking whether the requirements, for example the nominal number of hours required to deliver the qualification have changed.

While this process takes place, the price of the superseded qualification is immediately adopted, enabling providers to commence delivery of the superseding qualification immediately. Once price changes are approved the new price will then apply to students enrolling on or after the date the new price takes effect.

In 2024, price adjustments were identified and recalculated for 48 qualifications on the NSW Skills List.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: INDUSTRY ENGAGEMENT**QUESTION 54, PAGE NO 49**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Would I be able to obtain some minutes, an agenda or how this engagement works? When was the last industry trade meeting held, who attended and what was discussed?

JEREMY KURUCZ: I'm happy to take that on notice. We met with the NSW Skills Board last week, and we had some good conversations in relation to the implementation of the skills plan. We also discussed the areas of expertise where the board themselves can add their best advice and insights to the board, which is chaired, as the secretary referred to before, by the CEO of Microsoft Australia. We had a good conversation about balancing the needs of employers and industries against the skills and capabilities that vocational education and training can provide as different to higher education. We also had a good conversation about disability care and a range of other industries under the skills plan. I'm very happy to take the details of the specific industry engagement on notice. As recently as last week, we were having good engagement with the Skills Board about industry needs.

MURAT DIZDAR: Would you like me to give you the—

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: The construction industry would be my first area of interest, if possible.

ANSWER

The NSW Skills Board consists of members who are representing key industry sectors, including construction, digital, manufacturing and the care and support economy. Members include:

- Mr Steven Worrall, Chair, Managing Director Australia and New Zealand, Microsoft
- Ms Annabel Crookes, Director – Legal & Risk, Laing O'Rourke Australia
- Ms Robyn Delander, CEO of Health & Safety Advisory Service Pty Ltd
- Ms Jillian Kilby, Managing Director, The Stable Group
- Mr Alan Lipman, CEO, Romar Engineering
- Mr Jordan O'Reilly OAM, Co-founder and Executive Director of Hireup
- Mr Arnie Selvarajah, Chartered Accountant, Group Co-CEO of Bell Financial Group
- Mr Jeremy Kurucz, Ex-Officio, Acting Deputy Secretary Education and Skills Reform, Department of Education.

The Board is required to meet at least 4 times a year under the *NSW Skills Board Act 2013*. The most recent meeting was held on 4 March 2025, where discussions included the Board's 2025 draft work plan and its alignment with the NSW Skills Plan.

Industry Training Advisory Bodies (ITABs) provide industry-specific training and skills needs advice to the NSW Government. There are 10 ITABs covering various industry groups such as Building and Construction, Community Services and Health and

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Utilities and Electrotechnology, among others. The Department of Education conducts bi-annual Reference Group Meetings with ITABs and holds bi-monthly meetings with individual ITAB Executive Officers as needed.

In December 2024, the NSW Government released the *Principles for Partnership with the Construction Industry* to strengthen collaboration and address sector challenges. Additionally, the department and TAFE NSW have engaged with BuildSkills Australia on a Housing Workforce Capacity Study to assess labour market needs under the National Housing Accord.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Casual conversion**QUESTION 55, PAGE NO 50**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The \$83.1 million allocation—can you break down how that was spent? I'm a bit unsure. The Minister kind of put a figure on it: \$83.1 million over four years to retain expert TAFE teachers. Is that separate to the temporary to permanent?

CHLOE READ: I would need to see what particular release—

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I only have one copy of the press release, sorry. On 16 June—I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

CHLOE READ: I might take that on notice because there's been a range of workforce-related announcements. There are some that relate to the work under the National Skills Agreement. There are some that relate to this casual conversion. I might take that on notice to make sure we give you the right information.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: The 2024-25 budget includes \$83.1 million to support the conversion of teachers to permanent employment. The media release was on 16 June last year from the Minister. I'm happy for you to take it on notice. I'm curious as to what is the funding breakdown and what that money has gone to.

CHLOE READ: I might just take that one on notice.

ANSWER

\$83.1 million represents the incremental cost for financial years 2024-25 to 2027-28 to convert 500 FTE teachers from casual to permanent. TAFE NSW converted more than 1,700 casual teaching staff to permanent at the start of Semester 1, 2025. This is in addition to the conversions in 2024.

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Transcript Questions

Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: 1000 APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES**QUESTION 56, PAGE NO 52**

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: I want to move to the Government's commitment or election promise of 1,000 apprentices. I think it was \$93.5 million for 1,000 new trainees or apprentices, and I think that is separate from the local government one that we talked about last time. Are there any updates in terms of how many applications or how many apprentices have been recruited? What is the status of that?

MURAT DIZDAR: I can help you there, Ms Mitchell. We're well on track for that. It's 1,000 additional apprentices and trainees across government agencies by 2026. I want to commend all the agencies that have come to the table with us. We spoke about round one last time. For round two, we gave funding approval for up to 450 additional roles, which was above what we were looking at by way of 400. Mr Kurucz might have further details, but we're well on track and I can add that we're looking at round three in May this year.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: How many came in round one? Do you have that data?

JEREMY KURUCZ: Ms Lawrence can provide that.

MURAT DIZDAR: Do you want to dive in on that one, Ms Lawrence?

AMANDA LAWRENCE: Yes, I'm happy to provide that info. Under round one, which opened in November 2023 and closed in July 2024, there were 251 funded roles available and 221 candidates commenced in those roles. Thirty couldn't be filled before that round closed and they were returned, so they'll be used in the round that's underway at the moment, which is round two. That opened in June last year and will close in June this year. As the secretary said, there are 450 funded roles available and, as at last week, 305 apprentices and trainees had commenced in those roles.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: Do you have any retention of the 221 that were part of round one? Are they all still going or have you had any kind of dropout for whatever reason?

AMANDA LAWRENCE: Yes, we've got a 94 per cent retention rate from round one apprentices and trainees, which is great.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In terms of monitoring—and I appreciate what you said, Mr Dizdar, about it being a Government commitment—what sort of KPIs are there, or how are you monitoring the success as you go through particular rounds? Do you learn things from round one that you will apply to round two and round three? How's that happening in practice?

AMANDA LAWRENCE: We've got a range of wraparound supports in place for those apprentices and trainees. We do a lot of site visits and monitoring in that way. They also get peer support from each other and their post-placement support officers, who work really closely with them and with their agencies as they progress through.

ANSWER

The priority KPIs for the 1,000 Apprentice and Trainee program are to commence an additional 1,000 apprentices and trainees employed by NSW public sector agencies

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by 30 June 2026, and achieve a 75% completion rate for the apprentices and trainees employed by the agencies.

The Department of Education plays a role in monitoring the success of the program. This includes ensuring the apprenticeships and traineeships applied for are suitable to the agency and making sure agencies confirm commencements or cancellations. The department's post placement support team works with agencies to ensure a smooth onboarding process, assists supervisors, apprentices and trainees to understand their obligations and supports apprentices and trainees throughout the term of the contract, with a heightened mentoring focus on the first 6 months.

Learnings from Round 1 have informed improvements to the program.

- A report has been developed that tracks the apprentices and trainees formal training progress through routine training provider Smart and Skilled reporting, reducing the administration burden on agencies and training providers
- Fortnightly drop-in sessions for all agencies, and separately for apprentices and trainees that have commenced to flag and discuss any emerging challenges
- As a result of feedback from agencies, questions for the Round 3 application process, due to commence on 19 May 2025, will be simplified.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: 1000 APPRENTICES AND TRAINEES

QUESTION 57, PAGE NO 53

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: In terms of the actual training for the apprentices, is it all being delivered through TAFE or is it happening through RTOs as well?

AMANDA LAWRENCE: I understand the majority is through TAFE, but I would take on notice to give you a breakdown.

ANSWER

For Round 1 of the 1000 NSW Public Sector Apprentices and Trainees Program there were 221 apprentice and trainee commencements comprising of 67 apprentices and 154 trainees.

Of the:

- 67 apprentices - 51 (76%) are undertaking off the job training with TAFE NSW.
- 154 trainees – 73 (47%) are undertaking off the job training with TAFE NSW.

Off the job training is currently being finalised for Round 2 apprentices and trainees.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 58, PAGE NO 53

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Ms Read, you touched on surveys or studies of this current student cohort. Do we know anything about the mode of transport or what their current transport arrangements are?

CHLOE READ: I'm going to need to take that on notice. I'm not aware that we do. But, obviously, I am still fairly new, so I might just take that on notice.

ANSWER

The relocated Bankstown TAFE NSW campus is expected to be operational from Semester 1, 2026. The ROI documents for the site relocation note TAFE NSW is seeking a site within the Bankstown central business district, which is well served by current and future public transport links.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown

QUESTION 59, PAGE NO 53

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Ms Read, in light of the conversion of the metro, in terms of a transport taking longer than originally planned, would these issues be taken into consideration, in terms of the impact on the student cohort and travelling?

CHLOE READ: I'm not across the metro piece specifically, so I might also just take that on notice and make sure I understand the intersections between them.

ANSWER

The relocated Bankstown TAFE NSW campus is expected to be operational from Semester 1, 2026. The ROI documents for the site relocation note TAFE NSW is seeking a site within the Bankstown central business district, which is well served by current and future public transport links.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: TAFE NSW Bankstown**QUESTION 60, PAGE NO 54**

The Hon. RACHEL MERTON: Ms Read, I've previously raised this—given that the relocation budget remains unknown, the relocation and the reinstatement of a course pertaining to hairdressing and beauty. Like yourself, I've been to the college, I've seen the facilities; they're really quite outstanding. In terms of what the cost is going to be to reinstate such infrastructure like that—

CHLOE READ: I will need to take that on notice. As you say, they're great facilities. There's that glass window with all the heads with different hairstyles and things on as you walk into that area, which was very cool. We obviously want to make sure that we minimise the cost of the relocation, noting that it's part of the project design, and to make sure that they have the facilities that they need. So I'll take on notice anything about the cost and see what we can come back with.

ANSWER

Final relocation costs will be determined once a site has been identified.

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Minister for Skills, TAFE and Tertiary Education

TITLE: Digital Advertising

QUESTION 61, PAGE NO 55-56

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: With TAFE Connects obviously using digital advertising, do you do any advertising in newspapers as well for that, or not specifically?

CHLOE READ: That's an excellent question and one I do not have an answer for.

The Hon. SARAH MITCHELL: You can take it on notice. More broadly, in the advertising space for TAFE, for courses and for, again, digital spend versus newspaper, I'm specifically thinking about a lot of regional communities with community-run newspapers, which are very well read and usually the source of truth for a lot of communities. I'm just curious if there's an advertising spend breakdown, if you've got it, or you can take it on notice.

CHLOE READ: I think we should take that on notice and also see if we can get you anything on the differences in metro versus other places in the State. We'll see what we can get for you.

ANSWER

TAFE NSW is set an annual minimum investment in regional press by the Department of Customer Service each year, and TAFE NSW exceeded this requirement in 2023-24, with 74% of total spend allocated to regional areas