

Special Minister of State, Roads, Arts, Music and the Night-time Economy, Jobs and Tourism

**HEARING DATE: 11 MARCH 2025
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Question 1 – Toll Review

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, in relation to the Allan Fels toll review and Mr Fels' responsibilities, what's the current contract value or estimated amount payable to him by Transport for NSW?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Thanks, and firstly welcome to the Committee and thank you to all the officials who are able to be here. Ms Ward, as you know, we have released all the figures.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. The current contract.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: For tMO ahe toll review and the external consultants. The Hon.

NATALIE WARD: What's his current contract value?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: About a total of approximately \$8 million has been the public figure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: To Mr Fels?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: For Mr Fels? We will take that particular question on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

I refer to the response provided by Secretary in the hearing.

Question 2 – Toll Review

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can you take on notice all the times that you have met with Mr Fels since July last year?

TRUDI MARES: Sure.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I take that on notice as well?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You can answer in any way you like, but this is your chance—clarity, accountability.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'll take that question on notice, given the number of times I've met with him. I wouldn't be able to tell you that without going back to examine the record.

Answer

I am advised:

I frequently meet with Mr Fels, both in-person and online.

Question 3 – Toll Review

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Murray, will you take on notice the dates, times, costs and nature of Mr Fels' expenses to the taxpayer?

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, I'm sure we can take that on notice as part of the process.

Answer

I am advised:

Professor Fels has advised that his expenses total \$84,600 excluding GST for accommodation, travel and other expenses as part of his engagement as Chair of the Independent Toll Review. These expenses were paid by NSW Treasury who engaged Professor Fels for the Independent Toll Review and were within his expense cap.

Question 4 – Mardi Gras

The CHAIR: In relation to major events and what they do bring into the New South Wales economy each year, are you aware of how much the Mardi Gras celebrations—the parade, afterparty, the festivals and Fair Day; that three-week block—bring into the New South Wales economy?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We would have that figure here for you. I'm happy to take it on notice, that time. That adds greatly to the visitor expenditure in Sydney, but also to the character of Sydney as a city, so it's a highly valuable exercise.

Answer

I am advised:

NSW Government investment in the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Festival is limited to the Parade only. The 2025 Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade is projected to deliver visitor expenditure of \$42,342,973 and projected visitation of 37,996, ex-region visitors. The 2024 Mardi Gras Parade resulted in \$56,851,324 visitor expenditure and attracted over 40,000 ex-region visitors.

Question 5 – Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can I just go to the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum, Minister? Can you tell me what you and your office have done to help the Lithgow small arms museum after its recent burglary.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I had heard about the recent burglary. There have been questions in Parliament. I have met with MPs, including the Hon. Robert Borsak, about this matter. My office has reached out who are the owners of the space. That long-term security, I understand, is very important.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have you taken any steps to try to meet with that international company, Thales, around the Lithgow small arms museum?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. I have written to Thales to set out the Government's view about the future of this museum. I put the view that this is an important community asset. I don't think everyone will understand just how important this collection is. But this is a really crucial community asset. The Government wants to see it continue. I have written to Thales to make that point and encourage them to work with the museum. I will also be speaking to them directly. I understand that meeting is being set up or has been set up.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have you asked your agency or any of your agencies to provide any funding to the museum or any kind of support? As you said, it's an important part of the history. It's not just about firearms; it has a huge amount of Australia's engineering history held on site as well.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I have asked Create NSW to directly assist the museum with what their funding options might be. They actually do have some significant reserves that they've built up, which is remarkable for a community institution like that. Pending eligibility, the advice to me is that one of the options might be through the Create NSW Arts and Cultural Funding Program. The 2-Year Multi-year Funding would support a small-to-medium organisation up to \$200,000. It's the sort of program where they would have to work through the details of the eligibility, but they may well be eligible for that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Have they been given that information?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd have to take that on notice, but there have been active discussions with Create NSW to try to assist, given the Government's view. Look, I accept the case that's been put to me. This is an important community institution.

Answer

I am advised:

On Thursday 24 October 2024, Create NSW staff met with two representatives from the Lithgow Small Arms Museum and advised them of opportunities within the reformed Arts & Culture Funding Program (ACFP) to apply for Project Funding or key organisational funding, including 2-year funding. This session was held at the Lithgow Transformation Hub as part of several in-person briefings held across the state, open to the public, to communicate changes to the ACFP and upcoming funding rounds. Create NSW also shared the support offered by Museums and Galleries NSW that is accessible to the Lithgow Small Arms Museum.

Question 6 – Glow Roads Trial

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: It has been there for quite some time now. I drive that road almost daily. I can tell you that it's not glowing. I am wondering whose idea it was to put it in an area that has, during the day, probably 10 per cent or 20 per cent maximum sunlight. Whose idea was it to put light-activated glow-in-the-dark lines in an area that doesn't get light?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That is fantastic feedback about the trial. It isn't going to work everywhere. The sort of thing you are describing is probably one of the constraints. Bulli was picked for research reasons. I would have to refer to the officials as to precisely why.

JOSH MURRAY: Mr Banasiak, thank you for the question. This was a trial proposal that was actually put forward by Transport's hardworking staff. It has come from the organisation itself. We do understand that there will be limitations, particularly around the amount of light that the photoluminescent paint can absorb during the day. But it was determined that the site would provide ample opportunities to start to generate some of that energy. Also, the safety impacts on that stretch of road would be of benefit as well. We are, of course, observing it, as you are when you drive past it, to see how it performs. We don't rule out using it on other stretches of road that might pick up more sunlight during the day. We'll take that feedback on board that you're not noticing it.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How much does it cost per metre more than normal line marking?

JOSH MURRAY: I would have to take that on notice. My understanding is that it's not a material impact on cost in terms of line markings. Obviously this is a heavily regulated area in terms of safety protocol, so we want to make sure that we have all the details right before we transition to a full rollout.

Answer

I am advised:

The current estimate for the unit rate for glow road line marking used on the Bulli Pass trial is approximately \$57.00 per metre. This is in comparison to regular line marking (thermoplastic line marking) for a similar location, which is approximately \$6 per metre.

Question 7 – Toll Review

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Minister, when were you first advised that the toll road modelling completed by Clarity Consult and commissioned by Mr Fels was peer reviewed and found to be not fit for purpose for negotiations with Transurban?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept the characterisation of that research.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But your review said it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd have to take on notice the specific question you're asking about the date.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When were you first advised that that modelling was not fit for purpose? The peer review said it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As I just explained, I'd have to take on notice the specific date, but I'm happy to do so.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: When did you become aware of it? I mean, you've got a peer review that says you can't rely on the traffic modelling. When did you become aware of that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I reject the premise but, as I've said twice now, I will take on notice the specific date. I think that's a reasonable question. I'm happy to take it on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Transport for NSW briefed me throughout the finalisation of the Independent Toll Review. Between May and June 2024, briefings included modelling outputs, and the tasks required to implement the Review's recommendations.

Traffic modelling is iterative and involves reviews and refinements of model inputs, assumptions and calculations. Transport is incorporating feedback from the peer review into the modelling as one of the inputs into the next phase of toll reform. These refinements will ensure the modelling is fit for purpose as decision points are reached in the process. Transport for NSW continues to provide modelling updates to me as needed.

Question 8 – Toll Review

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The peer review said, "Stop. Don't use this," and yet you get running with it. You run off with it and say, "Yes, we're going to rely on that." The peer review said, "Don't rely on this traffic modelling," but you pushed through anyway.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think you're trivialising the significant amount of work going into this.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: No, I'm not. I'm very concerned that you're relying, in negotiations with Transurban, on this modelling that a peer review has said, "Don't rely on it. Stop. It's unreliable."

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept the premise of your question. You are trivialising the significant amount of work—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: The peer review said it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: —and the significant Transport teams that are working on the traffic modelling here, as well as some of these consultants. We can answer the—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: They pleaded with you, Minister. They asked you not to rely on this traffic modelling. They said, "Don't go into this gunfight with dodgy traffic modelling." Yet, you have.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't accept the premise. We can take you through that specific modelling and correct the record for you, should you give us the opportunity.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Were you advised of this prior to entering into stage two of the direct deal?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've said I'll take on notice the date. I think it's a fair question to say when was I aware of this particular modelling. I have been briefed by officials. I did raise some—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But not just the modelling; the peer review. Were you aware of the peer review and the warnings to you about this traffic modelling before you entered into stage two of the direct deal?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As I was saying, Ms Ward, I was briefed by officials. I did ask some questions about the modelling and the peer review. I was reassured by the answers I was given.

Answer

I am advised:

I refer to the response to Question on Notice 007.

Question 9 – Sound NSW

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Good morning, Minister. I just wanted to ask you a couple of questions, one in relation to Sound NSW. What is that currently costing taxpayers—the full cost of Sound NSW?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Sound NSW, firstly, is the contemporary music agency established by the Government. It's modelled on Screen NSW, so it's a very similar format.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So it has a board and staff?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Correct. It's very similar to the set-up for Screen NSW, but to support contemporary music.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How many people work there, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's part of a \$103 million commitment to the contemporary music industry over the term of the Government. I would have to take on notice the specific numbers, or we could get officials to answer you now. But we certainly have that information.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: And there's a full, functioning, paid board, is that right?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Firstly, I can tell you that the budget allocation for this year is \$18.5 million. That includes both staff and the grant programs. There is a fully functioning board. That's been operational now for more than a year, but we've also legislated it recently, as you would be aware.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Yes. So staff, grants—and how many staff are there?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll get that—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You can take that on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm certainly happy to take it on notice, but we may be able to tell you more rapidly than that.

Answer

I am advised:

Sound NSW currently has 15 full-time equivalent employees.

Question 10 – Sound NSW

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: That's okay. What about the board itself? Are they paid positions?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't want to mislead you. I think they may be paid a small amount. It's a very serious board. We've been lucky to have some of the most senior people in the national music industry step onto that board.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you confirm if they're paid?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I will confirm.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Is it Ms Collins? Is that right? If she's here, can she confirm if they're paid?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, we can ask her to come forward. I can tell you that Sound NSW at the moment has 15 full-time equivalent employees.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Can you confirm that the board are paid, or are the chair and deputy chair paid?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're just taking that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

The Sound NSW Advisory Board Chair is entitled to payment of \$10,000 per annum. The Deputy Chair and other Board members are entitled to payment of \$5000 per annum.

Question 11 – Political Donations

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: When I had a look at the reportable political donations disclosure for NSW Labor 2022-23 financial year, it was interesting to me that Eleven: A Music Company donated \$1,900. Are you aware of that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would have to take that on notice. That's really a matter for the party rather than the Government.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I just want to know whether, as Minister, you were aware that John Watson had donated, through his company, \$1,900 in that financial year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wasn't aware that Eleven had donated.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: It never came to your attention?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wasn't aware that Eleven had donated to a party.

Answer

I was not aware that Eleven had donated to NSW Labor.

Question 12 – Sound NSW Board

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, you are also Special Minister of State. I did ask this question the other week to the Minister for Sport about the processes around grants but also about people taking on board positions and the need that they might have, if they are being offered a position like this, that they should declare that they have donated to a party—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, look—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: —particularly during the political process.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd be happy to take that on notice, but there's obviously a conflict—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm just interested, because you're the person that would normally bring legislation in that regard, as Special Minister of State.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: There is obviously a conflict of interest process that all these boards go be appropriate.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You said to me you didn't know that he donated. Could I just ask Ms Collins to come forward? Ms Collins, I'm going to ask you the same question: Were you involved in Mr Watson being recommended for the board?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes. Sound NSW put forward a list of, I think, approximately just under 60 potential industry candidates for appointment to the board.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You put forward 60?

EMILY COLLINS: Yes. We put forward a long list with some recommendations about people.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Who does the final choosing out of the 60? I've got the list of board members here. There's not 60 here.

EMILY COLLINS: No, sorry—the long list. When the board was first appointed, we put forward a recommendation of potential candidates, and we made a recommendation of, I think, closer to 20. I'll have to come back to you on notice about what the final—

Answer

I am advised:

Under Premier's Memorandum M2021-07 Appointments to NSW Government boards and committees, all Ministerial appointments to NSW Government boards and committees are required to follow the Public Service Commissioner's Appointment Standards: Boards and Committees in the NSW Public Sector. The NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines issued under Premier's Memorandum M2013-06 also contain information on the process for the appointment of members (section 5).

Under the Appointment Standards, appointments to NSW Government boards and committees are required to demonstrate compliance with four general principles, namely merit, fairness, diversity and integrity.

There is no express requirement under the Appointment Standards or the Boards and Committees Guidelines for potential appointees to disclose political donations. There is a risk that requiring potential appointees to disclose political donations may give rise to a perception that political donations are a pre-requisite for appointment. This would be inconsistent with the general principles of merit, fairness, diversity and integrity prescribed by the Appointment Standards.

Political donations to political parties, members and candidates are, however, required to be publicly disclosed in accordance with the requirements of the Electoral Funding Act 2018 (EF Act). Disclosures are available on the NSW Electoral Commission's website (www.elections.nsw.gov.au).

The EF Act imposes strict caps on political donations made to NSW political parties, groups and candidates. These caps help ensure that political donations do not give rise to public perceptions of undue influence or conflict of interest.

In relation to the Sound NSW Board, Sound NSW provided a list with 56 potential candidates from across the NSW contemporary music industry for the Minister's consideration for inaugural appointees.

Question 13 – Political Donations

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: My issue is—and nothing against Mr Watson. Well done for what he

Ms Collins, you weren't aware that he donated to Sussex Street, \$1,900?

EMILY COLLINS: No, I was not aware.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How can we fix that, Minister? I think that's a problem. These are the sorts of declarations that should actually happen.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I offer the secretary to give you some general guidance on this?

KATE BOYD: This issue has come up before in relation to employment in the public sector as well, and it would be potentially counter to the integrity aims of the public sector to ask people whether they have donated to a political party.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: What? Are you suggesting it's counter to integrity that they should actually advise, given they're taking on a public service role, even if it could be just a minor question that you put to them: Have they made political donations?

KATE BOYD: You wouldn't want to infer that that was a necessary criteria for appointment.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You would think that they would perhaps make that available—they would provide that information, I would have thought.

KATE BOYD: It is made available.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: There should be a process where you can ask: Are there any conflicts that you might think we need to be aware of?

KATE BOYD: I don't think making a lawful political donation is a conflict, and all of those donations were publicly disclosed.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm not suggesting it's unlawful; I'm suggesting that he made a donation to the Labor Party and within months was put on a board that pays a stipend or fee. Does it meet the pub test? No, it doesn't. Minister, will you commit to making changes in this regard?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've taken it on notice, and I'm happy to do that and look at the issue in a serious way. I would, of course, take the agency advice, but government will make its own decision about what was appropriate. I'm certainly happy to talk to you further about it.

Answer

I am advised:

Under Premier's Memorandum M2021-07 Appointments to NSW Government boards and committees, all Ministerial appointments to NSW Government boards and committees are required to follow the Public Service Commissioner's Appointment Standards: Boards and Committees in the NSW Public Sector. The NSW Government Boards and Committees Guidelines issued under Premier's Memorandum M2013-06 also contain information on the process for the appointment of members (section 5).

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The EF Act imposes strict caps on political donations made to NSW political parties, groups and candidates. These caps help ensure that political donations do not give rise to public perceptions of undue influence or conflict of interest.

Question 14 – Milsons Precinct Group - proposed traffic management plans

The CHAIR: I understand that the Milson Precinct group has requested details of the proposed traffic management plans for the closure. At last communication with them, that hadn't been provided. Is there any reason why not, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't answer that. I encourage you to take it up with the officials. There has been significant community engagement—for example, the normal letterbox and email notifications, street meetings, information settings, paid social media and radio advertising. There's specific information on the website and a media release. There have been briefings with key stakeholders and impacted residents' groups—that normal consultation. This is a disruptive project, though, so I'm sure—I know residents have really been impacted here so, if there's more we can do, we should. If we can provide that information, then my view would be we should, but I encourage you to ask officials.

The CHAIR: But you're here now as the Minister who can make a direction and suggest that that traffic management plan be provided. Given that all they found out about it, in terms of the community, was this one email on 6 November—you said a lot of consultation—they don't think they've got enough information. Are you going to say now that it should be released for them?

CAMILLA DROVER: There's no problem with explaining the changed traffic arrangements—absolutely not.

The CHAIR: All right.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It may have been released but, if not, we'll release it publicly and discuss it with the residents.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd certainly be comfortable with it being released. What's the view of the agency on that matter?

CAMILLA DROVER: The closure of that off-ramp is static, so it's been closed. I am surprised of the lack of information, but I'm happy to take that on notice. There has been a lot of information provided to the local community. There's also been media done with—

The CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Drover. The Minister just said he was happy for the traffic management plan to be released and passed it to you. You said you'd take it on notice. Is that what you're saying here now? The Minister has just said he's happy with it.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm taking on notice the fact that it hasn't already been released because a high degree of information has already been shared.

The CHAIR: Okay, and if it hasn't been released?

Answer

I am advised:

The Warringah Freeway Upgrade Alfred Street off ramp Traffic Management Plan (TMP) is available on the project's portal: <https://caportal.com.au/rms/wfu/alfred-street-off-ramp-temporary-long-term-closure>

Traffic Management Plan (TMP): https://media.caapp.com.au/pdf/8cnf9o/cd68127f-e180-41c1-9ccb-e8f859f19242/WFU%20-%20Alfred%20Street%20North%20Long-Term%20Closure%20-%20Traffic%20Management%20Plan_Nov%202024.pdf

Question 15 – Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Cammeray Voices released a report in September 2024. Transport then took the views out of that report and escalated them to the Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway upgrade environmental representative to do this review. What the review is looking into is the allegations about noncompliance that were outlined in that report. It has required some thorough work. It's not yet complete. Our expectation is that it may still take a number of weeks to conduct and finalise it. As soon as that is final,

we'll be going back to Cammeray Voices to inform them of the results of the review and any recommendations. That's the current status as of today.

The CHAIR: We're at budget estimates once again. It's a couple of weeks from budget estimates so I think, last October, whenever it was, you said a couple of weeks. Now it's a couple of weeks. Is that a guarantee that it's a couple of weeks?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's the advice to me. I accept the point you're making.

The CHAIR: The project will be done and dusted potentially—many couples of weeks later.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Possibly not, given just how big this project is. But I accept, Chair, the point you're making that this has taken quite some time. I'm happy to speak to the agency about what we can do to make sure that delivers on that timeline.

The CHAIR: All right.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It may have been released but, if not, we'll release it publicly and discuss it with the residents.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd certainly be comfortable with it being released. What's the view of the agency on that matter?

CAMILLA DROVER: The closure of that off-ramp is static, so it's been closed. I am surprised of the lack of information, but I'm happy to take that on notice. There has been a lot of information provided to the local community. There's also been media done with—

The CHAIR: Thank you, Ms Drover. The Minister just said he was happy for the traffic management plan to be released and passed it to you. You said you'd take it on notice. Is that what you're saying here now? The Minister has just said he's happy with it.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm taking on notice the fact that it hasn't already been released because a high degree of information has already been shared.

The CHAIR: Okay, and if it hasn't been released?

Answer

I am advised:

A review has been completed by an independent Environmental Representative (ER) into the allegations raised by community group, Cammeray Voices, regarding non-compliances by the Warringah Freeway Upgrade and Western Harbour Tunnel Project (the Project).

The report was provided to Transport for NSW on 12 February 2025 and Transport for NSW submitted this to Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure on 18 February 2025. A copy of the report, together with an explanatory cover letter, was sent to Cammeray Voices on 14 March 2025. As part of this process, Transport for NSW also re-offered the opportunity for members of Cammeray Voices to meet with Transport for NSW's Project team to review outcomes.

Further information about the Warringah Freeway Upgrade Project and Western Harbour Tunnel is publicly available (<https://caportal.com.au/rms/wfu> - <https://caportal.com.au/rms/wht>)

Question 16– Western Harbour Tunnel and Warringah Freeway Upgrade

The CHAIR: You summarise the independent environmental representative as being appointed by the project team. I just wanted to get clarity on that.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't answer that question. I would have to refer that or take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Somebody, just to be clear—and this is the political point I'm possibly wanting from you, Minister, or response. This independent environmental representative needing to look at compliance issues with the upgrade—quite a few significant breaches, according to the community—was appointed, is being briefed and is, essentially, paid for by the project team, the very team that it is enquiring into and investigating into. I understand that's the situation.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not aware of the method of appointment or the circumstances, so I'd have to—

The CHAIR: Mr Murray, are you aware?

JOSH MURRAY: No. I'd have to take that on notice, Ms Faehrmann. **The CHAIR:** Okay, maybe if somebody else within the team—

JOSH MURRAY: I think we could come back later today with a more fulsome report on where that's now up to.

Answer

I am advised:

The Warringah Freeway Upgrade's Independent Environment Representative (ER) is approved by the Planning Secretary and is a requirement of the project's Minister's Conditions of Approval (MCOA). Transport for NSW is required to cover the costs of the ER.

The escalation of a community member's complaint for review by the ER is part of the approved Complaints Escalation Protocol as outlined in the Project's Community Communications Strategy.

The ER produces a report following the investigation and issues this to Transport for NSW. Transport for NSW must notify the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure (DPHI) of any non-compliances within seven days. The ER is also required to notify DPHI as part of the required monthly reporting process.

The ER makes recommendations in relation to any non-compliances or areas for improvement. DPHI has the authority to enforce these. More detailed information is publicly available within the DPHI Environmental Representative Protocol.

(<https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2023-02/environmental-representative-protocol.pdf>)

The report was provided to Cammeray Voices on 14 March 2025 and Transport for NSW is liaising with the group to meet and discuss the report's findings and Transport for NSW's response.

Question 17 – New England Regional Arts Museum

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: I had the great pleasure to tour the New England Regional Arts Museum over the weekend. Have you had the chance to visit, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would have to check if I've been to the New England Regional Arts Museum. I've been to quite a few regional museums and galleries, so I'd want to check before telling you for sure.

Answer

I am advised:

I have not visited the New England Regional Arts Museum.

Question 18 – Short-term rental accommodation sector review

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: Let's talk about the short-term rental accommodation sector review.

Again, another review. Do we have an update on that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That question will be best directed to my colleague. I am not the Minister who is best placed to give you the most recent update on that.

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: That's fine.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would be happy to take it on notice, though, so we can provide you—

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: That's right. It does lead into previous answers.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I wouldn't object to taking that on notice and we could get you some information from my colleague on that.

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Government released an all-options discussion paper for public input, exploring policy levers to unlock housing and improve affordability. Potential measures include planning reforms, rental reforms, day caps, a levy to fund social and affordable housing and stricter reporting to improve transparency and planning.

Question 19 – Festivals

The CHAIR: While we're here, and while you're here, I want to check with whoever in the department can answer the question as to whether that review process has been triggered over the summer we've just had since the legislation has passed.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's probably Liquor and Gaming.

The CHAIR: Thanks, Mr Barakat.

TAREK BARAKAT: Thanks, Ms Faehrmann. In terms of the internal reviews, those are reviews for Health to have a look at their requirements for user-pays ambulance and, as the Minister said, for police as well. To the best of my knowledge, that hasn't been triggered over the summer festival process, but I am happy to take that on notice and check with those individual agencies and confirm that. In terms of the central review mechanism, which is effectively a government panel that has a representative from Sound NSW, Destination NSW and the Premier's Department, the Minister has published an order outlining the criteria that festivals would need to meet to be considered by that panel. That panel is in the final processes of being set up. It wasn't actually set up until such time as that order was published, but it's now been published in the gazette. I'm told that that panel will be established from either later this month or next month and then it will be open to festivals, should they meet the criteria published in the Minister's order to apply for consideration.

Answer

I am advised:

NSW Ambulance has advised it has received one request for a review of user paid charges, which occurred in October 2024.

The number of review requests received by NSW Police was provided by NSW Police during the Minister for Police's Budget Estimates hearing.

There is also the opportunity for music festivals organisers to appeal costs to a cross-government panel (Music Festivals Panel). The appeal may be made if exceptional circumstances apply and the user pays costs would impact on the financial viability of the music festival. The Music Festivals Panel has been established and the first meeting will occur later this month.

Question 20 – Drug Checking trial

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'll put some questions to you based on observations from people that were at the festival and have come to me. Were police instructed not to search or arrest individuals for drug-related offences inside the venue, or in proximity to the pill-testing area? It was observed there was obviously a heavy police presence outside, but there seemed to be a safe zone within the actual festival.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm not aware of what directions were issued. I wouldn't feel confident

that as more of an operational set of decisions, but that inter-government agency cooperation was clearly crucial to allowing this trial to proceed.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm going to use one of your lines. I don't accept the premise of your statement that it is purely operational. They are actually administering a policy decision of your Government. If more into a policy decision of your Government. I will press you a little bit.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think you are right to raise those concerns. Part of my constraint here is I'm not the relevant Minister driving the trial. The Health Minister is generally in charge from a ministerial point of view. Obviously the police Minister may have some views.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Can you provide details of how much this trial cost? I know it was free to get the pills tested, but how much did it cost the taxpayers to effectively test 80 pills, from the stats that I've seen?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I can't answer that. I don't have that information. Perhaps Liquor and Gaming would, either now or this afternoon, or Health certainly would.

TAREK BARAKAT: We don't have it now, but I can get it for you this afternoon. It will be a Health question, but I'm happy to provide it later today.

Answer

I am advised:

The trial will operate at up to 12 events over a 12-month period and is estimated to cost just over \$1 million. Matters related to the cost of the Drug Checking trial should be referred to NSW Health.

Question 21 – Sydney Opera House

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know how much the Government paid to hire the Sydney Opera House for the royal visit of King Charles and Queen Camilla?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I do not know those specifics, but I think it's an appropriate question. I'd be happy to take it on notice, or I'd certainly encourage you to ask officials this afternoon.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: My understanding from the public record is that it's \$172,075. Do you think that's an appropriate amount that the taxpayer has to pay, given the taxpayer already pays around \$75 million a year to support the Sydney Opera House?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I think it was an important visit. It was a very popular visit, it was my observation, as crowds turned out, so I don't object to that money being spent.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you have any negotiation power with the Sydney Opera House around these costs?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I should clarify, this wouldn't have been a decision of officials who I work with. This probably would have been coordinated through the Premier's Department, so those questions are probably best put to them. However, I'm certainly happy to answer any of your questions that we can here.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know how many events are being held at the Opera House and paid for by the Government?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: The Opera House, as an incredible icon and a significant venue, would certainly receive a range of government support. We could detail that for you.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I'm just asking how many events are actually held at the Opera House and paid for by the Government, in terms of hiring spaces?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It's obviously a very complex question to answer. I doubt we would have that information all in one place. We could give you information about the public support for the Opera House but, perhaps, if there are agencies—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Would you ask the Sydney Opera House to provide that information to you? They probably don't have a complex—there's probably a line item for the Sydney Opera House.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd certainly be happy to take that on notice. It's a complex question though, so we'd have to work hard to—but we'll see what we can produce for you.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Don't you think it's just one line item for the Sydney Opera House? They have the fees that they collect—

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I think it's unlikely that that's how they're accounting for it.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: It might be worth asking.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We'll take it on notice and give you a full breakdown of the government support and any event support in the way you're asking.

Answer

I am advised:

The Government was charged was \$172,075.73 for security, production and labour costs of staging the royal event at the Opera House in October 2024.

Between July 2023 to March 2025, 22 events booked by NSW Government entities were held at the Sydney Opera House. This included:

- Nine events in financial year 2023-24 and 13 events from July 2024 to March 2025.
- Of these, nine events were not charged any venue hire fees and 11 events received venue hire, production and labour fee discounts.

Further breakdown is below.

	FY24	FY25 to March	Total
Media Calls (no venue hire fee)	1	2	3
Boardroom meetings (no venue hire fee)	1	5	6
Events (with discounted venue hire fee)	7	4	11
Events (full fee)	0	2	2

Question 22 – Sydney Festival

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: With contracts backed by government, are you aware of concerns raised with the Sydney Festival director that two actors were given contracts by a producer that were not in line with the most recent MEAA negotiated awards for performance?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Just repeat that question, just so I can make sure I've got it right.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The Sydney Festival director was told that two performers at the Sydney Festival were given a contract that was not in line with the most recent MEAA negotiated award. Are you aware of that?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I don't believe I am but I have to take on notice to check that the office hasn't been alerted. I'd be happy to do so.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Knowing that is the case, would you commit to investigating all contracts that have been provided to performers from producers that are getting government funds through the Sydney Festival?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: No, I won't commit to that until I've got a sense of the scale of the problem, but I'm certainly happy to follow up on this individual example. If that shows

that there's a more widespread problem, or I do have concerns, then of course I'd be happy to widen the investigation.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: And will you make that public?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would need to get some agency advice before that. That'd be my first instinct but I'd want to get some advice from my officials before I committed to that.

Answer

I am advised:

Sydney Festival has confirmed that the contracts in question were issued by an independent producer and were an out of date pro forma. The oversight was due to the use of an outdated contract template and, once identified, Sydney Festival worked proactively with the producer to rectify the situation, ensuring the affected performers were issued the correct, up-to-date contract.

Destination NSW provides major event investment via a strategic event investment agreement. Performers are contracted by the event organiser.

Sydney Festival has confirmed that this oversight had no effect on the wages paid for the period and that there was no underpayment of wages. Sydney Festival is reinforcing its internal processes to prevent similar administrative errors in the future, including closer oversight of third-party producers and regular contract reviews.

Question 23 – Christmas Parties

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: This is something that's been publicly aired already, so I would be concerned if the festival director hadn't alerted your office about that. To the Christmas parties, we've discussed Christmas parties.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I haven't done that, but it'd be an excellent use of the estimates process and I encourage you to delve further. As I said earlier—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I'm actually asking if you will delve further, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: As I said earlier, I encourage agencies and institutions to be aware of the public mood at the moment. People are under financial pressure. Those agencies should—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: There is a difference, Minister, between encouraging these pathways of action and actually holding your departments and agencies and entities to account. Given you haven't looked into this so far, will you ask your agency heads to report on how much they've spent on their Christmas parties last year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm certainly happy to take that offline and speak to the secretaries of the agencies who report to me and ask them if they have any concerns. I think that's a reasonable question. I'd be happy to action that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I don't think it's just about their concerns; it's about your concerns.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm happy to seek advice on that from the senior officials.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are you going to make that advice public?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: It depends what the answer is, but if I've got concerns—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That's a bit of a worry, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: If I had concerns, I'd certainly be happy to raise them.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: The whole point is that we have concerns, given the demonstrated behaviour is concerning.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. We spoke about one of those issues earlier today. If you do have issues you want to raise, I'm open to guidance on it. I think it is appropriate for members to express views about those things, to make sure that these institutions know what the public mood is, bearing in mind—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Sure, but we only get to know some of that because of very specific information shared. We're actually looking for transparency about how taxpayer money is spent.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've committed to following that up, but I think you're significantly underestimating the powers of the upper House in that statement.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I hope I'm not underestimating your powers as Minister to investigate that information. That is your responsibility.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've committed to following that up.

Answer

I am advised:

It is my expectation that agencies comply with the relevant requirements set out in their agencies code of conduct and procurement policies to ensure that all expenditure is undertaken in line with public expectations, including in relation to specific provisions regarding staff events and the expenditure of public funds on hospitality and entertainment.

Question 24 – Liquor Act

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Thank you. Minister, the *Liquor Act 2007* included section 163A, which was all about reporting on the effectiveness of various amendments included the *Liquor Amendment (Night-time Economy) Act 2020*. This was repealed by your Government at the end of 2023, along with section 163, meaning that there's no legislative requirement to report on progress made. Would you commit to reinstating those sections, given their importance to keeping the Government accountable and transparent?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'm familiar with the section, because I think I in fact inserted it into the Act in an Opposition amendment with the assistance of Ms Faehrmann—and Victor Dominello, in the end. I don't agree that there is no reporting. This has now been replaced by the regular reporting which we've set up to examine the night-time economy more generally that the commissioner will do to report to the public. Frankly, I was in two—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is that legislated, though, Minister?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, I think so. No. Haven't we—

TAREK BARAKAT: I don't know the answer to that question.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: No, I don't think that that's legislated, Minister.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We might take that on notice. I think you might be right that it's not legislated, but we might be open to legislating it.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be important.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Can I just conclude the—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Please.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I was advised that it wasn't necessary because of this State of the Night report by officials. I took that advice, although I was in two minds about it. I suggest we revisit this after the next night-time economy report. If the Opposition had a strong view, I might be open to revisiting it.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I think that that would be a good idea, Minister, given the other types of legislation that we've passed recently which seemed reasonably innocuous but was at the firm insistence of the Government.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're looking to set up this architecture across these various areas, as I outlined in the debate.

Answer

I am advised:

Section 7(1) of the *24-Hour Economy Commissioner Act 2023* provides that the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner may "prepare a report about a particular issue or a general matter relating to the Commissioner's functions, including a report containing forecasts about matters relating to the night-time economy" and that this report may be given to the Minister for presentation to Parliament.

The NSW 24-Hour Economy Strategy (2024) commits to presenting an annual State of the Night report to Parliament, which will provide key data and analysis of economic trends, challenges and opportunities in the night-time economy. The first State of the Night report is in early development.

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner is coordinating cross-government monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Vibrancy reforms. The evaluation is being conducted in line with NSW Treasury guidelines.

In addition, the Office provides regular reports from the Data After Dark platform on the performance of the night-time economy. This platform provides the NSW Government and stakeholders an unprecedented view of the state's night-time economy.

Question 25 – Jobs

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Could you please provide a breakdown for the public service jobs versus private sector jobs that have been created under your leadership?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Well, I don't think it's fair to say "of my leadership". I think it is fair to ask about a breakdown of that 210,000 jobs since the Government's been elected

Answer

I am advised:

A breakdown of employment data between the public and private sectors for NSW is not available. The Australian Bureau of Statistics does not currently publish state data on this basis outside of the Census.

Question 26 – Create NSW

The CHAIR: With Sound NSW and Screen NSW removed, if you like, from Create NSW, what's the core staffing structure in terms of FTE, Ms Mildwater, that's left with Create NSW?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: If you give me a minute, I do have that—or I can come back to it this afternoon. So it is still, as at December, it's about 133 people. Just over 100 FTE.

The CHAIR: So that's the new Create NSW. Is that what you're—

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Yes. I can get you the figures as of today, but that was the end of December.

Answer

I am advised:

As at 28 February, 2025 Create NSW had 100.9 FTE.

Question 27 – Wildlife Crossings - Appin Road

The CHAIR: Does this mean that the various commitments around underpasses and potential overpasses along that stretch of Appin Road—particularly, we're talking about the very vulnerable south-west Sydney koala population—still haven't been commenced, or even committed to?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I've updated the House and estimates previously on those. We can give you a further update today. But, no, those are still in place. These are all additional measures. I've heard the message from the local community that we've got to do more, and these are the four best evidence-based interventions we can make. That's on top of—and it certainly won't replace—the underpasses. If you would like, I can give you some detail on those.

The CHAIR: We don't know, in terms of the timeline, how they're going, because, again, that population is still getting hammered by the traffic on that road.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: We're still working towards a total of three koala underpasses between Rosemeadow and Appin. We're working on those designs. I would have to check the timing, but we'll get that to you today, just the latest on that. I've updated previously.

Answer

I am advised:

Around 75 per cent of the Appin Road Upgrade permanent koala fencing is complete, with the remaining area covered by temporary fencing. The remaining permanent fence is planned to be finished after traffic is switched onto the new northbound (western) lanes in mid-2025.

A box culvert underpass is being built at Noorumba Reserve (Glen Lorne) with expected completion by mid-2025. A second underpass will be constructed at Beulah (Browns Bush). These measures will help to stop koalas from accessing the road corridor where they are susceptible to vehicle strikes, while providing safe crossing opportunities at Noorumba Reserve and Beulah Reserve.

Future projects will continue this work along Appin Road to the south towards Appin township. These projects are currently in development and are planned to deliver continuous koala fencing from Beulah Reserve through to Appin and a koala underpass near Brian Road along the Ousedale Creek koala corridor.

Transport for NSW has also implemented measures to change driver behaviour and increase awareness. In late 2024, static and visual messaging signs were installed along Appin Road, advising motorists to look out for koalas. In March 2025, road markings were implemented on Appin Road to improve driver awareness. These road markings aim to highlight the presence of koalas in the area at seven key locations including at Beulah Biobank site and Mallaty Creek.

Question 28 – Crash data – speed

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I might save that for Ms Aitchison, then. Can I just stick with roads and road fatalities. Obviously numbers of fatalities and serious injuries are still high, but according to the Premier's Department in estimates in September 2024, no outcome data from road crash rescue incidents are recorded by the State Rescue Board. This is the case regardless of whether the rescue incident happens in the geographical response area of a volunteer rescue unit, such as SES or Fire Rescue NSW. Given both the social and economic impact of road crashes on our State roads, wouldn't you agree that sort of dataset would be valuable for your department, and you as a Minister, when you are trying to design responses that reduce these road statistics?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes. Firstly, we have already this year had 51 people die on our roads. Pleasingly, that's 12 down from this time last year, but the Government's very concerned about the road toll. I wasn't aware of those specifics, so I'm certainly happy to take that on notice. Data is a real strength in this area and if there's better use of it we can make then certainly it's something I'm very interested in. I'd have to take that on notice too.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Apparently we're not collecting data in terms of the speed at which a rescue unit arrives on the scene with an appropriate number of trained staff and equipment. I think we all can agree, the quicker we get someone there with appropriate equipment and trained staff the better the chances are of reducing fatalities and injuries, and also clearing the road for better traffic flow. Will you commit to looking at collecting this data, if it's not already being collected somewhere?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd certainly be interested in it. I'd have to take it on notice. I'd have to consult with my colleagues, most likely. I think it's a really good suggestion, and we're happy to look at it with an open mind

Answer

I am advised:

Transport for NSW does not have data regarding response times of emergency vehicles, however, does make publicly available information about the occurrence and circumstances of Police reported crashes, including detailed location information on all roads in NSW. This data may be collected by Emergency Services, and this question may be referred to the Minister for Emergency Services for further consideration. Transport for NSW is open to working with other NSW agencies to use data to reduce road fatalities and serious injuries.

Crash data that is currently publicly available can be accessed at:
<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/roadsafety/statistics/interactive-crash-statistics>

Question 29 – South by Southwest

The CHAIR: Minister, did South by Southwest operate at a loss last year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: That's really a matter for them. A lot of these arrangements are commercial in confidence, so I'd want to be cautious about what I was saying about financial results.

The CHAIR: How much government money or contribution was provided to South by Southwest last year?

The CHAIR: Is the Government providing funding again this year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Yes, we will be funding South by Southwest again this year. I do see it as heavily aligned with the policy direction that the Government wants to head in. It's really aligned with the Creative Communities policy.

The CHAIR: Is the Government funding roughly the same as what was provided last year?

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I'd have to take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

The amount invested in South by Southwest 2025 is commensurate with previous years, noting that Destination NSW investment in major events is commercial-in-confidence.

Question 30 Toll Review - Allan Fels

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What were your total expenses—not salary, but disbursements—for your work on the toll review?

ALLAN FELS: The whole thing?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes.

ALLAN FELS: The total expenses were close to \$80,000. I'll say \$80,000. That's accommodation, flights and so on.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to provide on notice the breakdown of those disbursements?

ALLAN FELS: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just on notice, if you're able.

ALLAN FELS: It was \$50,000 and \$30,000.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you provide that to the Committee in writing afterwards? I think the Committee will contact you, and you are able to provide that in written form.

ALLAN FELS: Yes, sure.

Answer

I am advised:

Professor Fels has advised that his expenses totalled \$84,600 excluding GST as part of his engagement as Chair of the Independent Toll Review. This cost was paid by NSW Treasury who engaged Professor Fels.

Question 33 Toll Review - Allan Fels

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Fels, why did you charge taxpayers to fly business class Melbourne to Sydney?

ALLAN FELS: Look, I think I did about 45 visits, from 90 flights. I did one business. Frankly, I'm struggling to remember why but I think there was a scheduling thing and I had to catch a plane, and that was it. Honestly, I just saw it in the press. I have a struggle remembering it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: All right. So the entirety—

ALLAN FELS: I did about 150 flights under the previous Government and didn't travel business. But this one, for some reason—it wasn't comfort.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of all of your flights, throughout the entirety of the toll review, you took one business class flight. Is that correct?

ALLAN FELS: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Can you take on notice to confirm that that's the case, Mr Fels?

ALLAN FELS: Yes. Sometimes I paid for an upgrade, but I was always in economy.
 The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Did you pay for an upgrade for that business class flight?
 ALLAN FELS: Yes.
 The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So you paid, yourself, for that business class?
 ALLAN FELS: Yes.
 The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And you can confirm that to the Committee?
 ALLAN FELS: Yes. I paid on points.

Answer

I am advised:

During the Independent Toll Review, 94 flights (47 return trips) were taken.

Of these, 90 were economy class and four were business class flights paid as an expense under Professor Fels' engagement with NSW Treasury. Business class trips were booked owing to scheduling and business need and were within his total allowance.

Professor Fels has advised that he made about 150 trips between 2014 to 2020 working for the previous government on the same basis with nearly all being economy but business class when scheduling business needs factors applied.

Other flights were upgraded occasionally using Professor Fels' frequent flyer points.

Normally this level of detail would not be disclosed due to the commercial nature of the information. It has been provided in this instance because Professor Fels disclosed it during his evidence.

Question 34 Toll Review - Allan Fels

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Fels, you went on record on the ABC and alleged that three deputy secretaries stopped you from releasing information to the public concerning your review. Do you recall that ABC interview?

ALLAN FELS: Sure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Who were the deputy secretaries that covered up what you wanted to do?

ALLAN FELS: I don't know that I'd use the term "covered up", but the steering committee was the deputy secretaries of Premier and Cabinet, Transport and Treasury.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Who were they?

ALLAN FELS: I'm just having a moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Would you like to take it on notice?

ALLAN FELS: Yes, I'll take it on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

I refer to the response provided by Ms Trudi Mares in the hearing.

Question 35 – Haven Foundation - Allan Fels

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Did you suggest to the Australian Labor Party in New South Wales that they give funding to the Haven Foundation.

ALLAN FELS: No, it wasn't—as I said, there was—largely a community group did it, I think, but I knew it was happening.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How did the funding come about?

ALLAN FELS: I think it was—I don't quite know the answer to it. I wasn't particularly involved but— **The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** You can take that on notice. But did you ever speak to the then

Opposition about the funding?

ALLAN FELS: Maybe, but not in connection with toll—not surrounding any of that. **The**

Hon. NATALIE WARD: I didn't ask if it is in connection. I just asked— **ALLAN FELS:** No, I mean it was roads—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: —if you ever spoke with the then Labor Opposition about the Haven Foundation donation.

ALLAN FELS: No, I didn't talk to—it did not come up in connection with tolls in any way, direct or indirect. And there was some discussion—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I didn't ask about the connection. **The CHAIR:** Order! I have given a bit of leeway.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You might take that on notice.

ALLAN FELS: There was some discussion about it with the Opposition, led by a community group.

Answer

I am advised:

I refer to the response provided by Professor Fels in the hearing.

Question 36 – South by Southwest

The CHAIR: I just wanted to go back to the questions that I was asking about the South by Southwest

Sydney event. I understand that the investment itself is commercial in confidence in terms of the contract that was

Surely the Government has access to that and can inform the Committee about that.

KAREN JONES: If I can just clarify the question, is it about attendance for last year or projected attendance for this year?

The CHAIR: Both would be excellent.

KAREN JONES: I can say that projected attendance for South by Southwest Sydney 2025—we are looking at a visitation of around 36,805 ex-region visitors. That doesn't include those that might be local that are also attending. South by Southwest 2024 attracted 33,000 ex-region visitors.

The CHAIR: When you're saying "attracting visitors", does that mean how many people attended the event or how many came to the city as a result?

KAREN JONES: I can also say, in terms of 2024—obviously, 2025 hasn't happened yet. Therefore I can't tell you how many people have attended. But for 2024 it had over 92,000 attendees from 56 different countries.

The CHAIR: Any other information you want to share with us about that event, considering we haven't been able to get much at all in relation to it? Any other data that you've got there?

KAREN JONES: I'm happy to answer any questions that you might have. Or if you've got any follow-up questions, I can take those on notice for you, or even supplementary.

The CHAIR: What about whether the event covers its costs? Let's forget about the Government investment—but whether the event breaks even, whether it makes a profit, whether it doesn't.

KAREN JONES: That's a matter for the event organiser about whether or not it actually covers their own expenses. You're right in saying that the contract itself between the event organiser and Destination NSW is commercial in confidence. However, the risk in terms of running the event and whether or not it turns a profit is one that is borne by the event organiser.

The CHAIR: Just to be clear, with the data that you were just saying to me—for 2024 I think you said 92,000. Can I just get the ticketed attendance?

KAREN JONES: I'll take that on notice.

The CHAIR: So, yes, the ticketed attendance for the past year and then you've got a projected—**KAREN JONES:** We've got projected for 2025.

The CHAIR: Which I assume you're projecting more because of the discount rate.

KAREN JONES: Correct. The figure I quoted at the start was in terms of people who were out of region, which means out of Greater Sydney, who would be attending the event.

The CHAIR: Okay, and the revenue if that's possible.

Answer

I am advised:

Questions relating to revenue and ticketing for South by Southwest Sydney are a matter for the event owner.

Question 37 – Sound NSW

The CHAIR: Are you able to provide on notice an organisational chart, the positions in that and the salaries?

EMILY COLLINS: Absolutely.

Answer

I am advised:

Grade	Number of staff	Salary Range
SE Band 1	1	\$201,350 - \$287,200
Grade 11/12	2	\$145,378 - \$168,130
Grade 9/10	4	\$125,693 - \$138,510
Grade 7/8	6 (includes 2 roles in Create NSW)	\$110,266 - \$122,058
Grade 5/6	2	\$97,027 - \$107,059

Attached: High level org chart. Salaries for non executive employees is in line with the Crown Employees (Public Sector - Salaries Award 2024) and remuneration for Senior Executive is in line with NSW Public Service Senior Executive Remuneration Management Framework.

Question 36 – Sound NSW

The CHAIR: You're saying that the operational expenses at the moment are \$600,000. You just said that Sound NSW is paying for grant advice or probity—what was that, sorry?

EMILY COLLINS: For a lot of our programs, to make sure that we're meeting probity, we get independent advice to sit in in some of our processes and make sure that we're meeting proper processes.

The CHAIR: Is that one person?

EMILY COLLINS: It can be one person, yes. But we usually engage a company to do that.

The CHAIR: Who's that company?

EMILY COLLINS: I'd have to take that on notice, but I believe it's OCM. I'll just confirm that for you.

Answer

I am advised:

O'Connor Marsden (OCM) is engaged to provide probity advice to Sound NSW on grant development and assessments.

Question 37 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I had a question for Ms Jones, representing Destination NSW. Why did Destination NSW provide a gift of rugby league grand final tickets to Minister Rose Jackson in October 2023, valued at over \$1,600? What did this do to improve tourism in New South Wales?

KAREN JONES: Mr Latham, that was clearly before my time as the chief executive at Destination NSW. I'm happy to take that question on notice for you.

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW allocates hospitality to facilitate NSW Government representation at events which have received NSW Government investment. These allocations form part of strategic event investment agreements and sponsorship agreements between the event owner and Destination NSW. All Members of Parliament are required to make disclosures of pecuniary interests (including certain gifts) under the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983.

Question 38 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Is this a practice that's ongoing—that Destination NSW books a box at major concerts or sporting events and invites Ministers to attend, in this case with four tickets for the one event?

KAREN JONES: What I can say is that Destination NSW—we do allocate hospitality to facilitate government representation at events, and that's received as part of the New South Wales Government investment into those events. Those allocations actually form part of a strategic investment agreement and sponsorship arrangement between the event owner, Destination NSW and also the New South Wales Government.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What investment agreement or sponsorship agreement have you got with the NRL that requires the invitation of Government Ministers to major matches like the grand final and also, I assume, State of Origin?

KAREN JONES: I'm happy to take that on notice for you, but I think you'll find that the majority of the agreements that we do have between event organisers and ourselves are commercial in confidence.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Commercial in confidence when you're spending taxpayers' money to invite Ministers to events, not only in the State but in the city where they live. Is there any justification for this, in terms of boosting tourism numbers and the economy in New South Wales, which is why you've got your job?

KAREN JONES: In terms of the grand final and also State of Origin, there are statistics. I don't have them in front of me now, but I might be able to source them for you this afternoon.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why does giving Rose Jackson four tickets to the game boost tourism numbers or economic activity around the match?

KAREN JONES: Mr Latham, as I mentioned before, I'll take that on notice. That allocation happened before I became the chief executive.

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW allocates hospitality to facilitate NSW Government representation at events which have received NSW Government investment. These allocations form part of strategic event investment agreements and sponsorship agreements between the event owner and Destination NSW. All Members of Parliament are required to make disclosures of pecuniary interests (including certain gifts) under the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983.

Question 39 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Sure, but earlier on you said that these things are commercial in confidence. Are you telling the Committee that Destination NSW has formed contracts and signed contracts for these events that require the attendance of New South Wales Government Ministers?

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW allocates hospitality to facilitate NSW Government representation at events which have received NSW Government investment. These allocations form part of strategic event investment agreements and sponsorship agreements between the event owner and Destination NSW, details of which are commercial-in-confidence.

Question 40 – Destination NSW

KAREN JONES: What I can say is that there are strategic investment agreements, like all of our major events, that we enter into with the event organisers. There are, of course, terms and conditions associated with those agreements. I can't disclose those agreements because they are commercial in confidence. But in terms of the matter that you're directly raising with me now, I'm happy to take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Strategic investment agreements entered into by Destination NSW are commercial-in-confidence.

Question 41 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Does this mean that Destination NSW rents out a box for these events and invites Ministers?

KAREN JONES: Again, I'll take that again on notice for you, Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, but you must know. Can you answer the question?

KAREN JONES: What I do know, as I said before and as I've already disclosed, is that, depending on the event, there are different terms and different conditions involved in the strategic investment agreements. But if you have—

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW allocates hospitality to facilitate NSW Government representation at events which have received NSW Government investment. These allocations form part of strategic event investment agreements and sponsorship agreements between the event owner and Destination NSW, details of which are commercial-in-confidence.

Question 42 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Do you have that for the NRL grand final? What's the Destination NSW agreement that you have with the NRL?

KAREN JONES: The NRL grand final—again, I'd have to take that on notice. Obviously the NRL grand finals that were hosted for the last couple of years were the subject of an agreement with Destination NSW under former leadership, as opposed to myself. The NRL grand final this year is still in discussion.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: For this year's one, are you planning to sign an agreement that requires Ministers to be given four free tickets valued at over \$1,600 to attend?

KAREN JONES: Again, those agreements are negotiated with the NRL. I take the point that you raise as a concern. Again, I will take that into consideration.

Answer

I am advised:

Details of strategic investment agreements entered into by Destination NSW are commercial-in-confidence

Question 43 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: If you did that in the future, in what possible way could it boost tourism numbers in New South Wales?

KAREN JONES: I want to be really clear that I didn't do that in the past. In terms of your question about what it might contribute to the visitor economy, again—I repeat myself—I will take that on notice for you, Mr Latham.

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW allocates hospitality to facilitate NSW Government representation at events which have received NSW Government investment. These allocations form part of strategic event investment agreements and sponsorship agreements between the event owner and Destination NSW, details of which are commercial-in-confidence.

Government representation at events in which Destination NSW invests showcases Sydney and NSW's capability as events destinations and reinforces the importance of the visitor

Question 44 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why did the same Minister receive two tickets to the opera on Sydney Harbour for Westside Story at the beginning of 2024 in March? Have you got a commercial agreement with some opera outfit whereby Ministers have to be given tickets to attend?

KAREN JONES: All of the major events that Destination NSW supports are subject to a strategic investment agreement. They are all contracted. Again, you are asking me details. I am happy to take them on notice, absolutely. But you're asking me for details of contracts that were entered into before I became the chief executive officer.

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW allocates hospitality to facilitate NSW Government representation at events which have received NSW Government investment. These allocations form part of strategic event investment agreements and sponsorship agreements between the event owner and Destination NSW, details of which are commercial-in-confidence.

Question 45 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Would you agree that the average taxpayer who works very hard to pay their taxes would think this is a complete waste of money, given that it does nothing to increase tourism numbers or the visitor economy in New South Wales?

KAREN JONES: The whole purpose around engaging major events is to boost the visitor economy and attract tourism not just into Sydney but also across regional New South Wales, particularly for our regional events. The reason why we engage in those events is solely to promote the visitor economy and promote visitation. In terms of representation from the New South Wales Government, again, that would be subject to the strategic investment agreement.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: On notice, can you find out if there is one for the opera and can you find out if all the agreements you've signed require Ministers to attend with free tickets?

KAREN JONES: I am happy to take that on notice, Mr Latham.

Answer

I am advised:

The details of strategic investment agreements entered into by Destination NSW are commercial-in-confidence.

Question 46 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Ms Jones, what role did you play in helping the Minister answer or not answer question No. 3340 on the notice paper, which asked about the gifts that Destination NSW has given to Government MPs since March 2023, how they can be justified given that the gifts are already in New South Wales and what the purpose was of the gifting practice?

KAREN JONES: The question on notice that you're referring to—it's obviously the Minister's answer. **The Hon. MARK LATHAM:** What role did you play in drafting it?

KAREN JONES: Of course, they might have sought advice from Destination NSW on that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Okay, they sought advice. On notice, can you answer that question? You must have a list of the Government MPs who have received these gifts under your very unusual investment agreements and sponsorship arrangements. Can I get the list that I asked for here?

KAREN JONES: I will take that on notice, Mr Latham. I don't have that sort of detailed information available to me today.

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW allocates hospitality to facilitate NSW Government representation at events which have received NSW Government investment. These allocations form part of strategic event investment agreements and sponsorship agreements between the event owner and Destination NSW, details of which are commercial-in-confidence.

NSW. All Members of Parliament are required to make disclosures of pecuniary interests (including certain gifts) under the Constitution (Disclosures by Members) Regulation 1983.

Question 47 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Would you agree that an answer that says that MPs are required to make disclosures of pecuniary interests doesn't necessarily tell me who has received the gifts because some MPs, for various reasons, don't declare?

KAREN JONES: I will take that as a statement, Mr Latham. There is not much I can comment on in relation to that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Would you agree? You had some role in drafting the answer. It's nonsensical to the point where you are telling me that you can't give me the list of MPs because they have made disclosures when we know that not all MPs do. It mightn't pass the monetary value that is needed or they forget or they choose not to. Can I get my list and an answer here? What is being hidden here in this non-answer?

KAREN JONES: Mr Latham, the level of information and the detail of information that you are asking for today I don't have in front of me. As I said, as per due process, I am happy to take those questions on notice and provide you with the information and provide you with a response.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: There was another non-answer—I suppose more directly under your responsibility—to question No. 3334 as to, over the past three years, the conferences, seminars, meetings and other events that the staff of Destination NSW have attended outside of New South Wales. I only got one such event. But there are many more, aren't there?

KAREN JONES: Destination NSW staff do represent the New South Wales Government and Destination NSW at a variety of events. I want to fully disclose and be transparent that some of those events do people within New South Wales and within Sydney to participate in tourism.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Within the three-year period, how many are being conducted in tandem with Racing NSW?

KAREN JONES: I will take that on notice, Mr Latham.

Answer

I am advised:

No events of the types described have been run 'in tandem' with Racing NSW. Details of Destination NSW staff attendance at an event hosted by Racing NSW and the Australian Turf Club is provided in response to Question on Notice 2710.

Question 48 – Destination NSW

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: That's good to hear. Regarding 3334, you mentioned transparency. Can you provide the transparency of an answer as to the different events that staff have attended outside the State over the last three years?

KAREN JONES: I'll take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Travel by Destination NSW staff, including outside NSW, is undertaken in line with the relevant NSW Government and Destination NSW travel policies and within the allocated travel caps that apply to NSW Government entities.

International travel is disclosed in the Destination NSW annual report, including a description of the purpose of the visit and the country visited. Activities undertaken by Destination NSW - including attendance at conferences, seminars, meetings and other events - are to support its functions under the Destination NSW Act 2011 of delivering economic and social benefits to the people of NSW by growing the visitor economy.

Question 49 – Legal Panel and costs

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Can I ask the secretary, Mr Murray, have we previously discussed here the legal costs incurred by Transport for NSW? Has that been raised today? I don't want to duplicate.

JOSH MURRAY: The legal costs in regards to which matter?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Why has Transport for NSW stopped publishing the New South Wales legal panel reports that it manages?

JOSH MURRAY: I'll look into that. I would not be aware why we would stop. We continue to run the legal panel on behalf of the government sector. Those reports should have been published in the normal manner.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I'm told that they haven't been and I'm told that the annual overall panel spend now exceeds \$200 million, for which the Transport for NSW contribution is high and rising—over \$90 million. Why has it gone up?

JOSH MURRAY: I would have to have a look into the specifics of that, and I'm happy to do so. I know that, as part of the Government, we have got specific targets in reducing the cost of legal representation. We are working on that through Transport. But also we have achieved a number of great results through the use of that government-wide panel, which is run through Transport.

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Government Legal Services Panel Annual Report (1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024) was published on the Department of Communities and Justice website in February 2025.

The total panel spend was \$185 million which is a reduction of \$10.4 million compared to Financial Year 2022-23.

The Transport portfolio spend was \$70.9 million, a reduction of \$16.3 million compared to Financial Year 2022-23.

Question 50 – Destination NSW

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: How long had Mr Cox been in the role?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I could take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Mr Cox started in the CEO Destination NSW role on 4 May 2020 and finished his employment with the Department on 29 November 2024.

Question 51 – Create NSW

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: You've mentioned, and the Minister mentioned as well, the announcement regarding the work that started last week. I can't seem to find it on the Create NSW website. Where is it available?

LIZA NOONAN: I'll have to take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

A Policy, Plans and Strategies page on the Create NSW website is currently in development, which will provide information regarding progress of the Regional Plan.

Question 52 – Sound NSW board

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: Concerns have been raised regarding the application process for positions on the Sound NSW board and complaints about a question that was raised regarding LGBTIQ+ status. Can you confirm that that question was part of the application process?

EMILY COLLINS: I can't confirm at this moment. I'll have to take that on notice and come back to you.

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: Can I also get you then to take on notice if it was compulsory to make that declaration?

EMILY COLLINS: Absolutely. I'll take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

This question was part of the online application process. Due to human error this question was marked as compulsory

Question 53 – Destination NSW

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: Can you explain—as the Minister tap-danced around it—how Victorian bands are being included when it's specifically about promoting local live music from New South Wales?

KAREN JONES: ARIA is responsible—I think the Minister touched on that today—

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: He did, yes.

KAREN JONES: —for the talent acquisition for Great Southern Nights, and that's done through an EOI process.

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: But, again, surely there's the stipulation. If it's local live music from New South Wales, even ARIA would be made aware of that.

KAREN JONES: I'm not across the full selection criteria that ARIA use as part of that EOI process, but I'm happy to take that on notice for you.

Answer

I am advised:

Great Southern Nights showcases the Australian music scene, with a strong focus on NSW artists. The event program is not exclusively comprised of NSW-based artists and aims to feature a diverse range of talent from across Australia. ARIA selects talent based on audience appeal and suitability to the venue so that Great Southern Nights delivers visitor economy benefits to NSW.

Question 54 – Destination NSW

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: Ms Mildwater, I will come back to you. What was the cost of terminating Mr Cox's contract?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I could take that on notice, but the contracts contain a standard 38-week provision.

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: Sorry, how long?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Our contracts all have a 38-week provision. But I can take it on notice and come back to you with the detail.

Answer

I am advised:

At the conclusion of the employment, Mr Cox was paid the standard 38 week provision as per his executive contract.

Question 55 – AC/DC

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: I have a few short seconds left, so perhaps someone can answer more broadly. We know that the Premier managed an extremely well-timed news grab on a question he apparently was so surprised by. The demolition of the Angus and Malcolm Young house in Burwood, from an arts perspective, how did we allow this to happen and what are we going to do about it?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: Unless Ms Noonan has anything to say, I don't think we've got a comment on that. I'm happy to take it on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Minister for Planning.

Question 56 – Festivals

The CHAIR: Mr Barakat, I have some questions about music festivals and the new laws. I asked the question to the Minister today. Have any music festivals actually gone through the new process over the last few months in terms of developing either a health and medical plan or an agreed health and medical plan as per the legislation?

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, they have. I do have just a couple of things to clarify for you too, Ms Faehrmann. Whenever you want me to do that, that's fine. The number of determinations made regarding the requirement for a festival to have an agreed health and medical plan has been 38 since the new legislation came in. The number of agreed health and medical plans required has been 12 of those 38.

The CHAIR: That was based on the process of advice from the Commissioner of Police and advice from the organiser, as laid out on the website and the legislation?

TAREK BARAKAT: I can talk you through that, if you'd like me to, briefly.

The CHAIR: So 12 of 38?

TAREK BARAKAT: Those are the figures I have here, yes.

The CHAIR: Have those events largely occurred over the summer?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'd have to take that on notice, but my assumption would be yes.

Answer

I am advised:

As of 3 April 2025, there has now been 44 festivals considered. Of those:

13 festivals were determined as requiring an agreed HMP:

- 9 in Summer (two ultimately cancelled)
- 3 in Autumn
- 1 in Winter

31 festivals were determined as not requiring an agreed HMP:

- 12 in Summer
- 17 in Autumn (one ultimately cancelled)
- 1 in Winter
- 1 in Spring

(Note: the figures provided here are updated as of 3 April 2025 - 6 additional festivals have been considered since the Estimates hearing (44 in total).)

Question 57 – Festivals

The CHAIR: You checked in with who today in terms of the police?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'd have to take that on notice. I didn't do it personally. It was a member of the team who checked in with the police to see if they'd had any applications from festivals to review costs through their internal mechanism.

Answer

I am advised:

Liquor & Gaming NSW consulted with the Office of the Commissioner, NSW Police Force.

Question 58 – Festivals

The CHAIR: Remind me with the appeals—so, for example, if there has been a music festival, it has tried to appeal through the police, firstly, is that—when I look at the website, by the way, in terms of setting up a festival and the reforms to the Music Festivals Act and what people need to know, it doesn't seem as though it's ready because it says here still, "Festival organisers will be able to apply to New South Wales police for an internal review." It says the same in terms of NSW Health and that information on how festival organisers can apply will be updated shortly. It also says, about the appeal pathway for user-pays government costs to be waived, that that pathway will commence at a later date.

TAREK BARAKAT: I'm happy to take on notice whether our website needs to be updated, but the appeal pathway for Health based on the advice from Health has been set up, given they have received an application. That is my understanding. The Minister's order outlining what criteria festivals must meet very clearly says it commences on publication, which was at the end of last year.

The CHAIR: How are music festival organisers being informed of their appeal pathways, then?

TAREK BARAKAT: I don't think the communication has been particularly clear on the central government panel that I described, and I think that's probably because the internal processes have been dealt with first. As I said today, I think my understanding is that that panel will be set up either at the end of this month or next month, so that will be in place shortly. Then there will be a communications program rolled out. In terms of the internal processes, festivals are advised through a range of stakeholder groups that we have. They'll be informed through the music festivals round table. That round table will be aware of these appeals processes that are in place now, and the industry side of that round table is very proactive in communicating with their stakeholders. There's a range of sort of different mechanisms through which festivals will be advised about how and what to do. And obviously, if our website needs to be updated, I'm happy to take that on notice and look at it.

Answer

I am advised:

Updates to the NSW Government website to include all of the mechanisms available to festival organisers, including internal user pays charges reviews by agencies, and the Music Festival Panel are in progress. The Music Festivals Panel has been established and the first meeting will occur later this month.

Question 59 – Festivals

The CHAIR: Are you able to take on notice, in fact, the 12 agreed—the festivals with the agreed health and medical plans. Do you have that list there?

TAREK BARAKAT: I don't have it here, but I'm happy to take that on notice and provide it to you.

Answer

I am advised:

Agreed health and medical plans (HMP) have been required for the below 12 music festivals:

1. EPIK 2024 – 14 Dec 2024
2. Lost Paradise 2024 – 28 Dec 2024 – 1 Jan 2025
3. Field Day 2025 – 1 Jan 2025
4. HTID 2025 – 25 Jan 2025
5. MELTDOWN 2025 – 26 Jan 2025
6. Dreamstate Australia – 8 Feb 2025
7. The Nowhere Festival 2025 – cancelled – 8 Feb 2025 – 9 Feb 2025
8. St Jerome's Laneway Festival 2025 – 9 Feb 2025
9. Bondi Beach Party 2025 – cancelled – 23 Feb 2025
10. Mardi Gras Party 2025 – 1 Mar 2025
11. Gearbox Australia - 19 Apr 2025
12. Midnight Mafia 2025 – 3 May 2025

Question 60 – Festivals

The CHAIR: If you could take it on notice. In terms of the costs that the police imposed, is that a question for police, or can you provide that?

TAREK BARAKAT: It's probably a question for police, Ms Faehrmann, but I'm happy to provide any detail that we have and that's appropriate for us to provide.

Answer

I am advised:

Matters related to the costs imposed by NSW Police under their User Pays Charges policy should be referred to NSW Police for response.

Question 61 – Festivals

The CHAIR: Yes. Also, with appeals and decisions made, is that public? If anything is granted in terms of reducing fees or dropping fees, there's what the police do, what NSW Health do, and then there is the—what's that central body called?

TAREK BARAKAT: I don't actually know if it's got a name at this point.

The CHAIR: It hasn't even got a name yet.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, but I think that whether or not the police or Health would make their internal review processes public would probably be a question for those agencies. I can take on notice whether outcomes of this festivals panel will be made public.

The CHAIR: But you'll need to get a sense of whether the reform is working according to the statutory review, given that what is dragging the music festival industry in this State down—which, of course, is the regulatory environment—but the costs.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes.

The CHAIR: You will have to, of course, have a record of all of that to see whether the reforms are working.

TAREK BARAKAT: Correct.

The CHAIR: Liquor and Gaming NSW, I assume, will be collecting all of that.

TAREK BARAKAT: As we would with any new program that we put in place, be it for festivals, be it made visible to others will be something we'll have to work through with those agencies.

The CHAIR: What is the reporting requirement? Is it, say, after this summer, to have a look and then, of course, next summer? But what is there for the public to know that it's working and for the industry to know,

hopefully, that these government charges are reducing to save the industry? How is that being reported publicly?

TAREK BARAKAT: I will take that on notice, but I can assure you that we will be looking at whether or not these changes have had the intended effect.

The CHAIR: Will the public know about it though?

TAREK BARAKAT: That's probably not a decision for me to make, but I'm happy to commit to you that we will do the work.

Answer

I am advised:

Under section 19C of the Music Festivals Act 2019, once the Panel has decided on an application, the Secretary must give the music festival organiser written notice of the decision. The publication of individual decisions will be dealt with case-by-case in consultation with the festival organiser.

Questions about the decisions made by NSW Police or NSW Ambulance should be directed to the relevant agency.

A review into the operation of the Music Festivals Act 2019, including the Music Festival Panel appeals process under sections 19C and 19D, will be conducted after 30 April 2026 and a report tabled in Parliament no later than 30 August 2026.

Question 62 – Staffing – Legal Branch Roles

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Which new positions, at which salary levels, have you created in-house for this legal service since starting as secretary?

JOSH MURRAY: I'd have to take that on notice. But, as I say, in total there may have been positions advertised which would have been as part of a restructured legal service. That team has been through a change in its structure to reduce overall numbers and to streamline, but they will have recruited and advertised positions as part of that restructure.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: On notice, can you give us those relative numbers before and after—

JOSH MURRAY: Yes, I'm happy to do that.

Answer

I am advised:

As part of the Transport Operating Model Reform, in 2024, the Legal and Governance Branch went through a restructure, which resulted in the removal of seven Transport Service Senior Executive (TSSE) legal positions (one Executive Director Legal position and six Director Legal positions).

In the period from July 2023 to 23 March 2025, 17 new Legal related positions were created in the Branch. None of the new positions were TSSE positions. Therefore, as of July 2023, there were 144 Legal positions within the Secretary-led Functions' Legal and Governance branch, of which 18 were vacant. In comparison as of 23 March 2025, there are currently 154 Legal positions of which 13 remain vacant, which is a net increase of 10 positions in total, with a reduction of five TSSE positions.

The 17 new Legal positions are:

- **TSSM positions**
 - Senior Manager Legal Commercial Tech & Prop x 3
 - Senior Manager Legal Govt Regulatory & Prosecutions x 1
- **Grade 9 positions**
 - Senior Lawyer x 4
- **Grade 8 positions**
 - Senior Lawyer x 1
 - Senior Prosecutions Officer x 3
- **Grade 6 positions**
 - Lawyer x 3
- **Grade 5 and 4 positions**
 - Prosecution Support Officer x 2.

Question 63 – Staffing – Community and Place Branch Roles

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: —as you've claimed? Approximately how many people work in the Community and Place branch at Transport for NSW?

JOSH MURRAY: I would ask Ms Mares to perhaps assist on that one.

TRUDI MARES: Thank you for the question. I think I would have to take that on notice and come back to you, but they are the staff that do our project and community engagement across the State.

Answer

I am advised:

The Community and Place branch comprises the Sydney Integration and Place and Regional Integration and Place branches which are currently subject to detailed design as part of the implementation of the Statewide operating model. This branch is currently undergoing detailed design.

Question 64 – Staffing – Workplace Safety Complaints

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What role is Ferrous Advisory playing in trying to resolve a series of staff complaints about workplace safety and abuse? If this is true, why has it taken eight months so far to try and get a resolution?

JOSH MURRAY: I'm happy to take that on notice. Just by the company name, I'm not aware of the particular piece of work but I'll check that quickly and we can come back to you.

Answer

I am advised:

Transport for NSW has taken a number of steps to understand and seek to resolve concerns about the interactions between a small group of staff. One of those steps was to engage an independent external law firm (Ferrous Advisory) to undertake an investigation and provide advice, which has been finalised. These are confidential matters. The concerns do not include allegations of abuse. Confidential internal steps are continuing.

Question 65 – Staffing – Workers Compensation

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Could you also, on notice, provide some figures on how many staff have been stood aside on workers compensation or leave as a result of this unresolved series of complaints in what's described to me as a toxic work environment?

JOSH MURRAY: I'll take that on notice. As I say, I'm not sure which issue that relates to but I'll check under the company name and take the numbers on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Transport for NSW does not comment on individual employment matters.

Question 66 – Museum Attendance

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Given the stats I shared earlier with museum attendance down, do you think using self-funded revenue for such events is, in the long term, sustainable?

LISA HAVILAH: The statistics that you were quoting weren't correct. I'm happy to provide, on notice or now, the correct information.

Answer

I am advised:

2015 – 2016 Total onsite visitation 730,000
 2016 – 2017 Total onsite visitation 1,079,233
 2017 – 2018 Total onsite visitation 659,000
 2018 – 2019 Total onsite visitation 757,000
 2019 – 2020 Total onsite visitation 583,000
 2020 – 2021 Total onsite visitation 250,232
 2021 – 2022 Total onsite visitation 178,895*
 2022 – 2023 Total onsite visitation 607,994
 2023 – 2024 Total onsite visitation 390,196

(*Note - Powerhouse was closed from July 2021 -September 2021 due to Covid-19 lockdown and Powerhouse Ultimo closed on 4 February 2024)

Visitation – Snapshot FY2024

Powerhouse Ultimo – 335,461- closed in 4 February 2024.

Powerhouse Castle Hill – 41,415- Building J opened 23 March 2024.

Sydney Observatory – 13,320 (Astronomers Residence opened 1 May 2024)

Total on site visitation 390,196

TOTAL offsite visitation* 1,968,747

TOTAL visitation 2,358,943

* Offsite visitation includes engagement with Powerhouse collection objects on loan to other institutions.

Total visitation for FY 2024 is 2,358,943. It includes 335,461 visitors to Ultimo prior to closure, Castle Hill, Sydney Observatory, and programs presented in Parramatta and Western Sydney.

Question 67 – Museum Attendance

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: So everything is in context. How many people would have been invited to a more normal event like in 2023? What would have been the expenditure of a more normal event like in 2023? I am happy for you to take it on notice.

LISA HAVILAH: I'll take it on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

An estimated 300 people attended the 2023 event. The cost was \$12,510, funded through self-generated revenue.

Question 68 – Sydney Harbour Bridge – Structural Integrity

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just the Sydney Harbour Bridge—are there any structural issues with that almost 100-year-old bridge?

MATT FULLER: I am not aware of any structural issues on the bridge.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Has the department received advice regarding the bridge's suitability for car use after reaching the end of its 100-year design life?

MATT FULLER: I'd have to take that on notice.

[...]

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are there any structural issues?

MATT FULLER: As I said, I am not aware of any structural issues and there's nothing in that asset maintenance program at the moment, but I will take on notice if there are any other referrals.

[...]

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Just to be clear, the question for on notice is whether there is any risk to structural integrity.

MATT FULLER: We'll take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

There is currently no 'end of life' date for the Sydney Harbour Bridge nor any structural integrity issues for the Bridge as it stands.

As long as the Bridge continues to be maintained, it will remain safe and standing. It has had strengthening works for the road deck over the years. Information about other maintenance works for the bridge is available at:

<https://www.transport.nsw.gov.au/projects/current-projects/sydney-harbour-bridge-precinct>.

Question 69 – Southern off-ramps - total budget

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Sticking with you, Ms Mares, what was the total budget for planning for the southern off-ramps?

TRUDI MARES: I believe it was \$10 million. We are just testing whether we need the full budget allocation for that.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: If you don't need the full budget allocation, where will that money go, or will that perhaps stay in reserve for the actual action and completing the project?

TRUDI MARES: I might ask Ms Hoang if she wanted to answer that from a financial perspective.

BRENDA HOANG: Generally, if the budget is not fully utilised, it comes back to the broader portfolio pool to be used for other projects.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Given that nearly 4,000 community members participated in this process and 97 per cent support the project, what's causing the delay in moving from consultation to action?

TRUDI MARES: I don't believe we're delayed on the planning work for that. I will have to get the exact date for you that we'll be ready to take that for investment decision to see if we get delivery funding.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: I'm just looking at your next steps. You believe are on track for that, do you?

TRUDI MARES: Yes, we are.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Do you know how much has been expended so far in that \$10 million?

TRUDI MARES: No, I'd have to take that notice, but I can certainly get that.

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Government has committed \$10 million to plan for new south-facing ramps to improve safety, efficiency and connectivity in and around Dapto.

On 17 March 2025, the Australian Government also committed \$10 million for the planning of the south facing ramps in Dapto.

As of 21 March 2025, a total of \$1,149,068 has been expended on the project.

Question 70 – Tech Central Cooperation Agreement

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Are you familiar with the Tech Central cooperation agreement?

CAMILLA DROVER: Not the specifics of it. I am aware that there are agreements and arrangements in place across various government departments. But I am not familiar with the detail of that specific agreement.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know if Transport is a signatory to that agreement?

CAMILLA DROVER: I suspect we are, given that we are the landowner for many parcels of the land in that area. I would have to take on notice the exact arrangements, though.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful. Thank you very much.

Answer

I am advised:

This is a matter for the Premier and the Treasurer. Transport for NSW is not a party to this agreement.

Question 71 – Special Entertainment Precincts

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: On special entertainment precincts, Mr Rodrigues answered some questions earlier. I wanted to follow up and clarify how many have actually been set up. I understand that you said that there are some in the inner west that are underway in addition to Enmore Road.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: The answer I gave previously was that there is only one that is set up. That is the Enmore Road Special Entertainment Precinct. There is a process underway, which we believe in time will give rise to further. It's a process—

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is there a timeline on that?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: It's a process that's ultimately led by councils. We're enabling councils. I noted to Ms Faehrmann's earlier question that the Inner West Council has published on its website that it is expecting six to be in place by August 2025. You will have seen media and will be aware of the City of Sydney's own process that it is conducting for special entertainment precincts. They are still out for consultation and so forth. It is a pipeline of opportunities. Again, behind that, we have launched our own support process for councils.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Just on that, there is a \$1 million grant program. How much of that has been distributed to councils at this point?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I might need to take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

The NSW Government, through the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner, is delivering the SEP Kickstart Grant Program to help councils establish SEPs with grants of \$50,000 to \$200,000 to fund the required strategic planning, acoustic advice and community consultation.

Applications for the open, non-competitive grant program opened on 21 November 2024 and closed on 12 March 2025. Assessment of detailed applications is ongoing, and recipients will be announced as they are approved.

Burwood Council and Fairfield City Council are the first grant recipients and will receive \$195,000 and \$183,308, respectively.

On 28 February 2025, the grant program was expanded from \$1 million to \$1.7 million due to the number of councils across the state that have expressed interest in establishing a SEP.

Assessment of detailed applications is currently ongoing.

There has been strong interest in the SEP Kickstart Grant Program from councils across the State, and at least six councils outside the Sydney metropolitan area have resolved to investigate or establish SEPs, including:

- Byron Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- Goulburn-Mulwaree Council
- Kiama Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Newcastle City Council.

Question 72 – Special Entertainment Precinct

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I am also curious—I understand that there was \$100,000 to be put aside for councils outside the Sydney metropolitan area. I would be interested to know how much of that has been disbursed.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Yes, I'm happy to take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Burwood Council and Fairfield City Council are the first grant recipients and will receive \$195,000 and \$183,308 respectively.

Assessment of detailed applications is currently ongoing.

There has been strong interest in the SEP Kickstart Grant Program from councils across the State, and at least six councils outside the Sydney metropolitan area have resolved to investigate or establish SEPs, including:

- Byron Shire Council
- Central Coast Council
- Goulburn-Mulwaree Council
- Kiama Council
- Tamworth Regional Council
- Newcastle City Council.

Question 73 – Special Entertainment Precinct

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I'll now go to section 156 of the Liquor Act. This is probably for Mr Barakat. Thank you, Mr Rodrigues. I'm sorry if I'm jumping between you. I might come back to you later. Could you please point me to the annual report of the liquor licensing authority that's in line with section 156 of the Liquor Act which requires the authority to report things like the number of licences in force, the number of new licences granted by the authority and the number of licences suspended or cancelled?

TAREK BARAKAT: If it's the annual report of the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority, that's not something that falls within my remit. But if there's a requirement for it to be published, I would imagine it should have been published. I'm happy to take that on notice and come back to you.

Answer

I am advised:

The requirements as outlined in s156 of the Liquor Act 2007 is published in the Independent Liquor and Gaming Authority Annual Report.

<https://www.ilga.nsw.gov.au/sites/default/files/2024-11/ILGA-Annual-Report-2023-2024.pdf>

Question 74 – Sydney Festival

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Is there any ability to check which contracts are being used for artists and performers for government-funded events? They might be huge or small or like Sydney Festival.

LIZA NOONAN: To speak in terms of the point that was just discussed with Ms Collins, part of the Arts and Cultural Funding Program criteria is that a \$250 minimum is in place. Contracts would come through our acquittal process. We'd obviously review that.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: This is more broad than the specific musician payment. This is for other performers and artists that haven't been given the MEAA-approved contract or the latest award. Is there any process to review those contracts?

LIZA NOONAN: I'll have to take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

The Create NSW Arts and Cultural Funding Program (ACFP) application and subsequent agreement conditions stipulate that funded organisations must pay to direct employees the standard awards.

This includes the Live Performance Award, MEAA rates, and, where there is no award rate (visual arts, craft, design), the benchmark rates as detailed by peak bodies such as the National Association for the Visual Arts.

Question 75 – Create NSW

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you think it would be useful to collect that information to actually understand how long it takes for organisations or individuals to apply for different grants?

LIZA NOONAN: I think there are a number of variables. It would obviously depend also on the program and the amount of funding that's being asked for. Obviously there's going to be more detail.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Of course, but that would be relative.

LIZA NOONAN: Sure. My understanding is, based on the reform work and the consultation that took part to inform that reform, that type of consultation has taken place, but I'm happy to take it on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Create NSW does not collect information on the length of time it takes an applicant to complete an application. Applicants are sent a survey that asks applicants how satisfied they are with the time it took to complete their application.

In 2023/24, 49.4% of applicants said they were 'satisfied' or 'very satisfied' with the time taken to complete their application.

In 2024, Create NSW conducted a 'sludge audit' on the application process for Organisations and LGAs applying for project funding between January to May 2024. As a result, application forms were reduced from 33 pages to 23 pages, reflecting a significant reduction in the number of questions asked and the time it would take to complete the application form while still ensuring an appropriate level of information is gathered to support independent Artform Boards to make informed recommendations. Create NSW continues to seek feedback to improve the application experience.

Question 76 – New Housing Developments - Road Infrastructure

The CHAIR: Is any work being done within the department to liaise with the relevant planning department folk in terms of the road upgrades that are needed for particular areas in relation to the new housing policies that are making bigger town centres? I assume the upgrade of Mona Vale west is something that's been fed into that, as necessary?

CAMILLA DROVER: Not to my knowledge, but I might—

TRUDI MARES: I'm happy to take that question. As the development applications come in for any of the uplift for housing or mid-rise proposals, we assess what's required. I would have to check if there has been anything that we've responded to in Mona Vale that we've specifically called out that project on, but we would look at any surrounding works required as part of DAs.

Answer

I am advised:

Transport for NSW regularly engages with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure at various levels of committees and groups to understand the implications of future development on the transport network.

Mona Vale town centre has been identified as a Low to Mid-Rise (LMR) Centre, and the area surrounding it as a LMR Housing Area under the Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy, which commenced on 28 February 2025. This Policy is part of *State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021* and the new Low and Mid-Rise Housing Policy planning controls will apply to residential areas within 800 metres walking distance of 171 nominated town centres and train stations across metropolitan Sydney, the Central Coast, Illawarra-Shoalhaven and Hunter regions.

As part of Transport for NSW's statutory planning function, development applications are referred to Transport for NSW under various pieces of legislation, including but not limited to, the *Environmental Planning & Assessment Act 1979*, the *Roads Act 1993*, the *Transport & Infrastructure State Environmental Planning Policy 2021* amongst other planning instruments. Transport for NSW assesses the transport network impact of each referred development application and provides advice to consent authorities on the appropriate level of improvements that may be required to support the proposed development.

Transport for NSW advises that it proposes to upgrade Mona Vale Road from two lanes to four lanes between Terrey Hills and Mona Vale. The upgrades are being planned in stages and are aimed at improving safety and traffic efficiency. The Mona Vale Road East upgrade opened to traffic in 2024 and the detailed design for Mona Vale Road West, between McCarrs Creek Road, Terrey Hills, and Powder Works Road, Ingleside is being prepared.

Question 77 – Mona Vale Infrastructure

The CHAIR: Has Transport for NSW done work on determining that the Mona Vale Road West upgrade is essential if that Mona Vale precinct becomes low- to mid-rise?

TRUDI MARES: I understand your question. I'll take that on notice and just check what advice we've provided.

Answer

I am advised:

The Mona Vale Road West Project involves upgrading 3.4 kilometres of Mona Vale Road from two lanes to four lanes between McCarrs Creek Road, Terrey Hills and Powder Works Road, Ingleside.

This is the last remaining section of the Mona Vale Road corridor constrained by two lanes (one lane in each direction) following the completion of the Mona Vale Road East Project.

The Mona Vale Road West Project is expected to improve safety along this section of the corridor and cater for future population growth within the Northern Beaches Peninsula.

Question 78 – Vibrancy

The CHAIR: How about the progress in terms of streamlining the process for obtaining development consents under the EP&A Act and the Liquor Act? How is the single integrated application process going?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'd have to take the exact status of that on notice. That is integrated with the planning system, so it is a little bit more complex than some of these other reforms. We have—and I'll correct this if I'm wrong—streamlined the consultation processes. Previously for a liquor licence, for example, there was a 30-day pre-consultation and then another 30-day consultation process. That has been cut back, so it's just a 30-day consultation process—the idea being that that would make it easier, obviously, for applicants but also members of the community, who only have to participate that one time.

The CHAIR: Again, what's the working group that's working—so Liquor and Gaming are working with Planning on this process. What is that group?

TAREK BARAKAT: It is effectively that: It's a group of staff from Liquor and Gaming NSW working with department of housing and infrastructure staff to look at how the Planning liquor licensing system can be better integrated. It is quite a complex piece of work. As you'd probably be aware, both of those systems are complicated in themselves. Linking them together to streamline the process is a bigger piece of work, but it is something that we want to do. We've been wanting to do it for a while. I think Planning is on board. I don't have a time frame; I'm happy to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: I was about to ask the time frame.

TAREK BARAKAT: I thought you might have been. I will have to take that on notice. I don't have one here in front of me today, though.

Answer

I am advised:

There is an internal government group called the Vibrancy Regulatory Reforms Steering Committee, which includes senior public servants from Hospitality & Racing, Department of Planning, Housing & Infrastructure, Department of Customer Service, Service NSW, Office of Local Government and Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner.

Streamlined consultation and notification requirements were introduced 1 July 2024 to reduce duplication in the system.

The NSW Government has recently completed targeted consultation with stakeholders, including new and existing licensees and councils, to better understand pain points and identify opportunities to improve processes. The next step is to develop solutions that will make a difference to those applying for new licences and expanding their businesses. The timing for delivery of those improvements will be part of that process.

Question 79 – Bulli Bypass

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Who decided what was defined as a “local resident” within department? You've defined local resident a Bulli, Thirroul, Woonona and Corrimal but there are about 1,600 residents that live in a suburb between Corrimal and Woonona – as in, Corrimal is the further south; then you have Russel Vale, which has another 1,600 residents, and then you have Woonona. Were these 1,600 residents in Russell Vale considered as part of the local residents or are you considering them as visitors?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'll have to take the specifics of that on notice. There was quite broad consultation last year on the project and some of the early options. But I can take on notice exactly the specifics of that consultation and which groups were involved.

Answer

I am advised:

For the consultation survey undertaken for Bulli bypass, the respondents' post code was used to define the local catchment, rather than the suburb name.

As Russell Vale and Woonona both share the 2517 postcode, residents from Russell Vale were included as "local residents". Russell Vale not being named specifically in the Consultation Summary Report was an accidental omission.

Question 80 – Bulli Bypass

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Likewise with Thirroul, if residents of Thirroul wanted to access Bulli Pass presently, they wouldn't actually have to drive through Bulli or access Bulli at all. What weighting was given to residents of Thirroul, given generally they largely would not be impacted as much as other residents?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'll take that on notice. We are in the planning phase so there will be ongoing and further opportunities for the community, and the broad community, to provide input into that project. We haven't done the planning process yet for the project, so that would be the major opportunity for anyone in the community to give feedback, including non-residents, freight groups et cetera.

Answer

I am advised:

The purpose of the early consultation was to understand the community's support for a bypass, and to gather early insights into issues and concerns. All feedback was taken as equal and organised into cohorts (for example, active transport users, public transport users, freight operators etc.) to help inform planning work.

As the project progresses, Transport for NSW will consider the impacts of any potential bypass options, not only on the residents of Bulli, but also Thirroul and other surrounding suburbs that may be impacted.

Question 81 – Bulli Bypass

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Are you able to on notice provide a copy of the survey? I'm just curious as to what specific questions were asked. You obviously received quite positive feedback, but if you ask people if they want less traffic, of course most people are going to say yes.

CAMILLA DROVER: Happy to take that on notice and bring back the nature and extent and what questions et cetera were asked as part of that process. But I just note it was an early process. There will be ongoing consultation.

Answer

I am advised:

A copy of the 'Have Your Say' survey questions from the February 2024 consultation is attached.

Question 82 – Bulli Bypass

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: When do you think you would present potential routes? Where the route of the new road will potentially go will obviously maybe alter people's

opinions on whether they're in favour or not. When do you think you may have a set of maybe several route options that you could present to the community?

CAMILLA DROVER: I'll need to come back with an exact time frame for you. I suspect it's either later this year or early next year.

Answer

I am advised:

An options report summarising the findings will be released in 2025, and the community will be invited to provide feedback. This feedback will be considered in the Business Case process.

Question 83 – Bulli Bypass

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: How much money has been allocated to planning for that? Likewise, how much money have we expended?

BRENDA HOANG: I'm happy to confirm that there's \$20 million allocated.

The Hon. MARK BANASIAK: Perhaps on notice, can we come back as to how much of that has been expended so far?

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, we can do that.

Answer

I am advised:

As at the end of February 2025, the expenditure is \$1,377,000.

Question 84 – Contemporary Music Strategy

The CHAIR: I will go back to Ms Collins. I want to ask for a little bit more detail around the Contemporary Music Strategy?

EMILY COLLINS: Absolutely. There were a few different points we had for consultation and contribution to the strategy, the first being the development of the Creative Communities policy, where we sought submissions from the music industry. I don't have the exact figure of how many submissions were made from the music community, but those submissions were considered as part of—

The CHAIR: That was in relation to the—what was it?

EMILY COLLINS: The Creative Communities policy development—so the overarching policy. And then, in setting up the consultation for the Contemporary Music Strategy, we had, I believe—I'll have to come back to you on the exact number, but I believe we had eight focus groups across eight different areas, one being an artist-specific session, a First Nations specific, Western Sydney, regional, live, and festivals and venues, I think. We had those focus groups, and we had over 100 people participate in those various focus groups to contribute ideas. We also did a series of one-on-ones with industry leaders to get specific consultation or specific ideas from various organisations and leaders within the industry.

Answer

I am advised:

As part of consultation for the Contemporary Music Strategy, Sound NSW held 10 focus group sessions with industry participants with expertise in the following areas:

- Artists
- Audience development
- Festivals
- First Nations
- International market development
- Live
- Regional NSW
- Venues
- Western Sydney

Question 85 – Toll Review - Allan Fels

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Mr Fels, just briefly—I understand you need to be on your way. I think you mentioned that you attended a conference in Singapore. That's correct?

ALLAN FELS: Yes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Who paid for that?

ALLAN FELS: I did.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You paid personally to go to—

ALLAN FELS: I think I might have got \$1,000 from the sponsors as some kind of private international thing, but I paid a lot more than that out of my money to go there.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But you think, or you know, that you were given some amount, possibly \$1,000.

ALLAN FELS: I had accommodation for two nights in a hotel.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Paid for by—?

ALLAN FELS: Paid for by the conference organiser. I think I'd better take the other thing—actually, it was just the accommodation. It was not the fare or anything extra. I'd just like to check that out. It now comes back to me. It was just accommodation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you perhaps take it on notice and we can be clear about it?

ALLAN FELS: Yes, sure

Answer

I am advised:

For the conference in Singapore, Professor Allan Fels paid for his flights. The conference organisers paid for one night's accommodation for Professor Fels in Singapore.

Question 86 – M6 Tunnel

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: But just onto the main M6 tunnel, stage one, I understand it's with insurers, lawyers and potentially other advisers. Will taxpayers be paying those bills for this project?

CAMILLA DROVER: We are continuing to pursue those processes. They are very complex and there are a number of parties involved. We obviously need to ensure that government gets best value. The project, absent that 245 metres of tunnelling, is progressing well. For example, in the balance of the tunnel, half the pavement has already been placed, which is the final wearing course for that road. That's our intent, but we are still working through those processes. They are complex and they are lengthy, and they will take some time. Our primary focus is to ensure that the interests of government are protected, but that we keep

the project delivering and we finish the project as quickly as possible. That will ensure that we mitigate any costs associated with the delay, to the extent possible

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you take on notice what additional cost taxpayers will be paying?

I appreciate it's complex and I appreciate it was a sinkhole.

CAMILLA DROVER: I can answer, to some extent, now. To date there has been no additional cost to government other than that we have provided some support over and above the insurance processes to some of the impacted landowners, tenants et cetera, particularly in the Kirby estate. They are some additional, fairly modest costs that government has supported whilst those complex insurance processes et cetera continue

Answer

I am advised:

Transport for NSW has provided support in addition to the insurance processes to the landowners and some tenants at the Kirby Estate, which was impacted by subsidence. This support amounts to modest costs that government has provided while complex insurance processes continue.

Question 87 – M6 Tunnel

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you explain to me, though, how the Government will budget for this if Transport doesn't know how much it will cost?

CAMILLA DROVER: We're still working within the current funding envelope—the budget for the project. We obviously know that there will be additional cost, and we've been very public about that. Who bears that cost is still subject to very complex and what will be lengthy processes.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: So it's still the \$3.1 billion?

CAMILLA DROVER: The current budget for the project is, yes, the \$3.115 billion.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: How much have we paid in legal fees so far?

CAMILLA DROVER: Generally for the project, or for this matter? **The Hon. NATALIE WARD:** For this issue.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'd need to take that on notice; I don't have that information at hand.

Answer

I am advised:

The published legal services engagement for this matter is \$5,544,000.00 including GST.

Question 88 – Fifteenth Avenue

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: I may come back to that if there's time. When will construction begin on Fifteenth Avenue?

TRUDI MARES: Ms Drover can also assist with this. There are two lots of works happening. The initial \$50 million allocation—there are a number of early works and safety improvements being undertaken around Cowpasture Road for that. With the additional funding that we've got, we are in the design phase. We really do need to land the design and the business case before we can confirm the program.

CAMILLA DROVER: But I can confirm that those—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's not listed on the Infrastructure NSW website.

TRUDI MARES: We would have to check with Infrastructure NSW, but the funding was only just received. It may not be registered just yet.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you maybe take on notice when that is anticipated? It's been announced.

TRUDI MARES: Yes, we can do that

Answer

I am advised:

Transport for NSW will deliver short term safety improvements along Fifteenth Avenue, as well as upgrade Fifteenth Avenue between Cowpasture Road and Devonshire Road. Investigation work on Fifteenth Avenue has commenced to inform planning and design. Construction of the short-term improvements will start early in 2026, with the main upgrade expected to begin in 2027.

Question 89 – Data After Dark

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Mr Rodrigues, back to you. On the Data After Dark platform, did you spend additional funds apart from the \$1.345 million grant from your own department, or was that pool of funds the entire cost?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: Just for clarity, the original funding was from the Smart Places fund, and that was \$1 million. Further funds have been expended beyond that. I'd probably best take on notice any questions around additional funds spent, but it's paid from our operating budget.

Answer

I am advised:

The Data After Dark platform received an initial grant of \$1 million from the Transport for NSW Smart Places Acceleration Program. The Office of 24-Hour Economy Commissioner contributed the remaining costs from its operational budget in 2023/24 financial year. These funds covered the total cost to develop, operationalise (including data subscription fees) and launch the digital platform, covering:

- annual data subscriptions ;
- the management of the digital platform, data storage and security;
- software licenses;
- acquisition of additional data and integration of the data into the platform;
- improving and refining dashboards (based on user feedback); and
- provisioning user access across a number of NSW Government agencies and local councils, and providing training and materials to support users.

Question 90 – Data After Dark

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: My understanding is, or my suspicion is, that data from Westpark, DSpark, MobilityData and Roy Morgan Business Confidence—as sources for data, they're the ones that are causing the platform to remain private.

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: To be honest, I don't want to comment on things I'm not 100 per cent sure of. I might have to take that specific question on notice. Those are commercial datasets, for example, that I know are sold to other target customers.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: As part of that, is the agreement with those companies essentially that the data will be used privately by government departments and that you have a certain amount of logins or you can only log in from a government email address? Is that the idea?

MICHAEL RODRIGUES: I can't really comment on the specifics. There are a number of datasets. As far as I understand it, they are individually negotiated. Some of them may not

even be negotiated by our team; they may be negotiated by DCS or one of our partner agencies. I'm sorry I can't be more helpful on that. The ambition is to get to a point where information can be standardised and shared as broadly as possible. Getting us to this stage has been a giant leap forward from where we have come. Normally, data in this space has been anecdotal. For what it's worth, this project is seen globally as the market-leading project for a State-based economy, to get to this stage where at least government agencies can share the data and councils—the two significant stakeholders in the ecosystem.

Answer

I am advised:

Data sharing agreements with Westpac and DSpark stipulate that detailed data can only be used by the Office of 24-Hour Economy Commissioner and high-level data can only be shared with NSW Government agencies and participating local government councils. In addition, the platform integrates specific government data under strict access conditions. This includes sensitive data from the Bureau of Crime Statistics and Research (BOCSAR) and NSW Ambulance.

The Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner is committed to publishing insights from the platform wherever possible, including through a series of quarterly reports that include key trends, metrics and developments relating to the social, economic and cultural aspects of NSW's night-time landscape for public consumption.

Question 91 – Sound NSW

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Back to Sound NSW, there was a claim a year ago that the number of venues in New South Wales hosting live performances soared by 84 per cent since November 2023. I'm just wondering what that is based on. How is that calculated? What was the base figure? What is that figure today?

EMILY COLLINS: My understanding with that figure is the base figure was 133 venues from the Liquor and Gaming list that was listing live music venues who were receiving incentives. That was the data available at the time of that commitment.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: So it was actual venues who were getting the live music incentive or applying for it?

EMILY COLLINS: Correct.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Were they receiving it or just applying?

EMILY COLLINS: I believe they were, yes, receiving it. They were published on the website at the time.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: What is that figure today?

EMILY COLLINS: It's 412.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Do you know how many of those are in the regions?

EMILY COLLINS: I believe I do have a breakdown somewhere, but I can probably take it on notice if you're short on time.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: That would be helpful.

EMILY COLLINS: It was 178, according to Mr Barakat behind me.

Answer

I am advised:

There are a total of 495 venues that are approved as dedicated live music and performance venues in NSW. The base figure (at March 2023) was 198. There are 279 in Sydney, with 216 outside that area (including Newcastle, Wollongong, Central Coast and Lake Macquarie).

	Music Venues	Performance Venues	Total
Sydney	238	41	279
Outside Sydney	186	30	216
Total	424	71	495
Baseline (at March 2023)	133	65	198

Question 92 – Destination NSW

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: I have a question for Ms Jones. It's a quick one. It's about the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse and how Destination NSW is engaging with that platform.

KAREN JONES: Yes, so the chief executive officer position—that's myself at the moment. We have a position on the board of the ATDW. How we engage with that platform is, obviously, we encourage it to be sort of the single source of truth in terms of data across the country. It's actually used to inform future policy development not just for New South Wales but more broadly across the country.

The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO: Does Destination NSW put any funding towards that warehouse?

KAREN JONES: I'll have to take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Destination NSW and all other State Tourism Organisations provide investment to the Australian Tourism Data Warehouse as shareholders of this national platform for digital tourism information.

Question 93 – Venues

The CHAIR: I have questions again for Mr Barakat. This is just to get a little bit of clarification around the question that I asked you about the extended trading hours. What I was asking was how many of the venues have been able to get the extended trading as opposed to how many venues are on the list of dedicated venues.

How many have been able to access—or applied and got it and are operating as part of that extended hours?

TAREK BARAKAT: Just so I'm really clear, of the 412 that are licensed music venues accessing incentives, how many of those are accessing that extended trading—is that the question?

The CHAIR: Yes.

TAREK BARAKAT: If that is the question, I'll have to take that on notice, because it does depend on whether or not the development consents allow them to trade the additional two hours. But if we can get that breakdown, then I'm happy to provide it to you on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

There is no requirement for licensed premises to notify L&GNSW when they use the extended trading incentive, therefore, this data is not held. However, the Office of the 24-Hour Economy Commissioner is coordinating cross-government monitoring and evaluation of the impact of the Vibrancy reforms, and this review will include an assessment of the effectiveness and uptake of the extended trading incentive for live music venues. Any venue that accesses the extended trading incentive must keep a record of each live music performance or other arts and cultural event held or provided on licensed premises. These records must be made available to L&GNSW compliance officers or the NSW Police Force if requested.

Question 94 – Venues

The CHAIR: That would be good—again, just seeing how successful some of the reforms have been. I'm still getting contacted by some venues who are having difficulties. One is—I think they actually went to Liquor and Gaming NSW after being frustrated with the City of Sydney as well as New South Wales police—Mirage Kings Cross. Are you aware of—

TAREK BARAKAT: It doesn't ring a bell, but we do have what's called a Hospitality Concierge that take that on notice.

The CHAIR: How many people are working in that concierge?

TAREK BARAKAT: I'd need to take that on notice, Ms Faehrmann.

The CHAIR: Is it a biggish team, or is it one person?

TAREK BARAKAT: It's not one person.

The CHAIR: You're saying it's a concierge; it's a group.

TAREK BARAKAT: It's a team of people, yes.

Answer

I am advised:

The Hospitality Concierge is a team of four people.

Question 95 – Venues

The CHAIR: Is Kings Cross still classified as a high-risk area when it comes to venues licensing? Is it classified differently still? Because, again, I've been contacted that it is.

TAREK BARAKAT: I know exactly what you're referring to. There were different classifications for Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD at one point. I think they have been repealed, but let me take that on notice and confirm for you.

The CHAIR: Mr Barakat, what I might do is, via the Minister, send this information to you, which would be interesting.

TAREK BARAKAT: Yes, sure.

Answer

I am advised:

Under the *Liquor Act 2007*, Kings Cross and the Sydney CBD Entertainment precinct are listed as prescribed precincts, which are defined in Schedule 2 of the Act. Both Kings Cross and Sydney CBD designation as prescribed precincts currently remains in force under the legislation.

Prescribed precincts are designated areas identified as experiencing high levels of alcohol-related violence. Licensed premises within a prescribed precinct may be subject to certain special licence conditions on their liquor licence that are intended to support patron safety

Question 96 – Project Tenders

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to projects more generally—it's no surprise; I ask this every time—what projects will go to tender for delivery by the end of the financial year?

CAMILLA DROVER: There's a whole raft of them. I haven't got a comprehensive list in front of me.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Are you able to provide that list on notice? I think we do this every time.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes, we can. I might just mention that, for the first time, we've updated our project pipeline. It's on the Transport for NSW infrastructure portal. And it's also shared on the Infrastructure NSW portal. For the first time, we've updated that for industry every half year, every six months, not annually.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's helpful.

CAMILLA DROVER: So some of that information—I accept that some of the timeframes are broader, but that is now available. And the benefit for industry is that they can get those more regular updates.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Terrific, thank you. And also for us. If you could just take on notice, though, specifically, which projects will go to tender for delivery by the end of this financial year, please, for the Committee.

CAMILLA DROVER: Yes. And ones that are currently in tender? We have quite a few in tender at the moment.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes. If you could itemise each of those rather than a general statement, that would be helpful. What's the total payout of the heavy vehicle rebate this year and last calendar year—each calendar year, this year and last year?

TRUDI MARES: I'll just see what we have here.

Answer

I am advised:

An update to industry regarding the Transport for NSW Pipeline was provided on the Transport Infrastructure Industry Portal and Infrastructure NSW's NSW Infrastructure Pipeline Portal in February 2025. The portals lists projects confirmed to commence construction procurement in the first two Quarters of 2025 and can be viewed here [Pipeline | Transport Infrastructure Industry Portal | Transport for NSW](#)

The following projects are currently planned for procurement, but yet to be confirmed:

Quarter 2, 2025

- Pacific Highway, Wyong Town Centre
- Burdekin Road and Townson Road Upgrade
- Heathcote Road Overtaking Lane extension

The following projects are currently in procurement:

- Basset Street Upgrade – Widening of King Georges Road (advertised 18 Mar 25)

The following projects have recently closed procurement and are currently in evaluation:

- Heathcote Road SL95353 Landslip Remediation Works (closed 20 Mar 25)
- New Richmond Bridge Stage 2 – Expression of Interest (closed 20 Feb 25)

- Marshalls Creek Bridge Replacement (closed 06 Feb 25)
- New Richmond Bridge and Traffic Improvements Stage 1: The Driftway/Londonderry Road Intersection and The Driftway/Blacktown Road Intersection (closed 16 Dec 24)
- Forest Road and Botany Road Intersection Upgrade (closed 29 Nov 24)
- Pitt Town Bypass (closed 25 Nov 24)

Question 97 – Powerhouse

The CHAIR: What about exhibitions for the Powerhouse? Are there any plans? Is anything firmed up for what we can expect?

LISA HAVILAH: Yes, currently the Powerhouse curatorial team are working on the development of five major exhibitions that will open when Powerhouse Parramatta opens.

The CHAIR: Is there anything more you can reveal?

LISA HAVILAH: They are yet to be announced, but we are really looking forward to announcing what those exhibitions will be. I can tell you that they will absolutely feature the Powerhouse collection. They will also work right across the applied arts and sciences. We are working with museums and partners around the world to make sure we are bringing into Parramatta and the museum incredible objects and incredible stories.

The CHAIR: The opening program is going over how long? Do you know how long that will be for?

Are we talking several months?

LISA HAVILAH: For the first series of exhibitions, some will go for two years and some will go for one year. There will be a changing program of exhibitions. All of the exhibitions will be in place for the first year that we are open.

The CHAIR: Is that funded? Are you seeking any more money from Treasury or the Government to fund that?

LISA HAVILAH: The exhibition program is funded. Of course, we're always looking for external partners and collaborators to offset those costs as much as we can.

The CHAIR: How much of the \$60 million raised from philanthropy has been banked? Is that what you've said in terms of what has been raised so far—the \$63 million, I think you said?

LISA HAVILAH: It's \$60.4 million.

The CHAIR: Has that all come in or is that pledged?

LISA HAVILAH: That's pledged through a contract. That will be paid over a period of time. It's phased. **The CHAIR:** Over the forward estimates?

LISA HAVILAH: Different contracts are over different periods of time. I'm happy to take that on notice and give you those details.

The CHAIR: Thank you. For example, the Lang Walker foundation has committed \$20 million. Has that all been paid, or is that one of the ones you will take on notice?

LISA HAVILAH: I will take it on notice but it's phased over a number of years, which is a normal practice for a philanthropic contribution of that scale.

Answer

I am advised:

Philanthropy contributions are phased over a ten-year period.

Question 98 Heavy Vehicle Rebate

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: You're coming back to me, Ms Mares, on the heavy vehicle rebate?

TRUDI MARES: I've got it now, if you'd like it.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Yes, last calendar year and this calendar year.

TRUDI MARES: Last calendar year, the truck multiplier of \$16.7 million in rebates has been credited to customers. Did you want the toll cap figure as well?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What year was that \$16.7 million?

TRUDI MARES: It was 2024.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: And this calendar year?

TRUDI MARES: I don't have the current figure.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Will you take that on notice?

TRUDI MARES: Yes, I can do that.

Answer

I am advised:

The Heavy Vehicle Rebate scheme pays customer rebates quarterly. Therefore, as of 11 March 2025, no rebates have been paid.

Question 99 – Roads Projects Reprioritised

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: In relation to the roads projects reprioritised, are you taking that on notice or are you able to indicate any that have been reprioritised in this year that would affect their delivery date?

TRUDI MARES: I think we can probably provide that when we give the tender document. We can look at that on notice.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Could you list any that have had that date affected because of the reprioritisation, which is understandable in some circumstances?

TRUDI MARES: Just programming changes and reprioritisation.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Which roads projects have been reprioritised this year?

TRUDI MARES: I'll take that on notice as part of the response.

CAMILLA DROVER: I'm not aware of any. As Ms Mares said, there's additional funding that's coming in. In some instances, we're trying to accelerate projects. We'll take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

Where the NSW Government and Commonwealth Government have provided additional funding, Transport for NSW is undertaking accelerated project development and delivery activities, including program changes.

Transport for NSW is also taking advantage of NSW Treasury's Fast Track process reform where possible, including for:

- Garfield Road East
- Bandon Road Upgrade
- Liverpool to Airport Transit Corridor.

Question 100 – Roads Projects Funding/Progress of Murray Road Drive

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: What percentage of the four-year forwards is for roads projects? That might be one for Ms Hoang. While you're looking that up, I might keep

moving. Just to be clear, that's the capital expenditure—the capex. The Bankstown Airport intersection—that is, the upgrade of Murray Jones Drive and Milperra Road intersection—what is the timeline for that? It seems to be an issue bouncing between the State and Federal governments and some documentation outstanding to commence that work.

What's the commencement date?

TRUDI MARES: We'll just check that. It's part of the Henry Lawson Drive project, from memory.

Answer

I am advised:

I refer to the response provided by Ms Hoang in the hearing.

Question 101 – Steve Cox

The Hon. NICHOLE OVERALL: Ms Mildwater, if I could possibly go back to the situation with Mr Cox's termination, are you able to provide the dollar cost of the 38-week termination?

ELIZABETH MILDWATER: I'll take that on notice.

Answer

I am advised:

At the conclusion of the employment, Mr Cox was paid the standard 38 week provision as per his executive contract. Specific amounts for individual employees are private and confidential.

Question 102 – Henry Lawson Drive

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Do we have answers?

CAMILLA DROVER: Just checking, are you talking about Henry Lawson Drive section 1B?

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's the finalisation of the agreement with Transport and the Commonwealth Department of Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development, Communications and the Arts

regarding the upgrade of the Murray Jones Drive and Milperra Road intersection at the Bankstown Airport,

knowing that there are a lot of emergency services there and so these delays are affecting those operators.

CAMILLA DROVER: I know we're doing investigation works for the 1B project. That's part of the

planning process. Perhaps we can take on notice the specific issue that you've raised.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: If you could take it on notice—it seems that there are some outstanding

issues that have to be resolved before the works can commence. They seem to be relatively minor things to be

sorted out, or business-as-usual things—details of the lots to be valued for transfer, valuation costs and agreeing

on a sunset date for commencement of works, all of which are minor matters that seem to be holding up what is

otherwise broad agreement between the State and Feds to get it done. Could you give some indication of when

those things might be finalised and what is causing the ongoing delay?

CAMILLA DROVER: We have started some of the investigation works and even property acquisition

for the 1B project. If I could get the exact intersection that you're talking about—

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: It's the upgrade of the Murray Jones Drive and Milperra Road intersection at Bankstown Airport. It seems to be in place with the operator, Transport and the Commonwealth

department, but there seems to be some paperwork broadly from the bureaucracy that is holding that up.

BRENDA HOANG: Ms Ward, Roads projects are 47 per cent of the four-year capital project.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: That's the capex?

BRENDA HOANG: It's 47 per cent.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: Of the four-year forwards is for Roads projects. That's capital expenditure?

BRENDA HOANG: Yes, that's right.

The Hon. NATALIE WARD: We did get to something.

Answer

I am advised:

Bankstown Airport Pty Ltd (BAL) is managing and financing the Murray Jones Drive/Milperra Road project, which is supported under a Work Authorisation Deed (WAD) with Transport for NSW.

Commonwealth land is to be dedicated as part of the project and a tripartite deed is being prepared. It is currently pending an agreement on land valuation. The WAD was finalised and sent to BAL for execution on 25 July 2023. 100 per cent detail design review is completed and all comments are closed.

Transport for NSW has advised BAL that it can execute the WAD and start construction. Transport for NSW can manage traffic operations and maintenance upon work completion under a sub-lease agreement prior to land dedication completed.

BAL has not yet tendered the project. BAL advised they are unwilling to start until land dedication is complete. They are targeting commencement in Q3 2025.