

QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE

Ms Jan Barham: Do you have any research or documentation around the costs for workers who have to travel longer and longer distances? Do you have any idea around the broader impact on wellbeing rather than the economic cost, how much it costs them to travel, the safety issues, the additional time spent away from family...Can you refer me to any documentation that looks at how this impacts on workers....And if there is any evidence available as to how that might affect people's effectiveness and capacity at work or safety issues.

Slate compiled a set of research reports regarding the impact of commuting (http://www.slate.com/articles/business/moneybox/2011/05/your_commute_is_killing_you.html).

The research showed:

- Where one partner commutes for longer than 45 minutes, the couple are 40% likelier to divorce.
- 40% of those who commute more than 90 minutes (each way) every day experience worry, compared to 28% of those with extremely short commutes.
- One in every three commuters that spend 90 minutes or more traveling home every day experience recurrent physical pain.
- Long commutes increase the chance that we make fast food purchases.
- Vehicle mileage has a stronger correlation with obesity than any other lifestyle factor.
- Each minute of commuting time equates to a 0.22 minute reduction in sleep time. That's nearly 20 minutes for someone with a 90 minute daily commute.
- Every 10 minutes spent commuting results in 10 percent fewer "social connections.", resulting in loneliness.

Ms Jan Barham: You also mention the Northern Territory Government's housing policy about retirees and pensioners downsizing. You have identified that as an issue. Can you elaborate more on that or can you provide clarity or information on notice?

In the Northern Territory there is a Senior, Pensioner and Carer Concession (SPCC) Stamp Duty Concession scheme. To be eligible the purchaser must be 60 years or older or the holder of Northern Territory pensioner and carer concession card. The property sale price must be under \$750,000 (\$385,000 for a vacant block). The stamp duty concession in both instances is up to \$8500 off. Contracts must be signed on or after 4 May 2010.

For a property valued at \$500,000 (the median price for a house in Darwin), normal stamp duty payable would be \$15,428. The concession is therefore worth more than 50% of the stamp duty amount.

The effect of this scheme is to remove a disincentive for older Northern Territorians to downsize their properties to better reflect their needs and thereby free up housing stock for the next generation.

This scheme could easily be adopted in NSW.

Unfortunately, the Federal Government in the recent Budget scrapped the Housing Help for Seniors pilot. The scheme allowed those who had owned their home for 25 years to put the excess proceeds from the sale of that house that were not invested in a new home into an eligible superannuation fund. This scheme would have also been a way to encourage retirees and pensioners to downsize.

The Hon. SOPHIE COTSIS: You had a survey that referred to 45 minute travel time. Have you released the results of that survey.

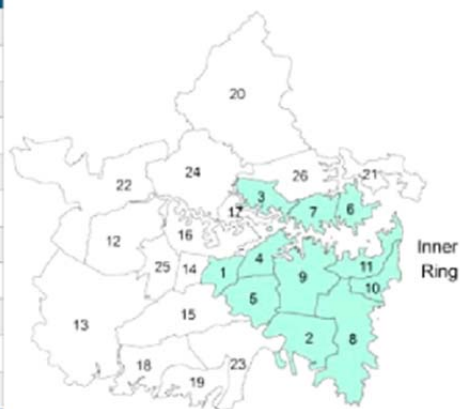
Unions NSW refers to the first answer to Ms Jan Barham above.

SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

1. Can you provide any information relating to the lack of affordable housing in key worker areas and if there is any information regarding travel times for workers?

The following table sets out the average rents in Sydney by Local Government area.

	Local Government Area	1 Bedroom Apartment	2 Bedroom Apartment
	Inner Ring	490	620
1	Ashfield	360	448
2	Botany Bay	470	505
3	Lane Cove	398	495
4	Leichhardt	440	635
5	Marrickville	380	450
6	Mosman	440	575
7	North Sydney	470	620
8	Randwick	450	565
9	Sydney	520	700
10	Waverley	520	650
11	Woollahra	495	630
	Local Government Area	1 Bedroom Apartment	2 Bedroom Apartment
	Middle Ring	420	450
12	Auburn	420	450
13	Bankstown	255	390
14	Burwood	415	510
15	Canterbury	300	360
16	Canada Bay	488	580
17	Hunters Hill	-	528
18	Hurstville	375	430
19	Kogarah	300	440
20	Ku-ring-gai	460	590
21	Manly	500	668
22	Parramatta	360	410
23	Rockdale	380	450
24	Ryde	360	425
25	Strathfield	380	465
26	Willoughby	500	595



The numbers of the tables correspond to the numbers of the map of Sydney above.

Please note that the areas are not individual suburbs but the larger local city council areas. For example, Woollahra includes the suburbs of Woollahra, Rose Bay and Edgecliff. All suburbs listed in the following tables below.

Also note that these are median weekly rents not average.

When you compare these rents with the minimum wage (\$16.37 per hour or \$622.20 per 38 hour week), it is easy to see how unaffordable it is for low paid workers to live close to work.

Public housing isn't a viable alternative. There are only 11,429 public housing properties in the Sydney District and 19,665 properties in the Eastern Sydney District. As at December 2013, 4188 and 6360 applicants, respectively, were on those waiting lists with only 470 and 1097, respectively, placed into public housing in those areas in the previous 12 months. See http://www.housingpathways.nsw.gov.au/NR/rdonlyres/9C300EE3-F53A-46C9-A43B-48A8CBA05003/0/Expected_Waiting_Times.pdf for more information.

The average amount of time spent commuting a day is 79 minutes. That figure has not changed over recent years. However, Western Sydney is adding jobs at just 1/3 of the rate of the rest of the city, increasing pressure on workers to travel.

For office workers, one solution can be work hubs or mobile working. In fact, the increasing incidence of this way of working is credited with the seventh consecutive year of the number of personal business trips reducing. However, remote working is no solution for nurses, cleaners, orderlies and other workers that have to physically present in the workplace. For these workers, the only solution is finding employment closer to home or moving home to be closer to work.

2. Can you provide information about the loss of jobs in the last 5 years and how that may have resulted in people losing their homes (in relation to inability to pay a mortgage)?

Banks and building societies repossessed 22.5% more homes in 2011 than in 2012 with western Sydney and big regional centres in NSW the hardest hit. At the same time, the unemployment rate for NSW in 2010 and 2011 was comparable, at around 5.2%. However, unemployment peaked for NSW in June 2009 at 6.4%. The higher foreclosure rate in 2010 may have been a lagged effect from the high unemployment in 2009.

3. Can you provide information about the loss of accommodation or home due to the fact that jobs have transferred from full time or part time to casual?

The last 20 years have seen a rise in more precarious types of employment: part-time, casual and contract labour. There is widespread anecdotal evidence that less secure work makes it harder to own a home due to the instability of weekly earnings and policies of lending institutions that have a bias in favour of full-time work. For further information see the following report of the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work in Australia

<http://www.actu.org.au/Publications/Other/LivesonHoldUnlockingthepotentialofAustraliasworkforce.aspx>).