



LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2021-2022 Supplementary Questions

Portfolio Committee No. 1 – Premier and Finance

PREMIER

Hearing: Wednesday 18 August 2021

Answers due by: Thursday 16 September 2021

Budget Estimates secretariat
Phone 9230 2898
BudgetEstimates@parliament.nsw.gov.au

PREMIER

Questions from the Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC (on behalf of the Opposition)

Public Health Advice

1. Did the Premier receive advice that recommended the reclassification of the Shellharbour local government area as regional from:
 - (a) The Chief Medical Officer? or
 - (b) NSW Health? or
 - (c) Another individual or organisation?
 - i. Was the advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?
 - ii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?
 - iii. If not, why not?
2. If the advice in Question (1) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?
3. On what date was the advice in Question (1) received?
4. Did the crisis policy committee of the NSW Cabinet receive advice that recommended the reclassification of the Shellharbour local government area as regional from:
 - (a) The Chief Medical Officer? or
 - (b) NSW Health? or
 - (c) Another individual or organisation?
 - i. Was the advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?
 - ii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?
 - iii. If not, why not?
5. If the advice in Question (4) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?
6. On what date was the advice in Question (4) received?
7. When the Premier received advice that Shellharbour local government area be reclassified as regional did the Premier receive advice on the classification of the Wollongong local government area for the purposes of the health response to COVID from:
 - (a) The Chief Medical Officer? or

- (b) NSW Health? Or
 - (c) Another individual or organisation?
 - i. If so, what was the nature of this advice from (a), (b), (c)?
 - ii. Was this advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?
 - iii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?
 - iv. If not, why not?
8. If the advice in Question (7) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?
9. On what date was the advice in Question (7) received?
10. When the crisis policy committee of the NSW Cabinet received advice that Shellharbour local government area be reclassified as regional did the committee receive advice on the classification of the Wollongong local government area for the purposes of the health response to COVID from:
 - (a) The Chief Medical Officer? or
 - (b) NSW Health? or
 - (c) Another individual or organisation?
 - i. If so, what was the nature of this advice from (a), (b), (c)?
 - ii. Was this advice written or verbal from (a), (b), (c)?
 - iii. If it is written advice, will the Premier release it?
 - iv. If not, why not?
11. If the advice in (10) was received from an individual or organisation other than the Chief Medical Officer or NSW Health, from whom was it received from?
12. On what date was the advice in Question (10) received?

Spending

13. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster in FY 20/21 what was the total amount spent on each of the following categories?
- (a) Indoor plants
 - (b) coffee and tea
 - (c) crockery
 - (d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters

- (e) alcohol
- (f) cakes, muffins and pastries
- (g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs
- (h) office renovations and fit-outs
- (i) taxi and rideshare expenses
- (j) office equipment
- (k) office renovations or upgrades
- (l) hospitality
- (m) conferences
- (n) travel
- (o) accommodation
- (p) employee development and training activities
- (q) study assistance
- (r) travelling and meal expenses
- (s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private
- (t) removal and storage expenses
- (u) education of children
- (v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)
- (w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)
- (x) additional benefits

14. For each department, agency, State-owned corporation or other body, and for each division of those bodies, if any, in your portfolio/cluster, from FY 20/21 what are details (specific item, and total cost) of the top five most expensive occurrences of spending on each of the following categories?

- (a) indoor plants
- (b) coffee and tea
- (c) crockery
- (d) kettles, sandwich presses and toasters
- (e) alcohol
- (f) cakes, muffins and pastries
- (g) computers, computer monitors and office chairs
- (h) office renovations and fit-outs
- (i) taxi and rideshare expenses

- (j) office equipment
- (k) office renovations or upgrades
- (l) hospitality
- (m) conferences
- (n) travel
- (o) accommodation
- (p) employee development and training activities
- (q) study assistance
- (r) travelling and meal expenses
- (s) temporary accommodation benefits - commercial and private
- (t) removal and storage expenses
- (u) education of children
- (v) reimbursement of transaction expenses (includes stamp duty, real estate costs for employee who is moving)
- (w) reimbursement of incidental costs (includes gas, electricity)
- (x) additional benefits

Premiers Priority – Bumping up education results for children

- 15. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of bumping up education results for children?
- 16. Can you outline any changes in the approach to this priority in 2015-19 to the current target?
- 17. Why was the target narrowed from 2015-19 to only address reading and numeracy?
- 18. Is this target on track to be achieved by 2023?

Premiers Priority – Increasing the number of Aboriginal young people reaching their learning potential

- 19. Can you provide a progress update on this target of increasing the number of Aboriginal young people reaching their learning potential?
- 20. What initiatives are in place to reach the target?
 - (a) How often are they evaluated to find what is working and what isn't?
- 21. What are the barriers to Aboriginal students receiving their HSC?
 - (a) What initiatives are in place through this target to specifically address these barriers?

22. Is there a difference in approach in reaching this target in rural/regional areas compared to metropolitan areas?
 - (a) If yes, can you outline the difference?
23. Is this target on track to be achieved by 2023?
24. The Premiers Priorities website states “We are monitoring attendance and HSC results to understand and respond to the impact of COVID-19 on students’ learning through 2020”. Can you provide any information on what that impact is?
 - (a) What is being done to counter it?

Premiers Priority – Protecting our most vulnerable children

25. Can you provide a progress update on this priority- Protecting our most vulnerable children?
 - (a) Was there an evaluation process between the 2015-19 and 2019-23 targets?
 - (b) What has changed in the approach from the 2015-19 priority to the 2019-23 priority?
26. Can you outline any known impact Covid-19 has had on children at risk?
27. Do you anticipate long-term issues on the number of children at risk arising from the past 18 months?
28. Is this target on track to be achieved?

Premiers Priority – Increasing permanency for children in out-of-home care

29. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of increasing permanency for children in out-of-home care?
30. What strategies are in place to reach this target?
31. Is this goal on track to be achieved by 2023?

Premiers Priority – Reducing domestic violence reoffending

32. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of reducing domestic violence reoffending?
33. Why was the deadline for this this priority extended from 2021 to 2023?
34. What initiatives are in place for this priority?

35. What data is held about the percentage of reports of domestic violence made to police that result in charges being laid?
 - (a) If no data is held, how was it determined that measuring repeat offenders would be the best way to reduce domestic violence, given there's no data on those accused, but not charged for offences?
36. Are there particular areas of NSW that strategies are targeted to?
 - (a) If yes, where?
37. Ms Sarah Cruickshank provided the 2020 data at budget estimates in March this year, why has that information not been updated publicly on the website?
38. The 2018 Audit Office Report found there were limitations with the way reoffending is measured for this target and additional indicators were used to measure the effectiveness.
 - (a) What are these additional measures?
 - (b) Can you provide an update on how they are tracking?
39. Is this target on track to be achieved by 2023?

Premiers Priority – Reducing recidivism in the prison population

40. Is this target on track for reducing recidivism in the prison population to be achieved by 2023?
41. Why is 2018 the latest data available on the Premiers Priority website?
42. Can you provide a progress update on this priority?
43. What is being done to reduce the proportion of reoffenders?
44. Is this target on track to be achieved?

Premiers Priority – Reducing homelessness

45. The Premier's Priority website states "Further work is underway to expand data collection by rolling out the City of Sydney Rough Sleeper count to other hot spot locations."
 - (a) What are the other locations?
 - (b) City of Sydney have been conducting their count since 2010, why is it taking the Government so long to develop other forms of data collection?

- (c) Will this data be published on the Premier's Priority website to provide the public with a better understanding of how this target is tracking?
- 46. A previous Premier's Priority was to reduce youth homelessness - why have these two components of homelessness been singled out?
- 47. The investment in the Together Home program has reduced the number of people sleeping rough. Why did it take a pandemic for the Government to take this target seriously?
- 48. The 2021 Audit Report 'Responses to homelessness' notes this Priority sits outside the NSW Homelessness Strategy. Do the two intersect in any way?
- 49. Is this target on track to be achieved?

Premiers Priority – Improving the health system

- 50. At a previous budget estimates round in 2019, Mr Reardon stated "they [Premier's Priorities] are very much about business unusual. They are very much about disrupting how we would normally go about things". Why was triage category 1 included in the priority when it was already achieved?
- 51. As it stands, Categories 2 and 3 are a long way off reaching the target – what is being done to improve waiting times?
 - (a) What are the biggest causes of delays for patients in those two categories?
 - (b) Can you outline which regions have the lowest proportion of ED presentations seen on time?
 - (c) What's the strategy to improve the wait times in those regions?
- 52. Is this target on track to be achieved?

Premiers Priority – Towards zero suicides

- 53. Can you provide a progress update on this priority of towards zero suicides?
- 54. Covid-19 has seen an increase in demand for mental health support – do you anticipate this will make this target harder to reach?
 - (a) If yes – what's being done to counter that?
- 55. What initiatives are showing evidence of working?
 - (a) What isn't working?

56. Is there are particular focus on a region or age group in working towards this target?
- (a) If yes, where?
57. At a previous hearing, Dr Lyons said “We have a number of strategies that we are actually going to implement”. What are those strategies, and have they now been implemented?
- (a) How much of the allocated \$87 million has been spent so far?
58. Dr Lyons also said, “Over time what we will be doing is looking at the cohorts and monitoring what the suicide rates are and what we need to do to address particular groups in that strategy”. Can you provide an update on which cohorts have been identified as needing focus and what strategies have been implemented?
59. Is this priority on track to be achieved?

Premiers Priority – World class public service – Proportion of government sector employees with a disability

60. The proportion of government sector employees with a disability has steadily declined under this government, reaching a record low in 2018 and 19 – how did that happen?
- (a) Why was it not identified as an issue earlier?
61. Why is the public sector so far behind the private sector?
62. What is being done to increase disability employment within the public sector?
- (a) What is being done to ensure public sector workplaces are inclusive and accessible?
63. Is this priority on track to be achieved?

Premiers Priority – World class public service – Proportion of government sector senior leaders who are women

64. Is this target on track to be met?
65. What initiatives are in place to achieve this target?
66. What are the other indicators referred to in the 2018 Audit Office report which are considered in this area?
- (a) What is the performance in these indicators?

2015-19 Premiers Priorities

67. Are the 2015-19 Premiers Priorities still monitored and reported on?
68. Can you provide an update on the ones that weren't included in the 2019-23 targets?
69. The Premiers Priority website only refers to the 2019-23 targets. Why is a public record of the 2015-19 priorities not available?

Questions from Ms Abigail Boyd MLC

Premier's Priority: Reducing Street Homelessness

70. One of the Premier's Priorities is to reduce street homelessness across NSW by 50% by 2025. The Premier's Priorities website states that 'official data' used to track the progress of this Priority is the Census, but that there are 'positive signs of progress' in other datasets. Please provide the most up-to-date statistics available which indicate 'positive signs'.
71. The Premier's Priorities website states that 'we are committed to reducing street homelessness by focusing on initiatives to ... collect and use better data'. What data collection on street homelessness is being undertaken by the NSW Government?
72. Please provide a breakdown of street homelessness in NSW since 2014 by age and gender.
73. According to the [SMH](#), 'the government provided 3732 rough sleeping households with temporary accommodation, mostly in hotels and motels, between April last year and the end of January this year', and that as of March 2021 '133 rough sleeping households still in temporary accommodation, implying 2706 had left the program without the government finding them a permanent home'.
 - (a) Please provide a breakdown by age, gender, LGA, current homelessness status, and date of departure from the program for all persons that participated in the program.
 - (b) Was any support additional to what would have been provided by the NSW Government prior to COVID-19 extended to households on departure from the temporary accommodation program?
74. It has been [reported](#) that the NSW Government provided 899 rough sleepers with temporary accommodation at the onset of the most recent lockdown.

- (a) Please provide a breakdown by age, gender, and LGA of the most current numbers of rough sleepers in temporary accommodation under this program.
- (b) For how long will these people be provided with temporary accommodation?
- (c) What will happen to these people when they are no longer provided with temporary accommodation?

Premier's Priority: People with Disability in the Public Sector

- 75. The See the Possibilities campaign directs disabled jobseekers to contact a variety of job service providers, private and non-government organisations, but provides no contact point for people with disability to seek help or support from the NSW Government in any way. Are there any plans to back this campaign up with Government-provided services like career counselling, guidance through application processes, and mentoring for people with disability seeking a job in NSW, and particularly in the NSW public service?
- 76. What integration has been developed with the federal JobSeeker process to ensure that job providers are matching disabled jobseekers with NSW public sector jobs?