

# PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 1 – PREMIER AND FINANCE

Monday 5 September 2022

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio area

## ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, ARTS, REGIONAL YOUTH, TOURISM

**CORRECTED**

**The Committee met at 09:30.**

### MEMBERS

The Hon. Tara Moriarty (Chair)

The Hon. John Graham

Ms Sue Higginson

The Hon. Shayne Mallard

The Hon. Chris Rath

The Hon. Penny Sharpe (Acting Deputy Chair)

### PRESENT

**The Hon. Ben Franklin**, *Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, Minister for the Arts, Minister for Regional Youth, and Minister for Tourism*

\* Please note:

[inaudible] is used when audio words cannot be deciphered.

[audio malfunction] is used when words are lost due to a technical malfunction.

[disorder] is used when members or witnesses speak over one another.



## **CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS**

**Corrections should be marked on a photocopy of the proof and forwarded to:**

**Budget Estimates secretariat  
Room 823  
Parliament House  
Macquarie Street  
SYDNEY NSW 2000**



**The CHAIR:** Good morning, everybody. Welcome to this initial public hearing for the inquiry into budget estimates 2022-2023. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians on the land on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales. I also acknowledge and pay my respects to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. Welcome, Minister and accompanying officials, to this hearing. Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Aboriginal Affairs, Arts, Regional Youth and Tourism.

Before we commence, I'd like to make some brief comments about the procedures for today's hearing. Today's hearing is being broadcast live via the Parliament's website. The proceedings are also being recorded, and a transcript will be placed on the Committee's website once it becomes available. In accordance with the broadcasting guidelines, media representatives are reminded that they must take responsibility for what they publish about the Committee's proceedings.

All witnesses in budget estimates have a right to procedural fairness according to the procedural fairness resolution adopted by the House in 2018. There may be some questions that a witness could only answer if they had more time or with certain documents to hand. In these circumstances, witnesses are advised that they can take a question on notice and provide an answer within 21 days. If witnesses wish to hand up documents, they should do so through the Committee staff. Minister, I remind you and the officers accompanying you that you're free to pass notes and refer directly to your advisers seated at the table behind you. Finally, could everyone please turn their mobile phones to silent for the duration of the hearing today.

All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn, as you've already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. I remind the following witnesses that you do not need to be sworn as you have been sworn in at an earlier budget estimates hearing before this Committee: Mr Michael Coutts-Trotter, Ms Lisa Braid and Ms Kate Foy.

**Mr MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER**, Secretary, Department of Premier and Cabinet, on former oath

**Mr CHRIS HANGER**, Deputy Secretary, Department of Regional NSW, affirmed and examined

**Ms JULIA RYAN**, Director, Department of Regional NSW, affirmed and examined

**Ms LISA HAVILAH**, Chief Executive Officer, Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, affirmed and examined

**Dr MICHAEL BRAND**, Director, Art Gallery of New South Wales, affirmed and examined

**Ms ANNETTE PITMAN**, Chief Executive Officer, Create NSW, affirmed and examined

**Ms ELIZABETH TSITSIKRONIS**, Interim Registrar, Aboriginal Land Rights Act, affirmed and examined

**Mr TIM IRELAND**, Executive Director, Closing the Gap, Aboriginal Affairs NSW, affirmed and examined

**Ms KATE FOY**, Group Deputy Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment, on former affirmation

**Ms LOUISE HERRON**, Chief Executive Officer, Sydney Opera House, affirmed and examined

**Ms LISA BRAID**, Acting Secretary, Department of Enterprise, Investment and Trade, and Chief Executive Officer, Investment NSW, Invest NSW, on former oath

**Mr STEVE COX**, Chief Executive Officer, Destination NSW, affirmed and examined

**The CHAIR:** Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. We are joined by the Minister for the morning session, from 9.30 a.m. to 12.45 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. In the afternoon, we will hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 to 5.15 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During these sessions, there will be questions from the Opposition and crossbench members only. If required, an additional 15 minutes is allocated at the end of the morning and afternoon sessions for Government questions. Thank you, everybody, for your attendance today. We'll begin questions now with the Opposition.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Welcome, Minister. Thank you to the officials you've brought with you. I'd like to start by asking about a promise that former Premier Mike Baird made, and that was for a national Indigenous cultural centre to be sited at Barangaroo. That promise has now been dumped. Can you tell us what your perspective is on this and what discussions you've had inside government about this proposal.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Thank you very much, Mr Graham. I don't believe that that was ever a stated government promise that there would be a dedicated Aboriginal cultural centre at the Cutaway at Barangaroo. I've not seen any evidence of that. Obviously, it was something that was being considered because the former Premier was committed, my understanding is, to the creation of an Aboriginal cultural space in Sydney, as the current Premier is. I'm delighted that we now have a dedicated Aboriginal cultural space in Sydney, on the site of the first Government House of Sydney, at the Museum of Sydney, which was announced a couple of months ago, I think. It will be in partnership with the Aboriginal Languages Trust, which will, over time, turn that facility into a fully dedicated Aboriginal cultural space.

In terms of the Cutaway, Minister Stokes, I believe, announced that this would be a centre now which would have a broad range of functions. Of course, there will be creative and cultural programming. There will, indeed, be Indigenous programming. There will be First Nations representation there, but it won't be the dedicated space that some have suggested, because that's something that we're doing both at the Museum of Sydney and something that will continue to develop over time.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But, of course, that should be part of the programming in any of these institutions.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But it certainly won't be dedicated at the Cutaway. You acknowledge that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, it wasn't really some passing comment by Premier Baird, though. This had seen significant work, you acknowledge that, by Wesley Enoch and Rhoda Roberts, for example, working on the concept designs that included a performance space for 500 to 600 people, an exhibition space, studios, workshops, a gift shop, cafe, restaurant? You acknowledge that these concept designs were significantly developed and now abandoned?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I do acknowledge, of course, that there was examination of that proposal. That's what happens in government. You look at a whole range of different proposals. Some of them continue and some of them continue through to fruition and some of them don't. Obviously this happened before I was Minister, but it's my understanding that this proposal was examined but that that's not a proposal that was proceeded with. I'm incredibly proud that the site of the dedicated Aboriginal cultural space in Sydney and in this nation is on the site of the first Government House, the site of first contact between Aboriginal people—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We'll come back to that, Minister. I promise you. Yes, some things proceed; some things do not proceed. The commitment here was that this would be open by 2024—that is, as the metro was originally designed to come through. That had been the commitment from government. You agree now that's certainly not the case?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't agree that that was a commitment by government. I don't think that that decision was ever formally taken. I think that that option was examined and it was considered and it was determined not to proceed. As I've been Minister, I've been focused on the importance of Aboriginal cultural spaces not only in Sydney but across New South Wales. In fact, two weeks ago I was incredibly proud to announce \$5 million for the Dubbo Aboriginal cultural space and healing centre, which will be an incredible facility which will focus for the entire western part of the State for First Nations people and provide cultural and healing support. I absolutely acknowledge that there is nothing more important—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So when the Government said that this would be open by 2024, you say that was not a decision of government?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** My understanding is that that was never a government decision. It was certainly an option on the table and I acknowledge that, but there are often options on the table that don't get proceeded with and this was one. That having been said, it is important to note that there will be a significant focus on First Nations programming there in the Cutaway. Today, in fact, you can see Wellama, which is a contemporary Welcome to Country commissioned for the entrance, which is a 10-minute audiovisual artwork by award-winning Aboriginal artist Alison Page. Just this year it was used to host an exhibition as part of the Biennale of Sydney.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But, Minister, you've seen the reaction from the—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You have asked what our focus is on utilising that space for Aboriginal culture. I think it's important that you understand that it is being used for Aboriginal culture.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, in fact I didn't ask that at all. You have seen the reaction from the Metropolitan Local Aboriginal Land Council to the abandonment of this commitment, though? They feel deeply upset that the Government has moved away from this proposal.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I've seen the article, of course. I've met with Nathan. In fact, I met with him last week and this is not an issue that he raised with me.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But do you concede they are deeply upset?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We spoke for an hour about a range of different issues and this is not an issue that he raised in that hour. That's what I'd have to say on that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you saying that the land council don't care about this matter?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, I'm not saying that at all.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It sounds like it.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, I'm not saying that. What I am saying, though, is that we talked about a range of issues that were clearly top of mind and of most importance for the—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There's a long list in Aboriginal affairs, Minister, as you would be aware.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There are, and I'm working my way through them as quickly as I can.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, can I ask why you think there was never a commitment from the Government in relation to the Cutaway? What makes you say there was never a commitment?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Because I've never seen a suggestion or a press release saying that this was the guaranteed government's intention; this was the view; this would definitely happen. I haven't seen a budget line item.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This was Mike Baird's view in 2014, a year before the Cutaway was opened. He was clear about that in public. The word of the Premier is normally—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** This was eight years ago. You're just alleging things that happened eight years ago. All I can say is, from the moment that I came into this ministry, I have not been advised of the fact that it was a government commitment, and that we have a commitment now to turning the Museum of Sydney into an Aboriginal cultural space. Ms Foy might have more information on this but, in terms of the context, I have never been advised that this was ever a formal government commitment at all. It was an option to be considered. Ms Foy, do you have anything to add?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I want to come back to—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, I just think in terms of the context, if you're drilling down, Ms Foy has been around for a lot longer in this space than I have and perhaps she may have some further context to add.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I might put this to Ms Foy: Is it your belief that there was no decision ever taken about the Cutaway or no promise or no public commitment made by the former Premier Mike Baird?

**KATE FOY:** That's my understanding, that there wasn't a formal commitment. There was no formal budget allocated for the Cutaway. What I can say is there were a range of options that were considered. I'm aware of some investigations and some thinking that was done quite a few years ago. We re-enlivened that, working with a number of stakeholders, including the stakeholders you've mentioned, to say what could be possible uses. We always saw this as a civic space and part of that civic space could be around performance. It could be around exhibitions. It could be around other kinds of civic uses. That work that we did led by Wesley, Rhoda and with the metropolitan land council was an input to INSW—Infrastructure NSW—as they further considered, because they are the people that own and manage that site. They had a look at that and we worked collaboratively with them. As the Minister identified, the dedicated cultural centre is at the Museum of Sydney site, that site of first contact.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We'll return to that, Ms Foy, both in a minute and in the official session. Minister, I want to give you the opportunity to respond to one of the concerns that was placed on the public record by the land council and that was this: that it was not the cost but the fact that this might be operated and run by the Indigenous community that was actually the blockage here. I'd like you to just respond to that on the record.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's obviously—I cannot strongly enough disassociate myself from that contention. My fundamental focus as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and in fact in my other portfolios is to ensure that Aboriginal people and Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations in this State are given more resources, more independence, more power to determine their own futures. That's exactly why I launched just last week the Community and Place Grants Program, a \$30 million program under the Closing the Gap structure, which will ensure Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations are able to determine the needs that they have and put forward applications and proposals that they have. Also, obviously, we're returning a remediated Me-Mel to Aboriginal people in this State, and I could go on.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We'll get that, and you could also get your Government members to ask you in the 15 minutes at the end where you can list all the things that you're doing as well.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure, but with the greatest amount of respect, Ms Sharpe, it was implied there that I didn't have a commitment to supporting Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations, and for some reason—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Point of order—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, this is important—

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Minister, I need to hear the point of order.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The Minister has got to be directly relevant. He's not entitled to wander freely in answering. I do want to be very clear, too, that there was no implication. I was in fact giving him an opportunity to respond to that. There was zero implication in that question.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** To the point of order: The Minister does not have to be directly relevant. That standing order in the House doesn't apply to estimates committees.

**The CHAIR:** It does. You do have to be directly relevant, Minister. I think that's been clarified, so we'll continue.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand. I'll just make one final sentence if I may. The suggestion there was that a reason why we wouldn't proceed with the project is because it was going to be controlled and run

by Aboriginal people. The fundamental basis of every decision I make in the space with First Nations people is that they will drive, they will run these sorts of initiatives. Whether it be economic empowerment, NGOs or community organisations, they will be driven and run by Aboriginal people in this State.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, you've said that you don't have any proof or understanding that there was ever a commitment in relation to the cultural space at Barangaroo. I'm looking at the Barangaroo Delivery Authority annual report, page 21, which I don't expect you to have in front of you. But I will read you some aspects of that. It dedicates some time and space to the consultations that were being undertaken in 2013 and 2014, confirming broad interest and enthusiasm for the national centre:

The National Museum of Australia and the Authority led a group including the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the National Film and Sound Archive and the Metropolitan and La Perouse Local Aboriginal Land Councils in consultations with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities about the potential to create an internationally distinctive and highly visited national centre for Indigenous art and culture at Barangaroo.

I'm now just paraphrasing this, because it's too long.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Feel free to read the whole report, Ms Sharpe, if you like.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There were consultations in Perth, Broome and Darwin by Aden Ridgeway from Cox Inall Ridgeway, and further consultations continued. Clearly, there were intentions and action being taken to look at this space. Clearly, people were under the impression that this space was going to be an iconic and very important Aboriginal space within Barangaroo. The whole concept of that area, obviously, is already being used extensively in relation to First Nations activities.

Minister, I want to know. You basically are saying today that that was never a commitment. It was an idea that you thought about—the Government, not you; I know that you weren't the Minister. But the former Premier promoted this idea and the Barangaroo Delivery Authority did a lot of amazing work. It's an amazing place. They clearly were pursuing this idea, and you're just saying that it was never a commitment.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Basically, yes. It was an option that was considered and I think that that's exactly—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Do you think people would be disappointed that there was a lot of fanfare around this and it's just now disappeared? And, frankly, that the excuse for the Government changing its mind for whatever purpose is that you can now just deny that it was ever a commitment?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No. I've admitted that it was an option that was being considered, and that's exactly right. But, particularly in this space, Ms Sharpe—and you know this better than anybody—it is incredibly important that consultation, discussion, engagement on these issues is done in a genuine, deep and collaborative way, and that takes time. Of course, in any government decision, there are going to be options that are considered before a final determination is settled. In terms of the Aboriginal cultural space in this city, my view is that there should be more. There should be—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But it's not going to be at Barangaroo?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No. That's right.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Let's turn to your other proposal: the Museum of Sydney. This will now become a dedicated centre—is that the view you're putting to us? This is where the Indigenous cultural centre in Sydney will be?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What happens, for example, to the existing exhibitions, the existing work, the existing collections that are at that museum?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Obviously, there is a range of different programming at the moment. I'm sure you know the site, Mr Graham. There aren't very many objects there in the museum. It's not a matter of moving a significant amount of objects. In fact, most of the exhibition spaces in the Museum of Sydney are in fact temporary exhibition spaces at the moment. The most recent exhibition, I think it was called *Walking through a Songline*, was extraordinary. In fact, it has already started significant First Nations programming. Obviously, there will be a transition but the Sydney Living Museums, which are shortly going to become the Museums of History, have more than one site. They have 12 sites.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You accept this will be a fundamentally different focus for this museum? Up to now it has been—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, I don't accept it will be a fundamentally different focus. There has always been a focus, for the last few years, in the Museum of Sydney on First Nations. But it will be a united and 100 per cent focus on that. Yes—in conjunction with the Aboriginal Languages Trust, who are providing support and advice in terms of the programming, and so on, that will happen.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But really, to date, this museum has had very little Indigenous programming.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't agree with that contention.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** There has been some in recent years, but very little. It's more of a focus on Arthur Phillip.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Originally, I think that was true. Originally, I think you're right, it told the colonial story of Sydney. But there has been a significant shift in recent years, and that shift will obviously continue as it finally becomes an entirely dedicated First Nations cultural space.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Are you aware that the Sydney Living Museums Aboriginal Advisory Committee had its meetings on hold during all of 2020 and 2021?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not aware of that, but I was at the launch of the First Nations Strategy for Sydney Living Museums.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Do you think it's appropriate for an organisation which is going to be in charge of the sole most important Indigenous cultural centre in the State of New South Wales—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I reject the premise of the question.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —that they suspend their Aboriginal Advisory Committee for all of 2021?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I mean, 2020 and 2021 were obviously extremely unique years in terms of COVID and so forth. All I can say is that I was at the launch of the First Nations Strategy at the Museum of Sydney by an extraordinary young Indigenous leader, Hayden Walsh, who drove and oversaw that—who, by the way, is so impressive I've appointed him to my Museums and History Artform Board. That strategy is deep and profoundly thoughtful, and I absolutely reject any contention that they're not serious about this. The partnership with the Aboriginal Languages Trust, which was established in 2017—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, I'm moving to a different question here.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You don't like the last answer? That's okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Is one of the reasons that the Museum of Sydney is being used here because visitor patronage has been lower than you would hope for this site up to now? Is that one of the reasons why this is the site that is now being examined?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, not at all.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What was the visitation for the last period? Can you tell us?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't have those numbers in front of me. If you'd called Mr Lindsay, who is the CEO, I'm sure he could have answered that question. But I can get that for you on notice, of course.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The last reported figure is 32,000 people. That's the audience reach over an entire year.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** It's not especially high. Would you agree with that, Minister?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think every institution has different roles, and will therefore have different visitation. I mean, a McDonalds on the Pacific Highway is going to have a lot higher visitation than Bennelong restaurant at the Opera House, but they fulfil different functions.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This is a key site of colonisation in New South Wales, Minister. How appropriate do you think it is that this is the place where our Indigenous cultural centre is placed?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think it could not be more appropriate, because Sydney was the first city, obviously, that was colonised. I think, therefore, there is no more important place, symbolically, in this nation, than sending a message that the site of the first Government House, i.e., the colonial control of the State and the nation was exercised from that venue—and that that site is now an entirely dedicated First Nations cultural

centre. I think that sends an extremely important symbolic message about what the priorities are of this Government, and I think, as a society, what we need to do to genuinely reconcile with the past.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Who will run the Cutaway now it is being transformed into an events space—an education, arts and entertainment space? Is this something which is going to be outsourced to some third-party provider?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** This is under the auspices of the Minister for Infrastructure. It hasn't been determined, is my understanding. It's outside the remit of my ministerial responsibilities, but I understand that it hasn't been determined yet. But I can say that any future use of the Cutaway as a cultural facility will retain flexibility to be used for a wide range of programming and events, suitable for a range of large-scale civic and cultural uses, and that will absolutely include First Nations performances and exhibitions and other events that have been used for the Cutaway before, but now with fit-for-purpose facilities. So there we go.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, just returning to Baird's previous announcements, what do you say to the fact that the cultural infrastructure blueprint in 2014 committed to work towards an Indigenous art and cultural centre at the headland park, along with a \$600 million commitment? How does that sit with your dismissal of this?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not dismissing it, Mr Graham. I have just said what my understanding of it is. My understanding of an option that was obviously on the table in 2014 is that it was an option. I'm happy to continue going down this line, but that's my view, and I've had no evidence that there's anything but that view. There was no budget item, there was no—I've not seen any sort of—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you disappointed, Minister, that there was never a budget item attached to this project after all of the announcements?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So you think announcements with no budget is a good thing?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No. What I think is that options should be considered by government, and a range of options need to be considered, particularly in this space, when you're considering how best to recognise and promote and support Aboriginal people and culture in this State. I'm thrilled that that has now happened with the Aboriginal cultural space in Sydney.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** There was a \$600 million financial commitment to that cultural infrastructure blueprint. Why didn't that see this promise delivered?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I just repeat the same answer, and I'm happy to keep doing this all day. The answer is my understanding is that was an option being considered but it wasn't a determined plan that it would definitely proceed.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, are you familiar with the operation of the dedicated First Nations space at Federation Square in Melbourne?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think "superficially" is probably the best way that I can answer that. I haven't visited it, but I would like to. I'm happy to go with you if you'd like to, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sure. It's an Aboriginal-controlled space. It's obviously in a very important part of Melbourne.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Indeed.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I believe that the vision for the Cutaway was, given the Aboriginal history of Barangaroo and the entire process—I accept now that you think there was never a commitment, but are you disappointed that it hasn't been able to have been delivered in the way that it was originally envisaged?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'd answer that question slightly differently. I would say this is an important space—what we've done in terms of the Museum of Sydney. This was done in consultation—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm not talking about that; I'm talking about the options—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm actually about to answer the question. This was done in consultation and conjunction with Aboriginal people, particularly through the partnership with the Aboriginal Languages Trust. Do I think this is it and this is where we should draw a line under and stop? The answer's no. Would I like more dedicated Aboriginal cultural spaces in Sydney? Yes. Would I like a larger one somewhere? I would, and I will continue to look at what can be done.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's a very good effort at doing a Kevin Rudd in asking yourself the questions.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** He's doing his own estimates questions. We don't need The Greens.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's great, and the answers were wonderful, but I'm just trying to understand—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** They were specifically related to your question.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, they're not answering the question that I asked, which is—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But they were.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, they're not.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** They were.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Thanks, Kevin! The question is isn't there a missed opportunity here at Barangaroo to actually establish what was originally envisaged, whether it was backed in or not by the Government over time? Do you believe that this is a missed opportunity?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No. What I would say to that is I think that there is a range of appropriate sites, not only around Sydney but around New South Wales, for—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But this is the most appropriate site.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know that I agree with that contention.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You don't believe that Barangaroo, which was recreated to actually look and feel like it was when the ships came in—this is the whole point. I'm sure you've been down to the events that happen down at Barangaroo.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Of course I have.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** On Australia Day, as the sun comes up, it is absolutely—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I was there, at Djubuguli.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So why is it not the best place to have a dedicated Aboriginal cultural centre?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I just don't agree with the contention of one person that this is obviously and inherently the best place for an Aboriginal cultural centre. I could equally say that the best place for an Aboriginal—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The former Premier Mike Baird seemed to think it was, as did a long list of Aboriginal people who spent years actually doing work to deliver it. It's not one person.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I could equally say that it is most appropriate that an Aboriginal cultural space be at the site of the first Government House in this nation, just to shine a very bright light on the fact that this country was colonised by people from Britain at the expense of the First Nations people and to send a strong message that this site—the site of executive control in this nation for many, many, many years, which is now run by the Aboriginal Languages Trust in conjunction with Sydney Living Museums to be an Aboriginal cultural space—is the most symbolically appropriate space in the nation. I understand your contention. It's not an unreasonable contention, but I say that I have a different view. This is something that doesn't just stop. This is something that will continue to progress in conjunction, consultation and collaboration with Aboriginal people. I will continue to work with them to identify the best places where we can focus on and support Aboriginal cultural heritage in this State, not just in Sydney but across New South Wales. I'm happy to go into a range of issues—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to be clear, the Museum of Sydney site is not being controlled by an Aboriginal-controlled organisation. It's under the auspices of the Sydney Living Museums or Sydney history museums.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** In partnership with the Aboriginal Languages Trust.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm glad you've advocated for the importance of budgets for these institutions. What is the budget for this transformation of the Museum of Sydney?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Good question. We'll have to take that on notice. The understanding is that it's being met from within existing budgets, but we'll take the question on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So there's no additional money?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'll just have to take the question on notice. If we had the CEO of Sydney Living Museums here, he could perhaps provide further information. But I'm happy to take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Could you take on notice the budget for both financial year 2022-23 and over each year of the forward estimates? If your contention is correct, Minister, that this is to be done out of the existing budget—quite a slim budget is the view that's been put to me in my short time as the Arts shadow—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Congratulations, I should say, Mr Graham.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you. It's a pleasure to be here asking you about these issues, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It's a pleasure having you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** In that short time, the view has been put to me that the budget is quite slim for this institution. There are significant new commitments on the horizon in this space, as well, that we'll turn to later. Is it really good enough that this significant transformation and Indigenous cultural centre for New South Wales is done on the cheap out of the existing resources?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Again, I don't agree with the contention. I don't have that information to hand, but my commitment is that this will be done appropriately, respectfully and incredibly well—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Do you think we'd be able to get it this afternoon?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We'll do our best—as would be expected for this sort of institution in Sydney.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When will it be done, Minister? When will this be complete? When will this transition be?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It's started now. It will be an ongoing transition, but it's already begun.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, hence my question: When will that transition be complete?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Again, I'm happy to provide that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is there not a plan for the transition?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But it's an ongoing thing. We've started right now.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When will you consider that it's completed?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know that the celebration and support for Aboriginal cultural facilities and institutions is ever completed. I think that there should be a constant assessment of how we do things and of the representation that Aboriginal people and Aboriginal heritage have in this State. I don't know that there's ever an end day.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, but you agree it's not meeting this mission at the moment. Will this transition be solely to experiences focused on this set of issues around providing an Indigenous cultural centre to Sydney? Will we see the other exhibitions and experiences that are currently located there phased out over time?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, that's my understanding.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When will that have occurred by?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Again, I'll have to take that on notice. I'm sure Mr Lindsay, who is in fact the CEO of the institution, could provide those details, but I would expect it to happen within six to 12 months.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I might just turn to a couple of other budget issues. The first of those is the Powerhouse. I'm referring to the Powerhouse at Parramatta. At the last budget estimates, which was on 15 March 2022, you talked about the target date for completion for this. What is the target date for completion of the Parramatta Powerhouse site, including Castle Hill?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We are on track for a construction completion date in late 2024 in Parramatta.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Then why does the budget say that the date of completion is 2025?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's a good question. I might ask Ms Havilah if she has a response to that.

**LISA HAVILAH:** The target for construction is the end of 2024. The date for opening hasn't been set. Once the building gets handed over to the museum, there will be a period of time where we'll need to fit it out. So that's taking into consideration the fit-out time.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you say "complete at the end of 2024", Minister, that's without actually fitting out the museum?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes. I did say the construction would be completed by the end of 2024. That's not an unreasonable answer.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This is what you said in estimates just a few months ago:  
... our target for completion of the project is by the end of 2024.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The construction of the project, absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Not for the construction of the project, "of the project".

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That was implied. I don't think it's unreasonable to say that, from the Government's perspective, to build the project, we want it done by the end of 2024. Of course, there's going to be some time that will be needed to make this work.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When will the public actually be able to—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** To walk in and see it?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —walk in the front door? I won't turn to the front door issue, but when will the public be able to walk in the front door?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Ms Havilah?

**LISA HAVILAH:** There isn't a date set for the public opening for the museum. That will depend on construction delivery and the fit-out requirements, which we're still working on.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** In March the Minister implied it was going to be the end of 2024, so I do think it's fair to press you, Ms Havilah, as to when that will actually happen. When will the public experience this significant development?

**LISA HAVILAH:** We can't set a date yet.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Treasury has set a date in the budget: 2025. Is that accurate?

**LISA HAVILAH:** It will be the end of 2024 or the beginning of 2025—around that period. We are just cautious about setting a date because there's a lot of work to deliver in terms of the fit-out.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you say "the fit-out", what is actually involved in that fit-out process?

**LISA HAVILAH:** The museum will be handed to the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences, and then our team will, over a period of time, install the exhibitions, ready to open to museum.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** They're quite significant installations. How long could that process take? You just have no idea, is the evidence you're putting to us?

**LISA HAVILAH:** We estimate it will be a period of three to four months.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That's for all those processes, including the installation?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think what Ms Havilah is doing, and I don't think it's unreasonable, is she doesn't want to say, "We will definitely open on 30 December 2024," or, "We'll open on 1 March 2025." What we've all learnt over the last three years is that events will intervene. What she has given—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I agree with that, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Mr Graham, just let me finish the sentence, if it's okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I can understand why Ms Havilah is being—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Can I just finish the sentence, if that's okay?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —cautious. You were specific—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Would you mind if I just finish the sentence, which may go the point that you're making?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —which is why she is now not being specific.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Understood. The witness was, in fact, specific, by saying she would expect that would take a process of three to four months. That is a specific and definitive answer, so I think we would all expect that the museum would be open, at the latest, by the middle of 2025 in terms of public patronage. Certainly, I will be pushing very hard for it to happen a lot earlier than that. It's not unreasonable for the CEO to suggest that there may be events. Obviously, we need to make sure it's done properly. She doesn't want to put a date in the diary—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think you've made the point.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —so that then, in six months' time, you can come back at the next budget estimates and say, "But you said it would be this date."

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You've made the point, Minister.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm glad that you're so concerned about what happens at budget estimates, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am extremely concerned about the budget estimates for the next four years because I look forward to continuing these discussions from this side of the table until 2027 or longer.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Havilah, that fit-out process cannot commence until that construction has all concluded. Is that right? There's no parallel process here?

**LISA HAVILAH:** We will do everything we can to work closely with Infrastructure NSW and our construction partner, Lendlease, to make those processes as concurrent as possible to open the museum as soon as possible.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, I will return to your comments at the last estimates, where you said:

Like all major infrastructure projects, the contractor has made allowances for the effects of wet weather within its delivery program, and the program still remains on track for completion by the end of 2024.

Now this will open in the middle of 2025.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, it won't open in the middle of 2025.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Do you concede—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The first point is that the implication, when discussing contractors and so on, is that we're discussing the build. That's exactly what we were talking about in terms of the specific quote that you make. The second point is we're trying to be as open, honest and transparent as we can be about this. Of course, we would like it to be done and open by the end of 2024. Of course, we'll be working hard to see if that's achievable. But it may not be achievable, in which case there may be a three- to four-month lag, as Ms Havilah has said. When I say "lag", a process of installation and ensuring that the museum is ready to be opened. It's going to be wonderful. What we're missing here—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Turning to the Powerhouse at Ultimo, Minister—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —is that this is going to be an extraordinary and groundbreaking—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Turning to the—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —piece of infrastructure—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Point of order—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —for western Sydney—

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Minister, I have a point of order. I remind you that you have to be directly relevant.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —and for all of New South Wales.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You do have 15 minutes at the end.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The point of order is direct relevance. The Minister is operating under the former standing orders for these committees. He has to be directly relevant, and I'm entitled to move on.

**The CHAIR:** You do, and I will uphold the point of order. You have to be directly relevant.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Meanie.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, I want to ask about the Ultimo Powerhouse Museum. What is the budget for this refit now? You've been on the public record about this.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The budget commitment is \$480 million to \$500 million. That will ensure that this redevelopment will secure the Powerhouse Ultimo's future and deliver, I believe, another world-class institution and another world-class museum for this State.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** It's obviously a significant amount of infrastructure funding—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —for the cultural sector. What will it actually deliver? What does \$500 million deliver?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It will transform the museum into the centrepiece of an entire precinct that will connect Darling Harbour, Tech Central and Pyrmont peninsula.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'd like some tin tacks here.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What does \$500 million buy you?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What does it actually build?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It is located in that environment, so what are you doing to it to make it—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Obviously, at the moment, as you would be aware, we have a design process and competition currently underway, where we will be able to see what the extraordinary offerings will be. In terms of the scope, I might throw to Ms Havilah to discuss the scope of the Ultimo precinct.

**LISA HAVILAH:** The renewed Powerhouse in Ultimo will include upgraded exhibition spaces alongside new exhibition space that will be dedicated fashion and design galleries. We will also have increased public domain, which will connect into all of the changes that's happened around the museum that the Minister just referred to. We will have new education and public program space alongside an academy, which will support regional New South Wales students and the opportunity to engage with design programs, connected with surrounding partners. We will also have new food and beverage spaces that will connect to the public domain as well. But we will also ensure that the museum is fit for purpose in terms of addressing the multiple issues on that site, including issues around circulation and issues around the ability to present and support international exhibitions. It's very expansive in terms of the renewal, and it will give an incredible benefit back to—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Havilah, can I ask about some of those specifics? How much new exhibition space are we talking about?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I'll have to take that on notice, but I can get that for you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How much new education space are we talking about?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I can get you the full details in terms of square meterage.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you say an academy is being established, is that with provision for overnight stays as is the case out at Parramatta?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Can I just quickly add, Mr Graham—obviously, the Powerhouse originally wasn't fit for purpose; it was an old powerhouse. It has needed work to ensure that it's brought up to standard as a fully modern museum, and that's exactly what this will do. In turning its focus inward to that entire precinct, I think it will just rejuvenate that entire part of Sydney. It's incredible exciting.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you, Minister. We're down into tin tacks over here at the moment.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I know. I'm just generally giving a positive and optimistic overview.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Characteristically.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Mallard can ask you to expand on that a bit later.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Don't give me instructions, Penny.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You know you want to.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Havilah, how many food and beverage establishments will be added?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I'll take that on notice and get the actual square meterage for you. The concept with the food and beverage is to connect into the goods line and really think about reorientating the museum to connect with the city so that it can be more useful and connected to its communities in terms of its opening hours, which are currently limited to 10 to five. We're looking at being as much open in the evening as well.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, when will this project be complete and, for total clarity here, when will it be open to the public? When will they be able to see this and wander in the front door?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The design competition has commenced. Well, I'm going to give you a good understanding of where we are. The design competition has commenced. The stage one concept State significant development application has been lodged with the Department of Planning and Environment. We would hope that there will be planning approval by the end of the year, when we will award the winning scheme and architect. The schematic design development will happen in the first six months of next year. We would then expect, at the end of March next year, the stage two State significant development application to be lodged with the Department of Planning and Environment, and we would expect that construction will commence at the end of December next year.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. I appreciate that answer, Minister. That's very helpful. When will the public be able to walk in the front door?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There hasn't been a final date set because we don't know what the scope of the design is going to be.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Approximate year?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Hang on a sec. We're going through the design competition now, and it will, obviously, entirely depend on what design is come up with and what design is agreed upon. It may well take one year, two years—I don't know—but we will be in a position to know that. And that's why I went through all of those issues before, because when the winning scheme and the architect is awarded in December this year, that's when we'll be able to have an understanding of what the likely time frames will be. I don't know, Ms Havilah, if you have anything to add on that.

**LISA HAVILAH:** No, I agree with that position.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Thank you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, why does the budget say this project will be complete in 2028?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We would hope that it would be complete in 2028.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Good. That was the answer I would have welcomed in the first place.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I would like it to be completed earlier than 2028.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Very good. Minister, there's just over \$4 million committed in the budget for this financial year out of this \$500 million. That's a tiny amount, really, of the total amount you're hoping will be spent here. Does that concern you that it's such a small amount this financial year?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, not at all. As you would understand in terms of infrastructure programs, you start out smaller when you're doing business cases and so forth and then build when you actually get into the construction costs.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is the amount that's committed over the forward estimates?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The whole project has a cost of \$480 million to \$500 million.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Hence my question: What is the amount committed over the forward estimates?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know if we have those details.

**KATE FOY:** I do, in my bag.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We'll get that information for you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Ms Foy, if you're able to come back as soon as possible on that, that would be helpful.

**KATE FOY:** I certainly can.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Ms Foy just wanted to add something quickly on Parramatta, if that's okay.

**KATE FOY:** I just wanted to add about Parramatta. We have, and members of the steering committee have, a target for completion and opening the Powerhouse by the end of 2024. There is budget allocated in 2025 because there are always things that need to be done when you complete a project, but I just want to reinforce that I understand we are fixed and determined to have this open by the end of 2024. We are fixed and determined to do it, but as the Minister and Lisa have said, there are things that are outside of our control. I just don't want us to be misinterpreted around our ambition to have this project open.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What does that mean, though, Ms Foy? Will this project be open at the end of 2024?

**KATE FOY:** That is our ambition—is to have it open by the end of 2024. There are often—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How is that going to happen given the information we've just been given that the fit-out won't commence until—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, no, no—

**KATE FOY:** The fit-out happens concurrently as you build—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Which is what Ms Havilah said.

**KATE FOY:** —which is the same as what we're doing with the Art Gallery or other projects. You have a concurrent thing and then you have exhibitions being put in and installed in the last phases of the project. I don't want to be misunderstood about our ambition to have it open by the end of 2024, but understanding that there can be external factors but that is our ambition that we're working towards.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Why does the budget say this will be open in 2025? Who is miscommunicating this to the Treasury?

**KATE FOY:** I would have to go and check on why that 2025 is there, but I'm very clear on our ambition.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You concede this would have been run past the agency, Ms Foy.

**KATE FOY:** It is not unusual for funds to be allocated into the next financial year.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You accept, though, there would have been consultation with the agency for those budget figures?

**KATE FOY:** I will come back to you on the detail of that, but I just want to be definitive about our ambition as a steering committee around the delivery of the project.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Were you definitive with the Treasury when they were writing the budget?

**KATE FOY:** Treasury are part of the steering committee.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And they've made their view clear and public.

**KATE FOY:** I will check why that is the case and come back with a much more detailed answer.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, you've recently taken on Tourism as a new portfolio.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I have.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Congratulations.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, just quickly in answer to Mr Graham's previous question, NSW Treasury *Budget Paper No. 2 2022-23* shows an allocation of \$179.5 million over the next four years. Sorry, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's okay. Minister, obviously with Aboriginal Affairs as well, you'd be aware of the incredible opportunities available for people who come to Australia or visit who want to experience and have contact and have tourism experiences with Aboriginal and First Nations organisations.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Why is the Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan two years out of date? Were you aware, Minister, that there is an Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What I'm aware about is that we are—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, Minister, can you just answer the question I've just asked you. Are you aware that there is an Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I will ask Steve Cox to speak to the specifics of this, but what I would say is that we met in 2022—Destination NSW met with the National Indigenous Australians Agency, NIAA, to discuss the next stage of the Strategic Indigenous Tourism Projects, which is an element—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, that's a national program. Is that correct?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Indeed.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, can I just stop you. You're about to give me an answer that I haven't asked you the question to, which is—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I was just showing our focus and our commitment to Indigenous tourism in this space.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I want to understand what you're actually responsible for as tourism Minister. There has previously been an Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan that went from 2017 to 2020. Are you aware of that?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** So, obviously, I've been in the role for three weeks, Ms Sharpe—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It's okay; you can say no.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —and I'm getting up to speed, but I do think it's appropriate that we ask Mr Cox.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm not trying to get a gotcha moment here for you.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, that's okay.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You're obviously not aware of that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I would say that I am aware of the fact that—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm going to ask Mr Cox in a minute about what he's doing about it.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure, but I just would say that I am aware that the NSW Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 includes living Aboriginal culture as a key strength for New South Wales and that Aboriginal—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many Aboriginal people work at Destination NSW, Minister?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not aware.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We can come to this later, Mr Cox, but I will ask you this afternoon. I just want a particular answer in relation to the Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan, which lapsed in 2020. What's happening? I will ask Mr Cox this question.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'll pass to Mr Cox for some information.

**STEVE COX:** Good morning. Thank you very much, Ms Sharpe. The action plan is being reviewed with NATOC at the moment, so we are continually working across it.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It ran out two years ago.

**STEVE COX:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When did the consultations start for this?

**STEVE COX:** We're finalising that plan, and just doing a review with NATOC on it. It has now been replaced with the Visitor Economy Strategy 2030. All of our actions align with the Visitor Economy Strategy 2030 going forward, and the Aboriginal actions are contained within that document.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So there's not a standalone plan anymore?

**STEVE COX:** Part of that strategy includes the incorporation of the Aboriginal plan going forward.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, but just to be clear, there used to be a standalone plan. There's been a decision taken that there's no longer a standalone plan.

**STEVE COX:** It is part of the Visitor Economy Strategy.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes. Yes or no answers are okay here, just to be clear.

**STEVE COX:** Within that strategy—there is a standalone plan within that strategy.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm not saying that a plan does not exist.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It's here, Ms Sharpe, as well.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm saying there is no longer a standalone Aboriginal Tourism Action Plan within Destination NSW.

**STEVE COX:** All the plans line up within the Visitor Economy Strategy, I think is the right way to summarise it.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Which is the overarching strategy.

**STEVE COX:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No debate about that. I'm just trying to understand what's happened to the previous plan.

**STEVE COX:** There are absolutely plans within that strategy.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What evaluation of the previous plan was there?

**STEVE COX:** We continue to implement the actions of that plan so—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, that's not the question that I'm asking. Sorry, Mr Cox. I'm asking what evaluation was undertaken at the completion of the 2020 plan.

**STEVE COX:** As I said at the beginning, that is currently being reviewed with NATOC, the National Aboriginal Tourism Organising Committee.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So it's taken two years? When did you start working with NATOC?

**STEVE COX:** I would need to take that on notice. I'm not sure of the exact date on that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** If you could do that and come back to me, that would be great.

**STEVE COX:** Yes, absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, I wanted to ask you about Aboriginal Affairs. When was it decided to change the organisational status of the head of Aboriginal Affairs from head of Aboriginal Affairs to a deputy secretary position?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I might pass to Mr Coutts-Trotter to address that issue.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** When I took the role on, I realised that Aboriginal Affairs is a division of DPC. In many people's minds it's still a separate agency, but it has been part of the department for some time now. The head of that function was an executive director role, whereas the head of every other function was a deputy secretary role. So I, in concert with the Minister, upgraded that role to a deputy secretary role. I think the Minister announced that in June, and Mr Shane Hamilton was appointed to that role effective from 11 July.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, I wanted to ask you about land claims.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There was some discussion of this at the previous budget estimates committee, and you acknowledged the outstanding land claims was unacceptable.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Can you tell me how many land claims are still outstanding?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I can. The claims that are undetermined or partially undetermined as at 31 August this year are 39,371.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What was that figure in March?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know. I'm happy to take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Would you be able to take it on notice?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, of course. Absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I know it's an issue that you are concerned about.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** At estimates, you previously said that you established a task force. I'm just trying to understand whether there has actually been any improvement and how many have been resolved.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Can you tell me about how many times the task force has met since March?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I can't. Just give me a moment. I don't know if Mr Ireland has information, otherwise we will have to take that on notice.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I think we will take it on notice for you, if that's all right.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, we will take it on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's fine.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I do have data about the number of claims resolved in the 2021-22 financial year compared to the 2020-21 financial year: 720 resolved in 2021-22 compared to 467 in the year before.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's good. That's a doubling, but 720 is still—I haven't done the maths—a long way from 39,000. We're talking decades here.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, absolutely.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** That's understood.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The way that you outlined it to the previous estimates committee, Minister, was that you were looking also to ask Aboriginal land councils what their prioritised lists were in terms of claims. Has that occurred?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm sorry, I was just reading something else. Could you repeat the question, please?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When you were talking about this in March, Minister, you said that you established the task force.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You then wanted to go to Aboriginal land councils and actually ask them, I suppose, to triage their own claims—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** —to look at the ones that they would like to move forward more quickly. I'm asking you whether that has occurred and whether there are these new lists coming forward.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure, I understand that. I should take a step back and just make it clear that obviously this process is not managed by me. It's managed by the Minister for Lands—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, I thought there was someone that was sworn in this morning who is managing this process.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There are two Ministers who do it in conjunction, which is the Minister for Planning and the Minister for Lands and Water, who are the Ministers who administer the Crown Land Management Act 2016.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm glad you can explain your machinery of government, Minister, because there are some pretty challenging ones in the most recent round. Sorry, is Ms Tsitsikronis—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, she's the registrar.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Just for clarity, this is being led by colleagues in the Department of Planning and Environment. I've got here an update if you would like me to provide it to you, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, thank you.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** There is a project, the LALC20 project, which is engaging with 120 local Aboriginal land councils—sorry, that's 120 land councils have been engaged so far. Some 44 have

expressed an interest in this project. This is a project seeking to prioritise land council claims from the perspective of social impact, economic impact, cultural or spiritual values—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Coutts-Trotter, thanks for that. I might actually come back to this this afternoon. I'm actually very interested in the detail of this but I realise that the time is ticking on the Minister's presence.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Sure.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Obviously, Minister, you would be aware of the Audit Office's report into land claims that was released in April 2022.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It was a pretty scathing report, was it not, Minister?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Basically it talked about the New South Wales Government maladministering the land claims process. What has changed since that report?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Look, I think *Crown land 2031* is important. It's a 10-year strategy setting a new direction for Aboriginal land rights and focused on facilitating social and economic benefits for land councils and for their community aspirations.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, Minister. Is *Crown land 2031* a strategy for all Crown land or is it specifically targeted in relation to Aboriginal land claims?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think it's—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I realise this is not your portfolio but obviously it is key to—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It's not.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Well, you are putting it forward as the key document.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Indeed. I think it's broader, I want to say, but we're happy to take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Can I also say that I'm advised that the Department of Planning and Environment has increased its resources to assess land claims and to accelerate Aboriginal land agreement negotiations, which are agreements that are entered into with local Aboriginal land councils, which are an alternative to determining the land claims on a case-by-case basis. That's to start packaging them together and to prioritise them, as we discussed before. Three of those have been finalised already but we're hopeful, obviously, of more. Clearly, it needs more resources, which I'm advised is happening.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, more resources from where?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Into Lands so that there are, in fact, more people who are focusing on the determination of claims.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Was that in the budget?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know. I've been advised that, but I can take that on notice, happily.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** If you could take that on notice, that would be great. It would be good to know.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's important. I think all of those elements add together, along with the fact that I believe—and I'm happy to be corrected—that the Minister has delegated the responsibility of determining Aboriginal land claims to—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Ms Hawyes, yes. Mel Hawyes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —Mel Hawyes in the department, with the aim of speeding up the process as well. I don't know if you have anything further to add, Mr Coutts-Trotter.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** She has established an Aboriginal Land Strategy division, headed by an Aboriginal executive director. It's a threefold increase in resourcing for the team within that division that

handles claims, and there are actions—number one, the Government accepted all of the Audit Office's recommendations from the report in April. I'm happy to provide an update, on notice, on the progress against each of those actions, if you would like.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, I would really appreciate that. That would be great. Thank you. I'm going to let Ms Higginson ask some questions now.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Can I just start with something that crosses your various portfolios? There was recently an exhibition titled *One Man Soweth and Another Reapeth*. It was in relation to an incredible artist, Doug Heslop, who was to open his exhibition on the twenty-fourth of this month at Singleton's Arts and Culture Centre. It was an exhibition depicting the 1820s Ravensworth Estate massacres of the Wonnarua people. It was called off at the eleventh hour and it was on the basis that—well, we don't really understand. It has caused a lot of controversy and it's causing a lot of angst, particularly members of the Aboriginal community that were really hopeful that the exhibition would go forward as part of a truth and reconciliation act of art. Do you know anything about that, Minister?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't. This is the first I've heard of it. I am happy to look into it, and I will do so. I would make a couple of comments, though, more broadly, if I may, which is about the importance of truth-telling, particularly in terms of public exhibitions. There has just been last year an exhibition called *Unsettled* at the Australian Museum, which was one of the most extraordinary and outstanding exhibitions about colonisation of Australia, which has now won a national award for it, under the leadership of Laura McBride, who is the Director of First Nations at the Australian Museum and is doing an incredible job there. I'm not trying to filibuster; I'm just trying to acknowledge the fact that I think these things are important.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I am so certain there are good things happening. Can I point out to you that the controversy around this perhaps could be related to Singleton council's support for the destruction of the Ravensworth homestead through the mining application of Glencore coal? Minister, would you happily look into that—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** —and really try to alleviate some of the pain and suspicions that are now happening, particularly from the Aboriginal community, which is working around the clock and tirelessly to protect both the European and Aboriginal cultural history and heritage there?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know about the specifics of the exhibition's cancellation or the broader issue, and I'm very happy to look into it and continue to engage on that matter.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Minister, how many section 90 heritage impact permits have been granted in the past 12 months?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Good question. I don't have that information, and I don't know if—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, I don't have it to hand, I'm afraid.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's, I presume, under the auspices of the heritage Minister, I would guess.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** It is.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We'll obviously have to take—

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Could you take that on notice? I would have thought it's pretty important to your—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, I understand its importance. But as I don't have a direct responsibility, I'll get that information from the heritage Minister.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** The impact is to destroy cultural heritage.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** If you wouldn't mind taking it on notice, how many have been granted in the past 12 months, 24 months and five years? How many refusals for the same period of time? I'd be very grateful.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Happy to take all that on notice.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Minister, are you nominating any significant places as Aboriginal places at the moment?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Isn't the Minister for Planning—

**KATE FOY:** The heritage Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The heritage Minister does that.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Yes, but as the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, given how significant a place is to a community, could you please nominate Gaahna Bulla as an Aboriginal place? Could you also please consider nominating the incredibly culturally rich site of the former Dunoon Dam area as an Aboriginal place?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm happy to look at both of those issues and to examine whether there is any intention to nominate either of those places as Aboriginal sites.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Thank you. It's just this resounding issue that we expect Aboriginal communities or supporters of places being designated as Aboriginal places to do that work, but it occurred to some people who contacted me that perhaps the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and the department might be able to take on some of that work.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, and you would understand I'm carrying four portfolios, and—

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I do. I've got 13.5, as a crossbencher.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand, I know this is an issue of significant focus and importance to you. I'll have a look at it, and we'll continue those discussions.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Yes, and it really is just about how we make those government systems work and how we facilitate the only very small processes we have available to Aboriginal communities to get some formal recognition and protection for their places.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There's no question that ensuring government works together to ensure outcomes for Aboriginal people is important, which is what we're trying to do under Closing the Gap by getting all Ministers accountable for the actions and the priority reforms that are under their—anyway, my point is I understand and, yes, there needs to be continued engagement between all sides of government to protect Aboriginal culture and heritage in the State.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Of course, sometimes these can be somewhat controversial and require strong advocacy, given the pressure on those incredible places.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** According to the Commonwealth, the investigation report in relation to Mungo Man and Mungo Lady and their reburials is close to final. It may well have been finalised, and you, Minister, and the heritage Minister may have already seen that report.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I haven't; I just want to make that very clear. I don't know if it's been finalised or not. I'm certainly very interested in it because, as you know, Mungo Man and Mungo Lady were not reburied at the direction of the State Government. I am quite concerned and want to ensure that always when we're looking at, particularly, repatriation of either remains or objects, that's done in line with the wishes of the Aboriginal community. This is really important to me, which is why we have allocated money in the budget in order to significantly increase the amount of de-accessioning of both remains and objects from the Australian Museum to get them back out onto country as quickly as we can. I accept the premise of the question.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Minister, you're aware that the traditional owner applicants that were making the application to the Federal Court for the injunction have sought a copy of the report. Hopefully their access to them can be facilitated at some point, and perhaps that's something that you may be able to assist them with once that report is available. But the question remains how was a third party given access to those remains and their care and control?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That is exactly the right question, by the way. Like you, I am very interested to find out the answer to that question.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Yes, so really it's the advocacy of the traditional owners coming to me—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, Ms Higginson. I guess I should say it is contested, I understand, out there in terms of a number of different Aboriginal groups. Hopefully this report will be able to shine some light on those issues as well.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Minister, I just want to make sure that you're thinking in the same way as the traditional owners in the sense that the Aboriginal advisory group under the National Parks and Wildlife Service is a group. It is a group and it is a representative group, but it is not the only group and voice.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** As I say, it is contested space.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Yes, so therefore in that contest amongst traditional owners, our role is to facilitate, understand and get to a position as best we can.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I absolutely agree.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** There also seems to be an ongoing misrepresentation about the notion of what is free, prior and informed consent. The National Parks and Wildlife Service advisory group does not in and of itself satisfy that obligation requirement that is owed to traditional owner groups and traditional owner people, particularly under the EPBC Act and the Commonwealth. At the moment the role of New South Wales is a bit controversial, and as long as the Minister is cognisant of that then hopefully we'll get some outcomes for those traditional owners who are feeling very aggrieved at the moment. Minister, can I ask you about Splendour in the Grass?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure. Just give me one second.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Splendour in the Grass, as you know, is an enormous outdoor festival. It has experienced some serious difficulties over the COVID years of not being able to do its thing and all the disappointment that goes with that, including the significant losses and hardships experienced. But what we saw this year was an event of a very different form, and I saw it with my own eyes. We saw an extreme weather event take hold of the place, and we saw tens of thousands of people potentially put in a very precarious position. What are we doing about that? We're now on notice that that site and that festival need some particular attention, because it's so important that this festival is able to continue. But we need to question whether the site in its current manner and form is safe and appropriate.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, I agree. Like you, I've also been to Splendour a number of times. I think it's an incredibly important festival, particularly supporting not only Australian artists but also all of the contingent jobs that rely on it. I am a strong supporter of it. In terms of the specifics of the site itself, yes, the severe weather conditions this year made it, I think we all know, a very challenging event. Although, that having been said, I was up at the Sample Food Festival in Bangalow on the weekend and a young fellow was saying to me he had the time of his life on the Friday at Splendour—even though there wasn't any music—because of the mud and the camaraderie.

Nonetheless, that's a small digression. I'm very happy to continue to work with the organisers to discuss how they want to move into the future. I'm committed to supporting festivals in this State, and Splendour is obviously a key anchor one. If they come to me and suggest that they would like to look at, potentially, moving the festival and they'd like to engage with the Government on that, then of course I am not only open to, but I welcome those discussions.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** There's a bit of a bind there because obviously the proponent is currently suggesting that it's all okay. "We had a bus problem, and we'll get through it."—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There clearly was a bus problem, by the way.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I'm sure there was. For the record, I have never been to a Splendour in the Grass on that site.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Haven't you?

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Never. No.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We should go together next year.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sue doesn't like the site.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm sorry.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I was the solicitor on the record, representing the community that challenged that approval—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I see. Fine. Pooh-pooh my suggestion.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** —where the Land and Environment Court actually found that having a festival on that site was unlawful.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** It was the State Government that overrode all the conditions and controls of the local planning authority and pushed that development ahead.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We're pro music festivals. We're pro how it brings community together. We're pro the extraordinary support that it provides musicians and sound technicians and caterers and staging people and lighting—

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** As you know, Minister, there's a lot of concern—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —and the extraordinary benefits that it provides, not just for the region but the entire State. So we strongly believe that they should be supported.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Minister, could you look please at the fact that the egress and access is a major, significant problem in extreme weather events. I think, in all of my expert view on that side, we are so—I'm talking deadly serious—lucky that that event didn't go worse than it did and that we need a serious climate adaptation plan and we need to look at it because young people go there and it is very hard to get in and out in an extreme weather event and the site floods very, very fast and the site is very fire prone for when we're talking about dry years.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes. The premise of your question is patently and obviously correct because of what we've just been through, which is that the site clearly has challenges. There's no question of that. As I say, I'm very happy to have discussions with organisers, to talk with them about the future if I'm approached.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Minister, as you know, First Nations people are vastly over-represented in the specialist homelessness service system. Despite 31 per cent of clients accessing the system identifying as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, just 6 per cent of contracts delivering specialist homeless services involve Aboriginal providers. That's less than 10 specialist funded organisations in New South Wales. What investment and planning's taking place at the moment to address, firstly, the over-representation of First Nations homelessness and to scale up Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to lead those solutions?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'll answer the question, but I just want to make it clear that the Minister for Families and Communities and the Minister for Homes, obviously, are primarily responsible for the issue.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I know.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Nonetheless, I agree that it clearly is an issue that I need to be concerned about, particularly because the National Agreement on Closing the Gap commits us to increasing the proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people living in appropriately sized and not overcrowded housing to 88 per cent by 2031. I understand that that's one of the 17 priority reform areas and we therefore must focus on it, and we are. So in the 2022-23 budget we invest over half a billion dollars in Aboriginal housing. I'll just give you a few bits and pieces. There's \$149.8 million, for example, to deliver 200 new and 260 upgraded homes for Aboriginal families and to install 4,440 climate resilience and energy-saving upgrades, which will help to reduce overcrowding and improve the quality of life, obviously, for tenants.

There's \$67.2 million to continue and expand the Strong Family, Strong Communities program, providing home ownership opportunities and tenancy support to Aboriginal families, delivering housing support to Aboriginal students completing tertiary studies, and promoting the viability of the Aboriginal community housing sector through workforce training and resourcing for maintenance and operating activities. That builds on the AHO's, the Aboriginal Housing Office's, continued efforts to deliver new homes for Aboriginal tenants and upgrades to many existing properties. There have been new five-bedroom homes in western Sydney and Cessnock and Raymond Terrace, for example.

Funding has been provided to the Bowraville LALC—Local Aboriginal Land Council, for the benefit of Hansard—for repairs and the installation of rooftop solar panels and air conditioning on 47 properties. There have been eight units constructed in Casino, including four three-bedroom homes and four two-bedroom rooms, which include adaptable accommodation, which allow for easy modification to become wheelchair and mobility accessible. We also announced, in October 2021, \$12 million to boost the capacity of the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to prevent and respond to homelessness through the Aboriginal Homelessness Sector Growth project. We're conscious of the issue. Clearly, there is more work to be done. But I think that those initiatives show that we are engaged in the area and will continue to focus on it.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Are you satisfied that the Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations are taking the lead? Or are you not yet satisfied?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think there is certainly more work to be done, not just in this space but in all spaces. I'm very focused. I'm not sure that you were here before when we had an engagement about this, but I am very focused on doing all I can to ensure that ACCOs are given the responsibility to lead in not just this space but all areas that directly relate to Aboriginal people and outcomes in this State.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Can I just ask you, finally from me, about the cultural heritage reforms.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** As you know, there's now a bill that is being sent to an inquiry. Does Aboriginal Affairs intend to work to, potentially, seek an outcome on that bill or, as the Minister and the department, do you have your own intentions, to do something parallel, different? How are we going to be engaging on this?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We've been working on this since 2018, since the 2018 discussions, to ensure that we land in a place that is as acceptable for all key stakeholders and Government as we can. We're in the process of developing a draft bill, after discussions with the key stakeholders, to try to ensure that we get to a place where we can legislate on this. I appreciate all that Reverend Nile has done in this space. He's actually been a champion for Aboriginal people for decades. I do have concerns. The Government has concerns about the bill, about its practicality in terms of implementation, about the level of consultation and other bits and pieces. But we'll be looking at the outcomes of the inquiry. I believe the submissions close, from memory, on 15 September. I think the inquiry comes down on 7 November. So we give a commitment that we, the Government, will look at and consider the findings and the recommendations of that inquiry before we then proceed to a draft bill.

I think it's good that it's happening, because it will, hopefully, flesh out more issues and allow us to land in a good place. My hope is that with—Aboriginal cultural heritage has taken far too long to be legislated in this State. Right? There is no question of that. It needs to be done. I know that there is goodwill on all sides of politics to get it done. My hope is that we can do it in a similar way that we did the reparations for the Stolen Generations, back in 2016, and we land in a place looking at finalising and formalising a path that's going to not only be good for Aboriginal people in this State, protect that cultural heritage, but also is broadly supported across all sides of politics. There would be nothing worse than this becoming a contentious culture war issue because it can't. The protection of Aboriginal cultural heritage in this State is too important to allow that to happen.

**The CHAIR:** It's now time for our break. We will return at 11.15 a.m.

**(Short adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back everybody. We'll continue questions with the Opposition.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, I just wanted to take you through a number of strategies that your Government has adopted since 2011 in relation to Aboriginal Affairs. Obviously, OCHRE was the main work that was done in 2011 to 2013 on how does Government speak with First Nations people. What is the status of OCHRE?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** OCHRE continues, particularly its underlying principles and, I should say, contingent structures in terms of the alliances and local decision-making. Many of them do extremely good and important work.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sure, so just—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, I am answering the question. That's the starting point. The second point that I want to make is that—the fundamental implication of your question is that there are other strategies and how do they all work together. I shouldn't probably put words into your mouth.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You should probably wait until we get there, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'll wait until we get there. That's where we are with OCHRE.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I just want an answer on OCHRE.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure, there's an answer.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to be clear, OCHRE was evaluated in 2019, was it not? I know that you're new.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, there was an evaluation in 2019.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What has happened since then?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think that there is much important and valuable work that's done under the OCHRE strategy. Now, it is quite clear to me—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No doubt about that, Minister, but it's not what I'm asking you.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm asking you what happened after the evaluation. Has the Government formally responded to it?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Obviously that was before I was made a Minister in December last year. I don't know if Mr Coutts-Trotter has any information on that.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, I don't have it to hand, I'm afraid, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We're happy to take that on notice and provide information for you.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Obviously that's a big strategy, lots of consultation. That was done. In terms of trying to do things, then in 2017 Gladys Berejiklian became the Premier and set a range of Premier's Priorities, is that correct?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, I wanted to ask you about two of those, obviously, which is HSC attainment for Aboriginal people—how is that tracking?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't have that information on me. I'm happy, obviously, to source it, but what I would say is that clearly there are a number of issues under Closing the Gap—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, we're going to get to that, Minister. Just wait. I'm trying to work through the various commitments that your Government's made in relation to Aboriginal Affairs and the outcomes for Aboriginal people in this State. I'm just trying to understand where we're at, because it's complicated.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It is complicated.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Correct.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It's appropriate, I think, that underneath the Premier's Priorities should sit focus on outcomes for First Nations people.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Correct. We're going to come to that. The proportion of Aboriginal students attaining the HSC has gone backwards, Minister. Are you aware of that?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand that there have been some of the Closing the Gap targets, particularly, and the—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, I'm not talking about the Closing the Gap targets; I'm talking about the Premier's Priorities that were put in place in 2017. I'm wanting to understand that you are aware that HSC attainment for Aboriginal students has not improved.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not aware of that fact.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The second item that I wanted to ask you about was the number of children being re-reported in out-of-home care. I know Mr Coutts-Trotter is well across this. We've talked about this a lot. But clearly a couple of issues to mention—one is there's an increasing proportion of First Nations children in out-of-home care, and the figures in relation to the number of children being re-reported are, again, not meeting the Premier's Priority target. Are you aware of that, Minister?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am deeply concerned about the high rates of Aboriginal children who are in out-of-home care and the impacts that are felt on those children and their families and the communities. I am well aware of this issue because Closing the Gap commits—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We're going to get to that, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, this is exactly the issue. It commits to reducing the rate—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, correct. But we're going to get to that. I'm not asking you about that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —of over-representation of Torres Strait Islander and Aboriginal children in out-of-home care by 45 per cent.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We're going to get to that, Minister. I'm asking about commitments that your Government made over a long period—this is not new stuff. Closing the Gap is looking into the future to try to improve things. I'm trying to look at the record of your Government in relation to the priorities that have been set previously.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Understood.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** On these two you're not going well. And I'm not suggesting for a minute that you're not concerned about them and I'm not for a minute suggesting you are personally responsible for these given that you've been in the position for a very short period of time. However, I think it is perfectly reasonable for me to ask that you, on behalf of the Government, explain the status and nature of these and what's being done to try to achieve these. I do understand that the Premier's Priorities are not totally in your purview. I'm trying to understand how Aboriginal Affairs interacts with the Premier's Priorities.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm happy to do that. This is why Closing the Gap is important because it sets—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, Minister, we're going to get to that. You're going to get to tell me what you're doing in the future.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** If you're talking about—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm asking about the commitments that this Government made in 2017 to try to achieve these priorities that have not been met.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** And you specifically said, "What are you doing to address them?" I was going to try to tell you—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** And you're going to give me a long list of things that you're doing—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —what I'm doing to address the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** —in the future. I want to know what's going on now.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Point of order: We've not had to do this point of order today, but obviously the Minister is trying to answer the question. Ms Sharpe is talking over him. I'm concerned for Hansard being able to record that dual—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** They're okay. They're used to me.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** We're all a bit used to you.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** And we're used to each other too.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** So you two can take it outside or we can have it more orderly.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Okay. I will let the Minister answer the question.

**The CHAIR:** I will just rule—everyone involved one at a time. Thank you.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand where you're coming from. But this is specifically valid to addressing this issue. Obviously, we need to reduce the over-representation of Aboriginal children in out-of-home care, which is a direct—one of the specific priorities under Closing the Gap.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, just to be clear, just to give you the figures and the numbers of the problem: In 2011-2012 the proportion of Aboriginal children in care was 35 per cent. In 2021 it's now 43 per cent, and it has increased every single year.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm happy to answer the question, which is to tell you what we're doing. What we're doing is working hand in hand with the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations, or CAPO, to define programs that are going to address this specific need. In this budget we actually did that under a number of programs. We've allocated \$9.9 million over four years for the Aboriginal Child and Family Advocacy Support pilot.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Franklin, I'm not asking you to give me a list of how much money—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** With respect, you were. You said, "What are you doing to address this?"

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, I'm actually trying to have a conversation with you—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** And I was happy to tell you what we're doing to address it.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Well, no. You can get Mr Mallard or Mr Rath to ask you—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But you asked me, "What are you doing to address it?"

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Well, you did. I'm quoting you directly.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Well, let me reframe my question if you don't understand the nature in which I was trying to ask it.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Happy to answer any question you ask.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** And I'm happy to take responsibility for not being clear.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No problem.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The issue is that the Premier's Priorities were put in place in 2017 and it is now 2022. My understanding is that your understanding is the Premier's Priorities are still a priority for the Premier and for the Government?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm sorry, it was a little Gilbert and Sullivan-esque there for a moment, but nonetheless—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are the Premier's Priorities something—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Of course, those priorities—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Okay. How are they being reported? Mr Coutts-Trotter can answer this, because I have asked him almost every estimates about this, for probably the last seven years.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm happy to pass to Mr Coutts-Trotter for the eighth time.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** On the proportion of children in out-of-home care who are Aboriginal, the proportion of children who are Aboriginal has risen because the numbers of children in care have fallen and the fall in the number of children in care is most marked among non-Aboriginal kids. The number of Aboriginal kids in care is stable but, with the overall population falling, their share rises. Over the past five years we have seen a fall in the number of Aboriginal children coming into care. There are some interventions that have been deployed over those previous five years that have had an impact.

If you look at the rates of kids in care around the nation, they have been rising. In New South Wales, for the past five years, they have been falling. So it is a mixed picture. What is really very clear, though, is that if we are to make further significant progress, we won't achieve that by simply running the system we have harder and faster. We have to make some fundamental changes to the way non-Aboriginal agencies engage with Aboriginal people, communities and Aboriginal-controlled organisations. There is a lot of work that colleagues elsewhere in government can talk to, particularly in DCJ, about attempts to do that.

The only other point I would make, in terms of the Premier's re-reporting measure is, yes, it remains a priority. The most recent published data is from 2021. We saw a reduction for a number of years and then an increase. I keep in close contact with my former colleagues on this. The good news is that the three strategies that have been deployed appear to be working, and I think the next dataset to be published will show a significant improvement and a credible trajectory to achieving that target.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The figures in relation to re-reporting, are they broken down between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I'm not sure how they're published but, of course, they can be, because there was a lot of focus on—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Could you take it on notice?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I'm happy to.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That would be great. Thank you. I suppose my question for you, Minister, is as Minister for Aboriginal Affairs—I understand that you are not—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Directly responsible for them?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But I'm trying to understand how, in government, those are fitting together with things like Closing the Gap. Just to give you some context, my understanding of the Premier's Priorities is that Mr Coutts-Trotter is in charge and that the various secretaries have to get together. It is part of

their KPIs and it is part of what they have to work to, and there has been an ongoing working group over a period of time. There is now Closing the Gap. Is that a separate process?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, and, obviously, how does that interplay with the local decision-making processes and the alliances? Clearly, this is an issue that people have been considering. I guess I say a couple of things. Firstly, I make no apology about the Government putting further focus and placing further import on these issues. I think that's a good thing.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No criticism, Minister, about that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** With the new deputy secretary's appointment, Shane Hamilton, I have asked him to undertake a review of how these constituent bodies all work together in terms of providing the best outcomes for Aboriginal people, on the ground, in community. Because we want to make sure (a) that the resources of government are united and directed in achieving those outcomes, but (b) that the broader community, particularly Aboriginal organisations and the Aboriginal community, understand how it fits together. We don't want people to think that either LDMs are the only ones delivering outcomes or Closing the Gap is the only thing delivering outcomes or a focus on the Premier's Priorities. What we want is all of those to mesh together, and that is exactly the body of work that Mr Hamilton is doing now to ensure that we make that as smooth and efficient as possible.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How does that work with all of the other government agencies that are also doing their own consultations?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Every three months we have meetings between the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations and all clusters, which has all Ministers attend these 10, I want to say, different—how many clusters are there?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Ten.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** These 10 different cluster meetings, with all of the Ministers and all of the key public servants, along with the representatives of all of the—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, that's how you're doing the cross-government consultation. But each of those agencies is doing consultation on the ground with Aboriginal people, are they not?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, and they have to report back on their outcomes, what they're doing, their strategies and against their agreed-upon targets—at each of those meetings—and provide information on the progress in that specific way.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, what is the future of the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** NCARA? That review will speak to that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, the review that you're talking about is trying to bring all of those programs together, but I'm asking you now specifically about NCARA.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think NCARA is a really good and important organisation.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to be clear, your Government established this under OCHRE, did it not?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, that's what I'm saying. It is a good organisation. It is the umbrella organisation over all of the regional alliances and the LDMs, and I think that it does a good and important job.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So they're funded until October?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, that's not true.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When are they funded until?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Until 30 June next year.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you also aware, though, that they also have two separate reviews that they're in the middle of? Their statewide evaluation—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm aware.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** —and the NSW Ombudsman is also reviewing—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, I'm aware of that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So why are you subjecting them to a third review, happening all at the same time?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, because it's not just subjecting LDMs to that review. This is a broader and holistic—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm sorry. Why are you asking them to participate in a third review?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Because I would've thought it is in their interests to work out or to be part of—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Was there not a review of the entire OCHRE program, which presumably included NCARA, in 2019?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What I want is an understanding and an investigation and an assessment of how all of these programs work together. I have had feedback from the community that there is some confusion about that—and concern, frankly. I will be brutally honest with that. LDMs have felt some level of concern about the fact whether CAPO and Closing the Gap are now delivering outcomes on the ground, when they already have a number of structures that are working and delivering on the ground. To which I say I am utterly ambivalent about the vehicle that delivers outcomes for Aboriginal people on the ground.

I support all of these constituent bodies and all of these organisations and all of these programs, but I want them to deliver. I need to make sure (a) there is not inane replication of bureaucracy, and (b) that all of the programs that are established are actually delivering outcomes on the ground. That is what this review seeks to assess: to make sure that we're actually achieving what we want to achieve, to address a number of the issues which you've already raised in this session.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to be clear, though, NCARA, in terms of their future, is there until 30 June.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, they're funded each year. The automatic funding structure for NCARA and alliances is a year-by-year funding, and they are funded until 30 June next year.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When was the last time you met with NCARA?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Probably two weeks ago, I think. Yes, two weeks ago.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, I want to move to Closing the Gap. To preface this, part of the reason why I wanted to take you through those issues this morning was that in previous budget estimates, so in 2017—and I should have checked whether I actually asked, then. I would have had exactly the same answers, which was that the Premier's Priorities were going to deliver change and there was fundamentally going to be an improvement. I suppose what I'm pointing to is that there has not been an improvement in terms of those two key measures that the Government decided were two of the key measures. We've now got Closing the Gap, which everyone welcomes, and I know there's been a huge amount of work that's gone into it. I do believe it has been a lot of joint work with Aboriginal-controlled organisations in terms of trying to measure those.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** And I'm personally deeply committed to this.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, I know. That's great. How is it going to be better this time?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think it is going to be better this time because it is actually being done in genuine collaboration with Aboriginal people in this State. The 27 programs which were announced under this budget were developed by officer-level working groups in conjunction with CAPO—representatives from clusters in conjunction with the relevant constituent bodies of CAPO. Together, they came up with the programs, all of which have been fully funded. The point that I would make is that there is now buy-in from all parts of both government and community. When I was in Lightning Ridge with the Premier to announce this Closing the Gap funding, what I said was, "Gone are the days when government tells Aboriginal people what's best for them." We have to work together in genuine partnership, and that's why this is different. You're right, Ms Sharpe—I know you're right—that this is really challenging. Yes, some of the baselines have gone back, but a number of them have improved.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, Minister. These are more than baselines.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, I agree with you.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** These are the targets that the Government sets to show progress.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I absolutely agree with you. That's why I'm excited and enthused that not only do we have in New South Wales this genuine collaboration and partnership for the first time ever but that at

a national level there's such focus on doing this across the nation. I had a meeting with Minister Burney and all of the State Aboriginal affairs or Indigenous affairs Ministers in Adelaide—I think it was last week—and there was actually a lot of praise for New South Wales and what we're doing in terms of the targets that we've set and the collaboration—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The targets are great, but unless you meet them, Minister—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —and also, by the way, the reporting. We're the only State in the nation that's actually reported back the outcomes of what we're required to do federally.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's great. Can I just ask you a couple of more specific things?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sure. I appreciate your support.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many dedicated staff have been employed in CAPO? What resources have you given them to support the NSW Implementation Plan?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We've given them significant resources, including a significant uplift in this—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't have those figures in front of me.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You can take them on notice?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But all I'm saying is—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Ireland, I'm going to be asking you this afternoon.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Let's perhaps allow him to answer the question now if he has that information, which he may not. Welcome, Mr Ireland.

**TIM IRELAND:** So from the 2021 budget, CAPO was provided \$3.9 million to employ—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Over what period?

**TIM IRELAND:** Over 18 months. That takes their contract up to August this year. Then, under the 2022-23 budget, an allocation was made to further the partnership with CAPO.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many extra staff did that \$3.9 million equate to?

**TIM IRELAND:** I might need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, that's fine. So it was \$3.9 million in 18 months. What was it in the 2022-23 budget?

**TIM IRELAND:** Just let me check.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I want to say \$4.6 million, but I might be wrong.

**TIM IRELAND:** It was close to 10, but I'll just take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It's okay. If you take it on notice, we can come back.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, aren't you looking at the New South Wales Government and NSW CAPO partnership funding. Is that right?

**TIM IRELAND:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** So when you say "10", I think that's over 2022 to 2024.

**TIM IRELAND:** That's right—over two years.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, so it's \$4.6 million for 2022-23 and then \$4.6 million for 2023-24.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Again, are you able to tell me how many extra staff that's provided to CAPO to do the work?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I can't, but—

**TIM IRELAND:** I think that will be dependent on their model and how they work to deliver on the work that they're doing.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to clarify, they're the employers of the positions. Is that correct?

**TIM IRELAND:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What is the role of the regional alliances in relation to this process?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's, I guess, the point that I just made before, which is that we need—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Subject to review?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes. The regional alliances—if you look at the work that La Perouse does or Barang, some of the work that is being done by the alliances on the ground is extraordinary.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No doubt about that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What we need to do is to make sure that it fits together because we're doing this in a new way. Obviously, CTG is a different focus, a new focus for government. You're right to say that there was already a pre-existing policy position and set of programs. I believe that LDMs and alliances are really important, and I think that their work needs to be—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But that's not what I'm asking you, though, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, just remind me of the question.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Do they have a role—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** —formally within the Closing the Gap infrastructure that's been put in place? If so, what is it?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** In terms of their ongoing relationship with Closing the Gap, that's being assessed now.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So it's subject to review. You've answered that; that's fine.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Could I just give you one more piece of information, which is the Community and Place funding that I announced before. It is basically funding of up to \$250,000 for actual programs or infrastructure that's going to make a difference to Closing the Gap on the ground, like, for example, a bus which, when the Premier and I were in Coonamble, the community said they really wanted so that they could take their old people who needed health care to hospital in Dubbo et cetera. LDMs, along with all other organisations, have been encouraged to apply for those grants.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is it fair to say, Minister, that Local Decision Making was a creation of Aboriginal Affairs but there's now been additional things added onto and on top of it, and that it's not considered to be the primary way in which the Government is negotiating and consulting with Aboriginal groups across the State?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, I wouldn't say that. I don't see that one has supremacy over another. I think that there is value in all of these constituent bodies. I think that clearly LDMs have a focus on the ground. That's why some of their constituent organisations—their member organisations—were part of the officer-level working groups, developing up these 27 Closing the Gap proposals. But what I would say is CAPO generally has a more statewide focus and understanding, although they do have constituent organisations like AMSs, ALSs and so forth on the ground that do work specifically within community. LDMs are deeply connected into local communities, and they have an extremely important role too. My view is that all of these organisations provide significant value to delivering outcomes for Aboriginal people on the ground in this State and all of them should be supported. But, obviously, because of exactly what you highlight—that there was an original strategy, there is now an additional strategy in terms of Closing the Gap—we need to ensure that they—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is there another strategy coming on top of that? Given that OCHRE is kind of complete and, as I said, it has sort of been hanging since 2019—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know that it's been hanging. I was—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There's been no formal response, as I understand.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I was down in Wagga and I met with the alliance. When would that have been? Three days ago, four days ago. The work that they're doing on the ground of that whole region is extraordinary. So they're not hanging; they're out and active and—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What is the primary strategy that will guide the work of Aboriginal Affairs NSW going forward?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What our aim is in this State is to close the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, full stop. That is our aim. Clearly, in order to do that there are 17 nationally agreed on priority reform areas—or targets, I should say. There are four nationally agreed on priority reform areas, to which we've added a fifth, which is the economic empowerment one. But there are 17 targets, which everybody is trying to fulfil and to focus on nationwide. That is what our fundamental focus is on. That having been said, there is a whole range of vehicles that will be able to assist in the delivery of those outcomes. I see LDMs as an important part of being able to deliver on the ground for community. Their relationships with other community organisations will be absolutely profoundly important because they actually know what's happening on the ground, as do the constituent bodies of Closing the Gap and of CAPO as well.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, I understand there's going to be a review of funding for Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations. Is that correct? It may not be correct; I'm willing to concede this.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Could you give me a little more information?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm advised that you're going to be undertaking a comprehensive review of funding issues faced by ACHOs.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** ACCOs?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** ACCOs, sorry.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know if Michael or Tim have anything.

**TIM IRELAND:** One of the funding initiatives in the budget includes an ACCO comprehensive support package, which looks at—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That would be it.

**TIM IRELAND:** —what an Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisation may require to effectively deliver services across the State, to inform government on how many—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That was announced in the budget, was it?

**TIM IRELAND:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is there a terms of reference for that?

**TIM IRELAND:** No, it hasn't commenced yet. It is \$1.9 million over two years to try to test what we need to learn from Aboriginal Community-Controlled Organisations to deliver.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It's not about cutting funding or anything like that; it's about ensuring that we maximise their role.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I know. I'm asking the question. Don't assume that I'm heading towards an outcome.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I would never assume with you, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm asking the question. Who is going to be undertaking that research?

**TIM IRELAND:** The model that we're looking at at the moment is having a conversation with CAPO about how we commission them to undertake that work.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Could I just quickly correct the record? In my enthusiasm for clusters, I thought there were 10. There are, in fact, nine.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It's very confusing. The Government keeps creating new ones.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** There are nine plus the Public Service Commissioner. I have 10 in mind, but—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's fine. As I said, it's confusing for all of us.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, we might turn back to your Tourism portfolio. Congratulations on your ascension to this role. I look forward to seeing what you do. I want to ask about the Feel New in NSW campaign. Data provided by Destination NSW shows that the majority of this advertising campaign was, in fact, spent in New South Wales. Can you confirm that is correct?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, I was trying to find my note. I have a number of folders here. Could you repeat the question?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The question is this: Feel New in NSW, the campaign designed to bring people to New South Wales—most of the money appears to have been spent in New South Wales. Is that correct?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'll ask Mr Cox to make some comments on this, but that wouldn't be surprising, if that were the case. I'll ask Mr Cox to comment.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I might indicate, Mr Cox, I'm just keen for you to confirm those figures.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** They did switch their focus to domestic travel before the international borders reopened. I'm saying that it intuitively makes sense—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm happy to take either—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —but I won't pre-empt Mr Cox.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —but I think we're with Mr Cox at the moment.

**STEVE COX:** Good morning, Mr Graham. I would need to take on notice the exact split. I did actually publicly record those in the recent media article so, if you're taking it from that article, that would be correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Those figures that were reported publicly—36 per cent of the campaign in New South Wales, 28 per cent in Victoria and 21 per cent in Queensland—they were the figures you used—

**STEVE COX:** That's correct. The reason for the higher split to New South Wales was the timing of the original launch, which, as you recall, would've been the back end of last year, when borders were still closed and there were different levels of travel between destinations. It was also very important to be providing travel within New South Wales—so for Sydneysiders to travel through the rest of New South Wales and into regional New South Wales, which has been the lifeblood of their businesses during the period of the pandemic, and from regional New South Wales back into Sydney.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Mr Cox, when we say the campaign generated 2.1 million leads, presumably more than a third of those were from New South Wales. They were actually New South Wales people clicking on the website.

**STEVE COX:** I would need to get that data. The 2.1 million leads is the total number that went there, but it would include people from outside the destination. We record visitation as somebody from outside of 50 kilometres from the destination.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you for that clarification.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But we also want people from New South Wales to visit other parts of New South Wales. That's an important part of the strategy, particularly while we are still getting international—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You're entitled to put that view. I'm asking this specific question: Of the 2.1 million leads, is it common sense that one-third of those would've come from New South Wales?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'll leave that with Mr Cox.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think you've taken that on notice.

**STEVE COX:** Again, I'll take it on notice to give you the exact numbers.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Of the \$120 million brought into the State's visitor economy, it'd be common sense that more than one-third of that would be from New South Wales. Is that—

**STEVE COX:** Again, to get the exact numbers, we'd need to take that on notice. I think the point is, as the Minister was just saying, visitor spend within New South Wales is critically important, especially during the period of the pandemic, when Sydney was supporting the visitor economy of regional New South Wales.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I agree with that. I think you're taking that on notice.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** In fact, the Ballina Byron airport and the route between Sydney and Ballina-Byron was the busiest air route in the country for quite a while.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, I accept the economic case of your argument, but why is the Government promoting this as \$120 million brought into the State's visitor economy, when \$40 million or \$45 million of it started here?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I would argue that the \$120 million has been spent on the visitor economy in New South Wales.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But it hasn't been brought into the State. Do you agree with that?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think we're getting quite semantic here.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm referring to the Government's argument about this subject.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You could argue—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm just asking if you agree with me.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** If we're going to go down semantics, and I'm happy to do this anytime, you could argue that \$120 million has, in fact, been brought into the visitor economy. That doesn't mean it has been brought into New South Wales externally from New South Wales, but it has been brought into the visitor economy from people who, potentially, otherwise wouldn't have travelled, whether that's intrastate or interstate.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The Government has got a bold commitment to \$65 billion of visitor expenditure by 2030. How much of that target is not attracting people from Victoria, Queensland or, perhaps, across the globe, but simply getting people from New South Wales to move around New South Wales?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I know that, of that \$65 million, \$25 million—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Sixty-five billion.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sixty-five billion. Apologies. Twenty-five billion is envisaged to come from regional tourism. I believe that \$10 billion is to come from day trips, if I remember correctly. As I say, I'm only just getting my head into this space. Perhaps Mr Cox will have some more information.

**STEVE COX:** Again, I think the numbers, I'd just need to check for the exact—I'm happy to take it on notice, but I'm also happy to give you the exact numbers in the afternoon session. The numbers are within the visitor economy strategy itself, so they are to hand—the splits between intrastate and day-trip visitation, interstate visitation and international visitation. Those numbers are available.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Just to add, I have the very document right here. On page 26 it says that domestic day trips, we envisage to have \$10 billion by 2030, up from \$8.3 billion in 2019.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And you agree that \$17 billion of this is coming from international tourism in the 2030 target? It's really the breakdown between the \$47 billion—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** And that's up from, by the way, \$11.4 billion in 2019.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm clear on that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's a significant increase—basically, a 50 per cent increase.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** My question, though, is how much of the \$47 billion of domestic tourism that we're trying to generate is simply New South Wales citizens moving around?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand the question. I'm answering as best as I can, which is to say that \$10 billion of that is in terms of day trips. In terms of the more detailed part of the question, I'm very happy for us to take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think Mr Cox has taken that on notice. Of the \$65 billion—\$17 billion in international and \$47 billion on domestic—where does the other \$1 billion of visitor expenditure come from, if not international or domestic tourism?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I assume that we're talking about decimal points here, but I don't know.

**STEVE COX:** I would expect it's a rounding error, but I'm happy to take it on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Not interstellar travel?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Flying cars.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Don't encourage me on the flying cars.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Don't get him on the flying cars.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We were promised flying cars, by the way, in *The Jetsons* when I was a kid.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Your Government has promised it.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I want flying cars.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** In the next term of Parliament.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Graham's been pursuing it in the Transport estimates. You should read the transcripts.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** It's Mr Graham's new mirrorball.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I love the mirrorballs. Can we bring that back?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, this isn't what Victoria is doing. Victoria is advertising in Victoria, Queensland, New South Wales, Western Australia, Tasmania, Canberra and New Zealand. Why are we focusing our expenditure mainly in New South Wales with this campaign?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We're not. Even by your own figures, it's—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We are, by Mr Cox's figures.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You said "mainly". That implies over 50 per cent.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The greatest single expenditure in New South Wales.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Fine. But if we're talking about semantics—we can continue to talk about semantics—what we understand is that there is enormous—we are the premier State in this nation. We understand that there is enormous value in people in New South Wales travelling to other parts of New South Wales, because we have such an extraordinary variety of opportunities for people to experience, whether that's beaches, whether that's vineyards or whether that's the snow-capped mountains of Thredbo and Jindabyne.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Why do we have to spend so much money convincing our own citizens to visit their own State? It seems counterintuitive when the whole focus of these campaigns elsewhere has been to get people to travel from Sydney to Melbourne, for example.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand the question.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Intrastate.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The Victorian Government has done that to great effect.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** What I would say is that the last three years has fundamentally changed how people see the world and their place in the world, and it has meant that people don't adhere to traditional forms of behaviour that they had done for many years. So people have been concerned about COVID. People have been inside on the couch. People have been watching Netflix. We all know that. But what we need is to ensure that we get them out the door and seeing the extraordinary value of what this State has to offer, and that's good for everyone. It's good for them in terms of their mental health, in terms of their connectivity with their family, their friends and others, but it's of course also extremely important for the broader cross-section as well of the economy and the visitor economy. I'd also make the point that—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, I put this question to you: Has Destination NSW made an offer to bring the Logies to New South Wales?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's a little non sequitur, but nonetheless I'm happy to pass to—I don't know details of that particular question. But before we get there, can I just say, there is one final point I wanted to make.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** If you're happy to do that briefly, I'm comfortable.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am. The inherent premise of your question is moving people around New South Wales is bad. I don't agree with that premise but I would say—or it's not where we should be focusing perhaps is a better—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You're inviting a response.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand that. I don't agree with the premise; that's fine. We are however focusing on bringing more international people back in terms of the \$60 million aviation activation fund. Just two weeks ago I announced two new planes weekly from Tokyo to Sydney, so we're conscious of it.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you for that. I do have to respond that, no, that is not the suggestion I'm making.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But we'll turn to Mr Cox.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Mr Cox.

**STEVE COX:** So am I answering the—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We're on the Logies.

**STEVE COX:** The marketing piece, to answer your question about where we invest our dollars—so it's important to recognise there's—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** No, Mr Cox, the question is: Has Destination NSW made an offer to bring the Logies to New South Wales?

**STEVE COX:** We are always looking at major events—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That's not the question.

**STEVE COX:** —and we pursue them aggressively, and the detail of which events we are in conversation with is commercial in confidence at any point in time.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Conversation I'd accept. Has Destination NSW made an offer to bring the Logies to New South Wales?

**STEVE COX:** Again, the details of any communications around events are commercial in confidence. As you could appreciate, they're a commercial nature and we're not at liberty to be able to discuss what we may be speaking to at any moment in time.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Mr Cox, you're here at the Parliament talking to the Parliament about your operations.

**STEVE COX:** Sure.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm not asking about the details of the deal you've done. I'm asking: Has an offer been made to bring the Logies to New South Wales?

**STEVE COX:** Again, we look at a very broad range of events, and lots of conversations occur at different times. Those conversations are commercial in confidence in the interests of the people of New South Wales.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is commercial in confidence about the fact that you've made an offer like this? Why can't you discuss—

**STEVE COX:** Any event that we may show interest in will therefore raise the interest of other markets, other destinations, other countries and the like, so the minute other people in the competitive set know that we may or may not have had a conversation around a particular topic, say, for example, South by Southwest—if other markets had known that we were talking to South by Southwest at the time, then those markets would engage.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But you've gone further than that, haven't you? And that's why it's appropriate to ask, because you've gone further than just a conversation. Can you confirm that?

**STEVE COX:** Again, conversations with relation to events are commercial in confidence.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm not very comfortable with that answer, Mr Cox, I have to say.

**STEVE COX:** Okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** At what point do you feel you would be able to disclose to the Parliament when you've signed a deal? Where in the deal pipeline for these events would you feel comfortable disclosing this?

**STEVE COX:** At the point when we have secured the event and make a public announcement.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What legal issues have you struck in dealing with this issue, trying to attract this event to New South Wales?

**STEVE COX:** As I said to you previously, I'm not trying to be difficult, sir, but if we make any conversation around events in the public domain no matter what stage they may be, we talk to events all across the world all of the time on an ongoing base and that information needs to be kept private and confidential for both parties and also in the interests of the people of New South Wales so that we can secure the best possible deal on the events that we are targeting as part of our strategy to grow the visitor economy.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you look at the events across Australia and you look at an event like the Logies, what do you see it might bring by way of visitors given that's your key target?

**STEVE COX:** We look at events across the broad spectrum. There is a variety of ways that we might look at any particular event. If it's an event investment, the primary measure is always visitor spend and how much money is spent in the area. Sometimes we can look at things that may be seen as an event as more of a marketing investment. In that case, it's around the exposure for the brand, for the destination and it becomes a media buy assessment and it would not be seen as an event, it would be seen as a marketing investment.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So that key test of visitors may be waived when it comes to an event such as the Logies, using this now as an example.

**STEVE COX:** As I said, I'm not making any specific commentary with relation to the Logies, but we do look at the marketing return as well as the visitor return.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, have you commenced an audit into the commitments that were made by the previous Minister in this Tourism portfolio, Minister Ayres, to see what decisions have been particularly recently made—such as perhaps this example—as to whether it stacks up based on your assessment?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am continuing to follow the advice of Destination NSW, the CEO and the board, and envisage doing so in terms of the recommendations that they make about what events should and should not be funded in this State.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And I take that commitment on face value, Minister. I think even the previous Minister would've acknowledged one of his strengths was having a strong view about particular directions.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** As is his right.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That was I think one of his strengths as a Minister—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I also have many strong views too on many issues.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —perhaps also occasionally a problem, but he may have taken a different approach to the one you've just outlined. Have you initiated an audit so you're aware of what recent decisions have been made by the previous Minister?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I've certainly asked Destination NSW to advise me if they have any concerns about any upcoming events or events that have been funded or supported by the Government and to give me any information about that. I haven't been alerted or advised as to any events, either upcoming or past, that I should have concerns about at this point.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you say you haven't been alerted, what was their answer specifically when you put that question to them?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That there is nothing that I need to be concerned about at this point.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And are you comfortable, are you satisfied, that the key goals, the stretched targets in the Visitor Strategy 2030 about getting people here, that that is the key criteria that's been used when it comes to recent decisions being signed off in the Tourism portfolio?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There are a number of different key priorities when we're looking at the events. Obviously one of them, as you rightly say, is about getting people to New South Wales, whether it be from overseas, from interstate or indeed from other parts of New South Wales, as we've discussed. Another is of course to send a very strong message that Sydney and New South Wales is open for business once again. Another is to support industries particularly that have been deeply and heavily hit throughout the COVID pandemic. So I see that there are a range of not mutually exclusive but in fact coordinated—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You don't sound very confident, Minister, but I might put the question more gently—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —which is: Are you comfortable that the recent decisions, particularly in the Tourism portfolio, satisfy the objectives of the agency more broadly? I'm asking about your confidence.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am not uncomfortable and I've seen nothing to make me uncomfortable about the contention of the premise that you just asked.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, have you been briefed about issues due to the Opera House renovation after a corridor was created between the Concert Hall and the drama studio which are now causing noise-bleed issues between the two event spaces.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Just give me a moment, I'll just zip over to my Arts portfolio and I might ask—there we are. Hello.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Hi.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** In fact, I might throw to the extremely competent and world-renowned expert and one of the finest creative leaders in the nation Louise Herron to talk about this exact issue.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Herron, that's quite an introduction.

**LOUISE HERRON:** It certainly is.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What can you tell us about this issue?

**LOUISE HERRON:** I can tell you about this issue that—the specific issue you're referring to is *FANGIRLS*, which was in the Drama Theatre and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra was playing in the Concert Hall. It is true that there was an unexpected noise-bleed issue between the Drama Theatre and the Concert Hall, and what we did was to actually create two—first of all, we don't believe that there has ever been such a loud show in the Drama Theatre as *FANGIRLS*.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Have you seen it, by the way? It's excellent.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** No, but I'm on my way after that.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Definitely.

**LOUISE HERRON:** It's finished now.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Produced by Belvoir, by the way.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Belvoir.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Anyway, it's excellent.

**LOUISE HERRON:** It had a long run. What we did when we were alerted to this issue—it wasn't actually that there was a noise bleed as such; it was that the seats were vibrating. Some of the seats in the Concert Hall were vibrating because of the noise in the Drama Theatre. So it actually wasn't noise bleed; it was vibration bleed. What we did was to create an A and a B version of the show. The A version was played when the Concert Hall wasn't being used and the B version was played in the other situation.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** The A version was obviously much louder than the B version.

**LOUISE HERRON:** We didn't have any problems after that, but it's an example of how meticulous we need to be. It was done on a cue-by-cue basis. So you look at every single musical cue and you say, "At what volume is that?" and there's someone standing in the Concert Hall till one o'clock in the morning actually taking the reading. So it was adjusted as soon as we became aware of the issue. It has never happened before and what we need to establish is whether it's due to the improved acoustics in the Concert Hall, whether it's a by-product of that. We don't believe that is the case, but it's certainly something that we need to be aware of because it's not acceptable. I mean, we previously had the problem from the Studio to the Concert Hall, and we believe that that problem has been fixed.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But part of it, I should say, is the very unique nature of this production. *FANGIRLS* is all about a very loud band playing and it plays to the audience. The music is extremely loud, which is unusual, obviously, in that particular facility.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, my question to you that I might repeat is: Have you been briefed on this issue?

**LOUISE HERRON:** Yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We've certainly had discussions about it, absolutely, which is why I can give you more.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Okay. Ms Herron, just turning to some of those details, what is the difference between the A and the B version of this show? Just give us some sense of that.

**LOUISE HERRON:** One is louder than the other—specifically, the bass is louder in the louder version, obviously, and it was turned down. But, also, obviously everyone is very concerned about what happens at the Opera House, and we actually had fewer complaints once the noise was turned down from the people who were in the show. We had more compliments about the show once it was turned down than in the previous version.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, which is sometimes—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think I saw the B version, by the way, and it wasn't, like, quiet. It was still extraordinarily powerful.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Yes, you saw it at the very beginning.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Herron, in the B version of the show, how much are you turning down the bass?

**LOUISE HERRON:** I would have to take that one on notice. Percentage-wise, decibel-wise—how can we best provide the answer?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I would be happy with either, Ms Herron. I'm comfortable in either format, actually.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Okay. Sure.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Sounds like our old music inquiry, John.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But this is an issue from the drama studio to the Concert Hall.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Drama Theatre. That's the one at the end—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** To the Concert Hall.

**LOUISE HERRON:** —that the Sydney Theatre Company and others use, yes, not the Studio.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You said before there had been an issue from the Studio to the Concert Hall.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Just give us the background on that issue.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Well, the background on that issue is a structural issue. The Studio, when this was going to be the multi-purpose hall, was actually going to be the orchestra pit for the Concert Hall, and then this new space was made in the—I think it opened in about 2000, and the issue was the level of insulation that you could have between the Studio and the Concert Hall because they were constructed as one.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So that's a historic issue that goes back to 2000, not part of the current discussion.

**LOUISE HERRON:** That's a historic—actually, it goes back to the 1960s because it's a structural issue.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Sure.

**LOUISE HERRON:** In constructing the Concert Hall, one of the things that we did was we removed all of the old concrete and put in the new stage risers. There was a large focus on ensuring—to the extent that we could—that we would isolate the sound that came from the Studio and the Concert Hall and vice versa because, equally, if you have a very loud show in the Concert Hall, you don't want that to be bleeding into the Studio because they're directly one on top of the other.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** On the contemporary issue, just to confirm, though, it's a one-way vibration issue. You haven't had issues back the other way from the Concert Hall?

**LOUISE HERRON:** No, we haven't, but we haven't fully tested that. It's certainly something that we need to be aware of, because we haven't really had any very loud shows in the Concert Hall at the same time as a quiet show in the Drama Theatre at this stage, and it's not really until you're in a live production environment that you can really test it.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** One suggestion was that that had come about as a result of some of the renovations. Is that a possibility here?

**LOUISE HERRON:** I can't say. Obviously, it's something that we need to look at, whether it is a possibility. I don't believe that's the case, but we always need to look at all possible causes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What are the potential remedies now?

**LOUISE HERRON:** Turn one of them down. Just make sure that it doesn't—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Tell the performers to be quiet.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Not to be quiet but that it's within—I mean, *FANGIRLS* was very loud. It's "turn it down".

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I've been seeing shows at the Drama Theatre for the last 30 years and I have never seen a louder show than *FANGIRLS*.

**LOUISE HERRON:** It was very loud.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How loud are we talking here? What is now, in your view, the maximum?

**LOUISE HERRON:** That's the decibel number that I will have to come back to you on.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So you will take that on notice, Ms Herron?

**LOUISE HERRON:** I don't know what that number is.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. So there has been an issue. It has impacted on programming.

**LOUISE HERRON:** One show has impacted, yes. It's not an ongoing problem. It was fixed and that show is finished, and it's something obviously that we will from now on ensure we're aware of.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Thank you, Ms Herron, for those answers.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Do you have any other questions for me? Because I'd love to go at lunchtime.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. I should indicate to a range of the people here that we've agreed with the Minister we'll release those people we can at the lunch break.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We hope to be able to indicate that at that time.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Thanks, Mr Graham. I appreciate that.

**LOUISE HERRON:** Okay. Thank you.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Does that include us?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, that does not include you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That will not include the members of the Government over here. Minister, I might turn to the Art Gallery.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes. I might get Mr Brand up here.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Firstly, the Sydney Modern I think is due to open on 3 December. Is that correct?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Given the significant expansion this brings for the Art Gallery, what boost has there been to recurrent funding for the Art Gallery this financial year?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Mr Brand, do you have those numbers, or Ms Foy?

**KATE FOY:** Mr Brand has the numbers.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Mr Brand might have some numbers to hand.

**MICHAEL BRAND:** Sorry, I'm looking up the right folders here.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I mean, I can say that the 2021-22 budget committed a total of \$222.2 million to the Art Gallery of NSW, and recurrent funding for the Art Gallery increased by \$8 million to a total of \$63.8 million in 2021-22, which is a 14.4 per cent increase. The funding boost reflected the increased operational costs which will be incurred by the Art Gallery, owing to the planned opening of the new building. This increased in 2022-23 again, when the recurrent funding to the Art Gallery is \$66.9 million.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Sixty-six point nine. So that's up about \$6 million, year on year.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes. But Mr Brand may have more comments to make.

**MICHAEL BRAND:** If I can add to what the Minister said, the operational funding has been ramped up over the past four years in light of the upcoming opening of the building—so we've been bringing additional staff on, for example, over those four years. The figure I've got for FY23 is 71 million, but it's made up a number

of issues, including some cash flow issues with the construction, so it's not all actually operating budget. It's quite a complex mix of figure there.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What I'm really interested in is what the recurrent funding is flowing from the Government to the Art Gallery. Can you narrow it down between the \$66.9 million from the Minister or your \$71 million? What detail can you give us on that?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** In terms of FY23, my figure for actual recurrent, which I guess would be sort of pure operational costs, is 41 million and in the previous year it was 39.5 million.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think what we're seeing here is that there are clearly a range of different definitions that are being caught up in what is recurrent. So, Mr Graham, perhaps to alleviate any doubt, what we might do is to take this body of questions on notice. Ideally, we will be able to provide more information by this afternoon so that you can drill down into that further. I'm conscious that there are different numbers floating about here.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm happy to return to Mr Brand on that question. I indicate I will ask about future years, not just this financial year, given that the doors swing open on 3 December.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm really interested in what that means for next year's budget. Minister, are you comfortable as this significant extension opens, with a significantly bigger workload and a significantly larger number of people coming through the facility, that the budget has increased to the extent required?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am, and I haven't been advised of concerns to that budget. I think that Michael Brand and the team at the Art Gallery of NSW are extraordinary, and what they're doing in opening this new facility—it will be one of the greatest art museums in the world, I believe. When you look at the current space, when you look at the design, when you look at the programming and when you add in this extraordinary oil tank gallery—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, you're now moving somewhat off the topic.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, but this is so exciting, and it's so exciting for everyone in New South Wales.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You need to get a dixer. Mr Mallard is available.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Good. I will read your media release closely.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, but I don't think a media release can really convey the enthusiasm and the passion which I feel.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** At 12.45 p.m. you've got an opportunity, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm just saying—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You're doing that adequately all on your own. I will turn briefly to the Powerhouse Ultimo and to the questions around the Transport, Flight and Space exhibition. There's been some publicity, and some questions and concern, about what might happen with this longstanding exhibition. Can you tell us exactly what is the plan for the elements of that exhibit?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That specific exhibition, I can't, but I'm very happy to throw to Ms Havilah to provide those details.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Thank you, Minister. We currently are developing an exhibition showcasing the Catalina. For the first time in 30 years, the Catalina will be lowered to the ground so it can be seen from a new perspective. We're working very closely with the family, who have donated extra objects from the family archive which will tell new stories about that plane. We're continuing to curate with the curatorial team, across the museum, new exhibitions that tell us new stories around that space.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Havilah, that's the bit that has—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** And the Catalina is such an iconic piece, it's appropriate that there's an exhibition around it.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, and that's the bit that has been public. My question is the question that that's raised, which is what is happening to the other significant bits of the Transport, Flight and Space exhibition? What's their future? Where do they go?

**LISA HAVILAH:** The Government and the museum have made a commitment to retain permanently the Catalina on exhibition once the museum is renewed, alongside the Boulton and Watt and Loco No. 1. We have over 300 very large objects—planes, cars, buses—that go right across space transport and transport generally, and we will continue to show those objects both at Powerhouse Parramatta and the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You've been clear on the Catalina. The other 300 will be shown in future, but what's their immediate destination?

**LISA HAVILAH:** They're on display in the Powerhouse Museum in Ultimo.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, for how long?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Until we finalise the time line for the renewal of Ultimo.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What happens at that point? What's the current plan for that exhibit, those 300 objects, setting aside the Catalina?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, and the Boulton and Watt steam engine and Locomotive No. 1, which we've also given the guarantee will stay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So they will stay continuously?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I just want to make it clear it's not one; it's the three very large objects we've committed to.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That's welcome, but they won't be lowered?

**LISA HAVILAH:** We have an incredible collections team made up of conservators and registrars, and they are working on the plan to consolidate the collection at Castle Hill. That development is moving into its final completion stages, and so the collection will be consolidated at Castle Hill. There'll also be a plan that will be integrated into the renewal project around the relocation of those objects.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When will they be in Castle Hill, under the current plan?

**LISA HAVILAH:** We're still working through. The digitisation and relocation project is moving into its final stages, so the 384,000 objects which we'll locate—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm not asking about those, Ms Havilah. I'm asking about the Transport, Flight and Space exhibition.

**LISA HAVILAH:** We are still confirming the dates that the museum will close for the renewal, and so once we know those dates, we'll do a detailed time line in relation to them.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, that's reasonable. But at the time it closes, Castle Hill, for the majority of those objects—barring the three the Minister is talking about—

**LISA HAVILAH:** Correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** They may then resurface either at Parramatta or Ultimo. Is that correct?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes, the team will continue to curate exhibitions across Parramatta and Ultimo, across both the applied arts and applied sciences.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How much of the cost for the Parramatta build is the cost of building or reworking Castle Hill?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I'll just find that number.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you.

**LISA HAVILAH:** I'm sorry, I'll have to take that on notice, but we can get it for you straightaway.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Yes, I don't have it with me either, I'm afraid.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Okay, we'll come back to that. Minister, I might just turn to the merger of Sydney Living—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Sorry, Mr Graham—

**LISA HAVILAH:** We'll take it on notice.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We'll take it on notice, sorry.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We'll come back to that in the officials session if that's okay.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That would be good. If we can get that information by this afternoon, that would be wonderful.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I want to turn to the State Archives merger with Sydney Living Museums and the creation of a museum of history. Minister, Can you take us through your understanding of what will happen with the old Registrar General's Building?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Let me go back a step. As you know, we commissioned an inquiry under the leadership of former Prime Minister Paul Keating and former Lord Mayor Lucy Turnbull to look at the entire Macquarie Street east precinct and what we needed to do in terms of revitalising and honouring that extraordinary precinct. One of the things, for example, we've done is the upgrade to the State Library that's going on at the moment. Part of that is clearly the Registrar General's Building, and we are looking at what the long-term future and home of the Registrar General's Building will be.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, and that's subject to a business case.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** And it's subject to a business case, absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That's been \$7 million for the business case. Is that correct?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Do we know? We'll take that on notice. And then at the moment what we've done is we have activated the site with RGB Creative, which has got 13, I believe, organisations and institutions—things like the Australian Theatre for Young People, Monkey Baa, House that Dan Built.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I've seen those, yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's been activated now to provide excellent homes for those organisations. I am very excited about this building being a focus for creative purposes down the line.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Is it fair to say one of the options in that business case is this idea of having a museum of history on that site? Is that one of the options being examined?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not going to comment on the business case, because that's obviously Cabinet in confidence.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We're at a very high level here, Minister. Is that one of the options?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Clearly, there's been a lot of discussion about the potential future of the site.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think it's on the public record that that's one of the options, isn't it?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There's been a lot of discussion about the potential future of the site.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** My real question is this: Are there other serious options, or is this heading down that path alone?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We'll just have to wait until the outcome of the final business case.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can you confirm there's more than one option being considered in the business case? I think that's fair to ask you.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There have been a range of options that have been discussed.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Is the range bigger than one?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But in terms of discussing the business case, I'm just not at liberty to do that, I'm afraid.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Business case aside, are you open-minded as Minister? Do you have more than one—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am an open-minded Minister, Mr Graham.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Very good, I'm pleased to hear that. What certainty do those 13 organisations that are currently there have, as you're working through that process?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** That's a very good question. I think it's wonderful that we have a home for these organisations. Clearly, as you know, as you and I have discussed on numerous occasions, there are challenges in terms of space in Sydney for housing creative organisations, both for rehearsal space and for performance space. That's one of the reasons why we're focused on things like what we've done down in Walsh Bay, which is extraordinary in terms of building a whole precinct for cultural and creative organisations. It's

certainly very much on my mind about what the home will be for these organisations. If we can continue to provide assistance and support, we will look at what needs to be done. Ms Pitman might have further comments to make about this, but I—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We might come back to Ms Pitman in the officials session if that's okay. We're just starting to run short of time. I know that seems unbelievable, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It does. This has been delightful, actually.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I might finally ask, before I hand to my colleague—you've said one of your highest priorities, as you come into this role, is the future of the Roxy and the Minerva. Where are we up to on this? What action has occurred?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** In terms of the Roxy, it's an extraordinary—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I don't need to know about the building. I want to know what you have done.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We all love it, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Do you? I love it, too.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We do love it. It needs work.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** It does need work. We're looking at what can be done in order to ensure that the Roxy gets revitalised once again as a pre-eminent cultural venue in Parramatta. There is nothing to announce per se. But I've obviously met with the action group. I've had discussions, significant discussions, within Government, including with Create NSW and in fact other agencies, to talk about the potential future for Roxy. I'm conscious and focused on it and committed to doing what I can to revitalising it as a cultural institution.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you for that answer, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You're welcome.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is that a Mike Baird announcement? It sounds like a Mike Baird announcement to me.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Give us some sense of what can be done here. What are the options that Government might pursue or might have open to it that you're weighing up as Minister when it comes to saving this valuable heritage theatre?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm considering a range of possibilities. Obviously—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Give us some sense of the options here that are available to Government, not that you're pressing the button on.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm working through the different possibilities. Obviously, there are—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What are the possibilities?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm thinking it all through. I'm not going to go into the individual discussions and possibilities that I've had in terms of government, but I think that there are some really interesting new funding streams that we've both supported and initiated that potentially might be good opportunities. But we'll see what happens. I'm committed to ensuring positive outcomes for the live performance sector in New South Wales. I'm examining the possible futures of the site, but I'm not going to—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That question was what can be done?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I know.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Let me return to the other question.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I understand, but I'm not going to down the path of saying, "Here are three different potential options", because then, inevitably, after the election, you'll ask me again, "Of those three options, what have you done?"—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, I'm comfortable with the answer you've given. I'm returning to the question "What has been done?" Your previous colleague Minister Harwin was an advocate of this idea but never managed to really progress it. He was clearly in favour of doing something in both these locations. What assurance can you give us that thoughts, discussions, enthusiasm you've had will translate into action here? How likely is that, as you sit there at the table as the Minister now?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm committed to it. That's what I have to say.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** As was your predecessor.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Indeed. But it's a challenge because it's in private hands. The site's in private hands. It's listed on the State Heritage Register. Clearly, the owners have a view about what they want to do. In 2017 they submitted a development application to Parramatta council about a 33-storey commercial tower above the Roxy. As you know, in 2019 the Land and Environment Court refused the application. Clearly, the current owners have a different view about the future of the site than, I think, many in the community, including the action group, including me and—frankly, if you don't mind me speaking for you, Mr Graham—including you, have in terms of what we would like to see in terms of the outcome of the site. I think it is an important heritage site. I think it should be revitalised as a cultural precinct and facility. I'm looking at the options to see what I can do to achieve that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, I wanted to get an update on how things are going at Cabbage Tree Island post floods. It's my understanding the Government's committed \$70 million to restore Cabbage Tree Island and work with the Aboriginal community. Is that correct?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No. Not just for Cabbage Tree Island. That \$70 million was to rebuild and repair Aboriginal housing broadly. Obviously, there will be—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Obviously there are other housing—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Obviously. A significant part of it will go to Cabbage Tree Island, but that \$70 million isn't entirely focused just on—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Do you know what percentage is going to—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you able to tell me?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No. I don't know.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** This is obviously outside of my remit. This is the emergency services Minister. But I'm happy to see if I can find that out for you, of course.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There's obviously Jali Aboriginal Land Council. There's the other Aboriginal communities. How are they being placed in terms of deciding how that \$70 million is expended?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Again, this is work that's overseen by the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation. It's my expectation that, of course, they'll be working closely with Jali, as they did when they put on a grants blitz session in July, which was to support a number of the residents in Cabbage Tree and in Ballina. Clearly, we need to continue to work hand in hand. Chris Binge has done an extraordinary job in terms of leading that community up there. What I want is what the community wants, which is to rebuild all of the residences on the island so the community can get back to their country as quickly as possible. The Government's committed to doing that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What role does your office, department have in the ongoing consultation with the Cabbage Tree Island community?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Basically, we continue to work with Jali. The new deputy secretary has been up there to meet personally and to look at the devastation and to look at the damage. We continue to provide the support on the ground—or Aboriginal Affairs does—to support Aboriginal people and Aboriginal organisations to access flood recovery funds, of which there are many—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just an example which is not Cabbage Tree specific, but the Koori Mail did an extraordinary job in Lismore. It's my understanding—I stand to be corrected—that some of it was funded, some of it was not but that they've had to close some of the services that they were providing because they've been unable to access funding from the Government. Are you aware of this?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not. I talked to the organisation and the CEO. I ensured that we provided \$40,000 to supporting the food, the equipment and the ongoing support structures of the community recovery centre. I visited there. It's—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Not denying your commitment, Minister, just asking. As one of the most effective responses—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I agree. It's been extraordinary.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It perplexes me that all of the government structures that are put in place, all of the consultation that everyone says is undertaken and all of the partnership approaches that are there, the Koori Mail still hasn't got the support they need to keep doing the incredible work in this very long—as you know, Lismore is still a mess, and it's five years away from being completely restored, at least. There's community need there after the initial response.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There is. I've been advised that Aboriginal Affairs has been working directly with the Koori kitchen, which obviously, as you know, is run under the auspices of the Koori Mail, to ensure they continue to provide the support that they need. I'm also conscious—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry. Does that mean that you're giving them funding?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I have given them funding.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you giving them more funding? Forty thousand dollars isn't very much, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But I'm open to providing whatever support is required. I've done this for arts and cultural organisations, and I'm doing this as well for Aboriginal organisations. I strongly welcome that discussion. If more funding is required, then I'll make a personal commitment to doing all I can to get it.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Great. Thank you. That would be very appreciated. Just going back to Cabbage Tree and the \$70 million. Who's going to decide how that is spent?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I assume it's the Northern Rivers Reconstruction Corporation. But—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Does Aboriginal Affairs have any input into that?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm not aware, but I'm happy to throw to either Michael or Tim if either of them have extra comments to make. Otherwise, we'll take it on notice.

**TIM IRELAND:** It's being led by the Aboriginal Housing Office in collaboration with Aboriginal housing providers that are on the North Coast, Jali included.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I suppose I'm trying to understand. Obviously, Jali have very clear—the housing issues elsewhere are also important. But if you're going to do a rebuild, there's an opportunity. I assume the community has a lot of ideas about how they could build back better and change. They're going to have to do it differently. Are you just sort of relying on the work that's just happening on the ground there with the authorities? Is that the expectation of how that will be delivered?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Well, my view is that of course there must be genuine engagement and collaboration with Jali, with Chris, with all Aboriginal people. I've spoken to Mal Lanyon. He advises me that he is obviously engaged regularly with the community. I assume that's the same with—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** My questions are not—there's no gotcha here.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Your premise is 100 per cent right.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm just asking the question.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** This has to be done in full collaboration and cooperation with Aboriginal people and their communities, absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There are obviously real workforce shortage issues. I've been advised that the Bundjalung community have put forward a plan to address workforce shortages. Are you able to give me any—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm sorry, could you repeat that? I had an enthusiastic and effusive Kate Foy in my ear.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's okay. Ms Foy, did you have answers for me?

**KATE FOY:** No, I was just—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, we didn't hear the question because Kate was talking to me. Would you mind repeating it?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** My understanding is that the Bundjalung community have put forward a plan to address workforce shortages, obviously a huge issue in the recovery. I'm just wondering if you have any advice about what the Government's response has been to that proposal or if you're aware of that proposal.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** So is this part of the Bundjalung Nation flood report?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I believe so, yes.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There are some excellent recommendations in the report, which the Government is obviously considering. I know that there are two that are specifically relevant to Aboriginal Affairs, which is recommendation number nine, which is to develop a plan with traditional owners to plan and protect cultural heritage sites before, during and after natural disasters, which makes a lot of sense—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Not sure how you deal with the landslips but, yes, it is a good idea.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Indeed. Clearly, it's about maximising that. But, second, a review of the NSW Aboriginal land rights legislation to improve and enhance resilience and capacity of local LALCs during time of disasters, both of which I think, without in any way pre-empting the Government's response—those two fall under my jurisdiction, both of which seem eminently sensible.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What's the time frame for that response?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I don't know.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Can you take it on notice?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Mr Coutts-Trotter, do you have—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It sounds like it's whole of government. Is it a whole-of-government thing?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think so.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, it is. I'm not sure. We can take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That would be great, thank you. Again, this may not be directly your responsibility, Minister, but I'm wanting to know what work has been done in relation to flood preparedness for Cabbage Tree Island given, I assume, more water is on its way?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I can only assume that, as for the entire region, those are issues that are being considered. I want to make a comment here and that is: the devastation that was wrought was unprecedented. The floodwaters were 2½ metres higher than they'd ever been. We have to do things in a different way and that has to be hand in hand with community but it has to be providing all the support that's needed. I'm comforted about the level of focus and attention that the Premier and the emergency services Minister and the Deputy Premier have given it, but we can't take our foot off the pedal. As you rightly point out, Ms Sharpe, this is going to take years and we need to be there for every second of that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Minister, the Office for Regional Youth—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I said there wasn't going to be a question and here it is.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There you go. I wish I had put some money on it. How many young people have you assisted in the last 12 months?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** How many young people have we assisted? Thousands.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** A little bit more accuracy with that would be useful.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm happy to pass over to the head of the Office for Regional Youth, Julia Ryan, to answer the question. The sorts of programs that we have in terms—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I know that you love it; that's not what I'm asking.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I love it so much.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, I know you love it so much and, again, at 12.45 p.m. you've got the opportunity to get Mr Mallard to ask you how much you love it.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** We have great programs—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's great but—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —through the children and wellbeing recovery initiative, through the Holiday Break program.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Ms Ryan, how many young people have you helped in the last 12 months?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** But I'm happy to pass over to—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I don't doubt your enthusiasm, Minister.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Excellent. If Hansard could register that, that'd be great.

**JULIA RYAN:** We have a lot of programs that directly impact young people, so our task force—we now have our third task force that are meeting with the Minister four times a year. There's 18 young people involved each year through that. The task force engage directly with the Minister and provide input to be brought to government. We also run programs like the Holiday Break. The figures I have for summer, autumn and winter for 2021-22 show that we had 32,672 young people participate over those holiday periods. We also are administering the children and young people wellbeing resilience program. Through that, at the moment, the figures that've been reported to us are 2,950 youth attendees at events through those programs. We're also running additional pilots where we're engaging with young people. For example, we've spoken before about the Dubbo zoo program, where we have a—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Ms Ryan, we might just halt you there. The reason is we're on the clock. We finish at 12.45 p.m. I will come back to you this afternoon.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Can I also give one final comment about it?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Minister, no, you can't. I want to ask you this question because I asked Mr Cox in the last session and former Minister Harwin cut me off—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** There were 2,000 young people engaged in the *Regional Youth Insights* report as well—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —and told me to ask you about this.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** —which is excellent.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —about this issue, which is the policy decision of the Government that you can make as Minister to have a minimum fee for musicians when they play. Other States have signed up to this. What is your view? Is this something New South Wales can sign up to?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Just give me a moment—sorry, there's a crossover between tourism and the arts.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Is it a yes? You've got the note. Is it a yes?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm happy to provide the following information. The New South Wales Government is committed to the fair and equitable payment to artists for their work. This includes performances by musicians, songwriting, composition and recording. Create NSW grant application forms require applicants to acknowledge that they are paying at industry rates as required by awards or best practice standards. If they're not, they must provide an explanation. The Australian Government Fair Work Ombudsman sets out the minimum pay rates for musicians through the Live Performance Award 2020. The Live Performance Award sets out the minimum hourly rates for the weekly and casual musicians, including musicians whose weekly employee hourly rate is \$42.97, casual hourly rate is \$53.71. Musicians required to accompany artists' weekly employee hourly rate is \$45.23, casual hourly rate is \$56.54—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm broadly familiar with those.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm almost there. It's just I think it is important to get it on the record. Principal musician weekly employee hourly rate is \$50.46, casual hourly rate is \$63.08. APRA AMCOS manage royalty payments when businesses and organisations use artists' music. They also manage licensing arrangements, including broadcast, digital and recorded music.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This is sounding like a no.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** No, I said: "Create NSW grant application forms require applicants to acknowledge that they are paying at industry rates as required by awards or best practice standards."

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So, Minister, isn't the issue—this is the difference between being paid the award rate or being paid a minimum fee. You've done the practice, you've lugged the equipment there, you

might get the \$42 or the \$50 that you've just talked about rather than the minimum \$250. Will you have a look at this issue of a minimum \$250 fee for musicians that other States have committed to?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I am committed to supporting performing artists and creatives in this State.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This is not our State policy—

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I'm actually about to answer the question in the way that I suspect you'll be happy with. I have been in all areas, whether it be visual artists or writers or people involved in film—and I acknowledge the extraordinary work that people in the music industry do and the upheaval they've gone through over the last three years. I am happy to commit today to you, Mr Graham, to have a look at this issue in depth and to continue to work with you on it. It's important. I understand that it's not an unreasonable request. I don't know what the unintended consequences are going to be and obviously we need to consider what that means in terms of government. We don't want, for example, an unintended consequence that it in fact stops people being employed because there's a small—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I put one final question to you, Minister, as I encourage you to stop while you're ahead?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You may. I understand.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I want to put to you the important release of the National Music Industry Review. This report looked at bullying and sexual harassment in the industry. It is an industry that clearly needs to change.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That has been the view of the Parliament—bipartisan.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** You and I talked about it and, in a bipartisan way, we both supported it.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I invite you to place any views you would like to on record.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I note this report *Raising Their Voices* was released relatively recently. I have read it. I think it makes findings of significant concern, which are disturbing. I make the commitment that the Government is open to discussions to what we can do to assist in terms of the implementation of those recommendations and findings. But, of course, what this needs to be driven by, first and foremost, is a desire to change the culture from within.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you for that answer. Is there a period where both Parramatta Powerhouse and the Ultimo Powerhouse will be closed? And is that a 12-month period, based on the answers you have given earlier today?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I think so, but I am going to ask Ms Havilah if she can answer that. I have it in here somewhere, but Lisa will know off the top of her head.

**LISA HAVILAH:** As you know, we are in the middle of a design competition to appoint the design team for Ultimo. Once that design team is appointed and we have the concept plan signed off, we'll be able to, with our partners Create NSW and Infrastructure NSW, put together the delivery time frame for that project. Then we will know when we'll need to close Ultimo and deliver that project. At this point in time, it is not known exactly.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The precise timing is unclear, but it is clear that there will be this crossover period when neither is open. Do you think that is a fair comment, Ms Havilah?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Potentially there will be a short period where Ultimo is closed and we are preparing to open Parramatta. What is really exciting is that we'll have Castle Hill opened, and we'll deliver quite an extensive program through that new facility. We'll also, during that time, deliver a range of regional and digital programs.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you. We might return to that issue in the official session.

**The CHAIR:** Are there any questions from the Government?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Here's your chance.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Ms Sharpe invited us to ask questions. My only question will be to the Minister. Is there anything you'd like to return to that you were cut off on by Mr Graham and Ms Sharpe and elaborate on with your enthusiasm?

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** I appreciate very much the question, but I don't feel like I've been cut off at all. I think it has been a robust and important exchange of views and, frankly, been one of the more delightful experiences of my ministerial career. I would ask, though, if there is the potential to release any of the witnesses that may not have questions asked of them in the afternoon? It would be wonderful if we're able to know that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We will try to work that out.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** If there's any inducements or blandishments we can offer you?

**The CHAIR:** You're stuck here, Mr Coutts-Trotter, I'm afraid.

**The Hon. BEN FRANKLIN:** Where did we land on that, sorry?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We were probably going to let you go. Let us have the conversation, and then we will tell you. Sorry, we weren't going to have that conversation in front of all of you.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister, for your attendance this morning. We are now finished with your questioning. Everybody else, subject to being notified, will be back after the lunch break. Thank you.

**(The Minister withdrew.)**

**(Mr Chris Hanger, Ms Elizabeth Tsitsikronis, Ms Louise Herron and Ms Lisa Braid withdrew.)**

**(Luncheon adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back, everybody. We will continue our questioning this afternoon, starting with the Opposition.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Cox, I want to ask you about the international offices for Destination NSW. I want to confirm that there are 13 offices. Is that correct?

**STEVE COX:** That's correct, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What's the budget for the operation of those offices?

**STEVE COX:** The budget spent across the 13 overseas offices in FY22 for all costs was \$2.9 million. That was the actual spend. In FY22, the budget allocated to those 13 offices was \$3.3 million.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What does that cover?

**STEVE COX:** The offices' travel, salaries and any costs associated with the work that they do in those markets.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are the costs of the offices separate to that, like the rent and those—

**STEVE COX:** No, it's inclusive. Most of our offices are co-shared, with Tourism Australia in particular.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you considering additional offices in India?

**STEVE COX:** No, we're not considering additional offices in India. Co-sharing in India with Investment NSW is my recollection for the Indian office in Mumbai.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So they've gone into the new INSW office. Who is the most senior person at the Destination NSW offices overseas?

**STEVE COX:** The country managers.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How much are they paid?

**STEVE COX:** I would need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm happy for it to be a band; I'm not actually asking for everyone's individual salary.

**STEVE COX:** Again, I'm sorry, I don't have that. I may have it to hand if you give me one moment. If I can take it on notice for the moment, Ms Sharpe, and perhaps I can answer it. I'll see if I can get an answer for you in a moment.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** First, I might turn back to those questions about the Indigenous cultural centre. Essentially, we are looking to work through some very similar issues but just in slightly more detail this afternoon. We also indicate that where we can deal with issues and then release officials, we'll do that as well to the extent we can this afternoon. Turning to the Indigenous cultural centre, is this to you, Ms Foy?

**KATE FOY:** It's probably shared between Annette and me, but me in the first instance, yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The Minister gave a range of views about that. Accepting all those things on record, what can you tell us about the nature of the transformation that's got to take place, given what's in existence at the moment at the Museum of Sydney?

**KATE FOY:** The transformation from the Museum of Sydney through to a dedicated centre?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, precisely.

**KATE FOY:** It's probably more a question for the Chief Executive of Sydney Living Museums, but I can say that that process has commenced. As the Minister said this morning, he expects it to be about a six- to 12-month transition. The other point I would make is that a transformation or a transition doesn't mean that you strip out everything that's in there at the moment, but you may bring a First Nations lens to telling a story—say, for example, a story of the First Fleet. The Sydney Living Museums may bring a lens around that first contact from an Indigenous point of view. Anything in detail, I'm very happy to take on notice and come back with quite a bit more. Because it's a matter of programming.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, I appreciate that.

**KATE FOY:** The other point I'd make around the budget—relevant to budget estimates—is that Sydney Living Museums has an operating budget, as it does for all of its locations. They plan as part of their forward programming to have different types of programming. So that is why its current budget can accommodate change and doesn't necessarily need an additional budget. It certainly hasn't been identified as requiring additional budget.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think you're confirming the issue that the Minister indicated but really said he'd take on notice—that there is no additional budget.

**KATE FOY:** It's currently out of its current operating budget. My understanding—my advice today—is that that's what they're planning on the basis of. Again, that transition is about six to 12 months.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Acknowledging that, you accept that this is quite a different proposition to what might have been possible or might have been planned in those concept designs at the Barangaroo space? In particular, I think we would highlight the idea of a performance space of 500 to 600 people, perhaps welcoming international visitors to experience Indigenous culture in Sydney. That is not the sort of activity that would be possible in the more limited space in the Museum of Sydney. Is that a fair comment?

**KATE FOY:** I think the point I'd make there is that each location, each facility, will have a different type of operation and a different type of cultural offering. Barangaroo and the future of the Cutaway doesn't preclude it from having First Nations exhibitions or activities there in a broader civic context, the same as the work that Dr Brand is doing at the Art Gallery in a dedicated space to Indigenous art doesn't preclude a broad range of offerings: the Australian Museum, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and the like. Of course, the Museum of Sydney is a specific space with a specific type of focus. Through the partnership with the Aboriginal Languages Trust, they will work together on what that future programming would look like.

I might also say, to The Cutaway, I would like, with your permission, to take some information and come back on notice. The 2014 report that Ms Sharpe was talking about—what I want to clarify is what was the nature of that work that was actually national. I think you referred to the national Indigenous organisations and some national bodies. I do want to confirm what in that was national, and part of the Federal Government's approach, and what was the role of the New South Wales Government because I think there are some complexities there that I wouldn't mind teasing out for the benefit of the Committee.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Accepting all that background, which was actually quite useful, I'm simply asking the question—obviously these are different plans. If this is to be the dedicated Indigenous cultural centre for Sydney or for the State, it won't include a performance space for 500 or 600 people, where you might welcome visitors to Sydney from around the State, interstate or internationally? That just wouldn't be possible in this particular space—the dedicated space that's now being considered.

**KATE FOY:** I suspect the size of it would preclude a certain scale of audience, but I'm happy to come back with advice from Sydney Living Museums on what type of programming could be there as well as what type of performance or cultural activities could be performed, also recognising that is on a broader—there's a forecourt—and on just how that all might work. I'm just not aware off the top of my head; I'm sorry, Mr Graham. But certainly the Cutaway would present a different type of experience.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. I was just slightly unclear after the exchange—although that was really because of the shortness of time—about what happens to the existing assets of the museum. It's had some exhibitions that have been ongoing. Are they simply reinterpreted or are they abandoned? What happens with those in this transformation?

**KATE FOY:** Again, I'm not across the detail of the programming. I know, from a brief conversation with Sydney Living Museums, the museum can interpret some exhibitions through a different lens. But I'm happy to come back with some detail. If they have detail about any programming that they might be planning, I'm also very happy to come back if that's appropriate.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I acknowledge you may want to come back on notice; this is a question really for the Sydney Living Museums. The plan for the Museum of Sydney had been to have visitation of 100,000 by 2022—by this year. Obviously, COVID has intervened, so I'm not critical of the fact that we're not there, but visitation—total audience reach—was just 32,000 in the last report.

**KATE FOY:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Perhaps on notice, or anything you can add now, what are the plans now to readjust? Is that goal of 100,000 visitors now in reach? What's the plan? What has been the readjustment in the hopes for the visitation this site might reach?

**KATE FOY:** I'm happy to give some general comments. Some advice that came through today, and I wish to validate it, is that the visitation—I think I had some figures somewhere from about 2016 through to 2019. They hover year on year from anywhere between 70,000, 80,000 and 90,000 visitations a year. In 2020, in that period affected by COVID, there were large closures, so the site was closed for a period of months, as well as having some COVID-safe rules around social distancing and having a shortened week. For some period of time it was open about four days a week. The visitation numbers were lower. I will test with SLM what their target is around future visitation, as you've pointed out, and just confirm what their figures are for their aim for 2022, 2023 and 2024. The history of it shows that there was good, strong visitation, and I'll test what their plan is to get to that level, if not higher, in the future years.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you. Dr Brand, I might turn to you on those questions about the gallery, as the doors swing open on 3 December. I'd invite you, firstly, to tell us any details about the funding that you'd like to place on the record—what you've got at the moment and what you will get over the coming years.

**MICHAEL BRAND:** It's important to keep in mind that, essentially, the Art Gallery of New South Wales is a public-private partnership. In terms of the operating budget for our general operations, it's a mixture of State recurring funds and self-generated funds, whether it's commercial activities, sponsorship or donations.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That's exactly why I'm asking. Normally, with the budget sector agencies, it's a lot easier to tell from the budget what's going on. That's exactly why I was keen for you to detail that and disaggregate it a little.

**MICHAEL BRAND:** For the actual Sydney Modern Project itself, a \$344 million project, it was \$244 million provided by the State—I think it's through the Restart funds, if I'm not mistaken—and then a pledge by us to raise \$100 million privately. That's a target we've gone over a bit, to about \$109 million. It is actually quite a complex budget. One of our main activities is art acquisitions. We haven't received any State funding for art acquisitions since 1991. That is all private philanthropy. It's a PPP, but with different levels and a mixture for different sorts of activities. The annual budget—in the budget we talked about a bit before lunch—is a particularly complicated one this year because it has COVID recovery funds and cash flow. Then, if you go to the bigger budget, you've got the actual capital works money for the Sydney Modern Project and maintenance funds. It's a complex one.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I narrow it down a little bit? I'm not interested in the capital works to do with the Sydney Modern. A lot of that is on the public record.

**MICHAEL BRAND:** It is.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The public question is this: As that opens, will there be the recurrent funding and recurrent support in order to take advantage of the potential of this site? The potential is massive. I'm going to turn to some other questions but, firstly, are we prepared, from a financial point of view, to take advantage of that?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** With the business case for the Sydney Modern Project, it's really clear that we need an activated building to meet our targets. This year is probably our most complex budget ever because we open the new building halfway through the financial year. But, as I said this morning, the Government has ramped up its contribution each year for the last four or five years, and we are now up at that higher level. We have funding to open the building as planned and to run the expanded campus from 3 December and provide the experiences to our audiences here that we had promised. One other issue is we have decided to have the whole campus free of charge when we open. As you're possibly aware, we have the Sydney International Art Series each summer, with a ticketed exhibition. This summer will we not be doing that. The whole thing, as a blockbuster, is free of charge.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You've ranged freely there. I'll bring you back to my question, which is how much Government funding have you got for the operations in this financial year?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** I think the actual number for this financial year for our recurrent expenditure is \$41.8 million. Again, it's a very complex budget in that if you include art acquisitions it would be more and things like that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm happy for you to be as specific as you want but I want to understand: What is the step up in the budget? That is lower than the broader figure that the Minister was talking about and that you mentioned. You would describe that as operational funding on a recurrent basis from the Government.

**MICHAEL BRAND:** Correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is that over the next couple of years as you open?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** This has been set for this financial year. For the future financial years, as always, we are in discussion with the Government about what the specific costs will be for those years. They're always under negotiation—under discussion, I should say.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So there is no commitment in the budget, at the moment, for any increase on that beyond the 41.8 that you've got in this financial year?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** My understanding is we've hit that extended level, and that's the level we will then stay on, unless we have a reason, through discussions, to modify that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How does that compare to 2021-22, for example?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** Perhaps the easiest way of understanding that is, in the forward estimates that were given four or five years ago, with that ramp-up over four years—I think the first year was something like \$700,000. It went up to about \$1.6 million, then \$6.7 million and then it was going to be \$13.4 million extra in the year we opened—extra directly related to running the expanded museum. I think it was 6.7. We remained on that for two years because, originally, about five years ago, the thought was to open in 2021 on our 150th anniversary. But by about 2016-17 it was clear that it was going to be 2022, so we had two years at 6.6. Again, in the most broad-stroke manner, we are up to about 13.4 this year.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What you're saying is that before that ramp-up started the funding was much closer to about \$28 million a year from the Government?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** Yes. We had figures like 23 and 25. Again, it varies so much year by year. But you're in the ballpark there, yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I appreciate it. That's helpful. As you pointed out, this financial year the doors will swing open for half a year, and you will receive \$41.8 million. Next year you'll be operating in this space for 12 months—double the amount—but the operational funding stays at \$41.8 million. What position does that leave you in?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** That is my understanding of where we would stand. Again, we are in discussions with the Government about issues just like that. The other issue we talk about is projections pre-COVID. We have assumptions, for example, for self-generated revenue that were made four or five years ago with the business case. We are closely monitoring how that's working. In some areas, like with the current Archibald, we met targets. But we can't presume that every target will be exactly the way we had expected a number of years ago. That is what we talk to the Government about.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Are you confident, given your role, that you will be able to operate this space to the potential that the building deserves?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** I am confident. I have to say I am an optimistic person by nature. It is very complicated, and we are in discussion with the Government, as always, about the coming years. I think we are starting from a very good position.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Let me put the question to you slightly differently, Dr Brand. This is a remarkable building. It's very important to Sydney that it opens and reaches its potential. Are you confident it will reach its potential, with the resources you've got?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is your plan, as the doors swing open, to make sure that this space does reach its potential and, in particular, brings people to Sydney to come and see this space—and see what's in it, crucially—both from around the country and around the globe?

**MICHAEL BRAND:** I said there are two main areas that I want to mention. One is, of course, once the doors open and the building is—well, the construction is pretty much complete, but once the doors are open, it is all about the program that we put in the building. It's the art we put on the walls. It's the public programs we run. It's the way we reach out to community, whether we're reaching out to people on our campus here in Sydney or whether throughout the rest of the State through extension programs or whether it's online. We have to have an art program, an activation program, second to none. The other thing we have to do is raise general awareness of the gallery both nationally and internationally, and I have to say we do work very closely with Destination NSW on that front to ensure that we bring in cultural tourists to Sydney and New South Wales. My understanding is that cultural tourists in general spend more per head per day than other sorts of tourists. Anything we can do to bring in more cultural tourists, we'll be working very, very hard to do so. But, again, you do have to have the great programs, the exhibitions, the collections and the talent to drive that. I'm very lucky I have a fantastic staff.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We might turn to some other questions. I think, unless Government members have questions for Dr Brand, that's the end of—

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** No, it's fine for us.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Dr Brand, I think you're free to leave should you choose.

**MICHAEL BRAND:** Thank you very much. Thank you for your interest. Thank you for your support.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you for your attendance today. I think you did take some questions on notice so the team will be in touch.

**(Dr Michael Brand withdrew.)**

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I want to ask some more questions about Cabbage Tree Island and the funding that's going there. I'm hoping that you can unpack some questions I've got about this. There are no gotchas in it; it's just trying to understand where the money is going. I've got information that says that the \$70 million that we were talking about with the Minister earlier today is for housing and for the rebuild of housing, and that that's funded by State and Federal government.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Certainly I can confirm the former. It's \$70 million to fund rebuild and repair of Aboriginal housing. I don't know if it's jointly funded by the Commonwealth. I will look to my colleague Mr Ireland.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Because I've also got, just to give you context that you might be able to unpack it for me—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, I think it's \$70 million of State funding and there is another \$50 million in joint funding for Aboriginal community infrastructure, which is joint between New South Wales and the Commonwealth.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, alright. So the \$70 million is State and it's for housing only and it's not just for Cabbage Tree Island. Is that correct?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** That's right.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Do you know why Jali Aboriginal corporation seems to believe that that \$70 million is for Cabbage Tree only?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, I don't. Tim, any—it's not a hospital pass; it's just genuine curiosity.

**TIM IRELAND:** No, we wouldn't have that information.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Right. My understanding is that there has been information provided to the Minister's office seeking some action around this, which sounds different to me than the document and the sort of whole-of-government plan that the Minister referenced earlier today. You're all looking blankly at me. If you're not aware of it, that's fine. I might take it up separately because there is not much point asking you about something that you don't know much about. My understanding is that Jali believes that the \$70 million is for the rebuild of Cabbage Tree Island. Do you have any information on how much the rebuild of Cabbage Tree is going to cost and what work's been done that?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, I don't. Tim?

**TIM IRELAND:** No, not broken down.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many houses do you believe that the \$70 million is going to rebuild?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I'm happy to take that on notice. That will be kind of a function of what can be achieved by the Aboriginal Housing Office in conjunction with Aboriginal community housing providers.

**TIM IRELAND:** That's right.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Everybody brings some of their own assets to it as well as the additional money.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I might pursue some of that on notice if that's unclear. Can I just go back to OCHRE. How many regional alliances are there?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I think we've got that. Either Tim or I will be able to give you that information. This is an assessment centre task, Tim—who gets there first. There are currently eight alliances actively participating in local decision-making in New South Wales.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Was each of those supposed to operate under an accord?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** That was the model, yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How many of them actually formally signed an accord?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I'm just reading. I can take that on notice. Let me take that on notice for you, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I wanted to ask you about the closure of the reparations scheme. Sorry, I'm moving on very quickly. My understanding is that the reparations scheme closes in June next year. Is that correct?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, I think that's right.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you able to give me some information—obviously you can take it on notice—in relation to how many people per year the scheme has assisted since its inception?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, we can take that on notice, unless you've got that information to hand, Tim.

**TIM IRELAND:** No, we'll take it on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** My interest is in, I suppose, what communications there are around the changes to the scheme.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** That's a good question. Tim, do you know?

**TIM IRELAND:** Not offhand. We'll have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's fine.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I can't give you the yearly figure; I can give you the total figure of Stolen Generations survivors who have received reparations. As at 30 June 2022, it was 900 people, totalling \$67.5 million with an additional \$6.1 million paid in funeral assistance.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What is the estimated number of people from the Stolen Generations who are actually eligible for these payments? Not who's applied—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Sorry, I don't—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We don't know how many people we have in New South Wales?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, I don't have that number.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just to check, the \$6.5 million, which was the funeral costs—has that been \$7,000 the whole time of the program?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** It's \$6.1 million.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, 6.1.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I'm sorry, I don't know that. Tim, do you?

**TIM IRELAND:** Seven thousand funeral assistance fund payment.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, so has it always been 7,000? I'm trying to understand how many funerals it has paid for.

**TIM IRELAND:** We'll have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I wanted to come back to Closing the Gap, thanks, Mr Ireland. I think I kind of got it, but can you explain to me what the architecture within government is for delivering on the targets?

**TIM IRELAND:** We've established a three-tiered governance structure. We have a New South Wales Joint Council on Closing the Gap, and that's co-chaired by Minister Franklin as well as the co-chair of the Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations. The members of that group include the Secretary of DPC and Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations members, and they come together on a quarterly basis. Supporting that group is the NSW Partnership Working Group, and that consists of deputy secretary level or executive director level from each government cluster as well as Coalition of Aboriginal Peak Organisations members. We also have representation from the NSW Coalition of Aboriginal Regional Alliances sitting on this group as well as other Aboriginal stakeholders that might be invited from time to time. Over the last 12 or so months we've established 13 officer-level working groups focused on each of the 17 socio-economic targets as well as the five priority reforms in New South Wales, and that just takes it down another tier focused on specific initiatives for development—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So that's happening at agency level, is it?

**TIM IRELAND:** Yes—at officer level.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So, for example, children in out-of-home care sits within DCJ. Is that right?

**TIM IRELAND:** That's right.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** But each of those groups is co-led by an Aboriginal-controlled organisation and a State government agency.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just using this as an example because I'm most familiar with it, for First Nations children in out-of-home care in the child protection system, is the co-chair of that someone like AbSec? Who is the co-chair?

**TIM IRELAND:** There's a families officer-level working group that has responsibility for that particular target. It's co-chaired by AbSec and I believe the deputy secretary in the Department of Communities and Justice.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm happy for you to take this on notice. Would you be able to provide that to the Committee across all of them?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I think it's actually very interesting.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I should just signal as well that the joint council commissioned a health check on the partnerships, so it's quite an elaborate architecture. It has been in place for a little while. Is it too much, too little or just right?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** We will see.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** The result of that review is going to the next joint council meeting, I think, in September.

**TIM IRELAND:** That's correct.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Great. Within Government, my understanding is that the Premier has made the Closing the Gap target, I suppose, part of the—I forget what they're called.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Charter letters.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Charter letters, that's right—the charter letters that are given to each of the Ministers. Is that correct?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, that's correct.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is there a Cabinet committee that's dealing with this at Minister level?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** There's not a standalone Cabinet committee, but reports on progress are—I was going to say "regularly", but reasonably regularly provided to Cabinet.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But not through the committee system; it's just part of the role.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Cabinet.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Obviously, I'm not asking you to tell me too much.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, sure.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I know you're not allowed to.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** But it's also—in bureaucratese—embedded in the way we make decisions. So if you are putting a proposal forward, you've got to identify a range of things about the proposal and one is the extent to which it links to achieving Closing the Gap targets or Premier's Priorities or other outcomes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** To go back to my questions from this morning, I'm again just pointing to two, which would be the Premier's Priorities. They've been in place since 2017. I know that there has been a lot of work. As I understood it, that was sort of where secretaries were held to account—their KPIs included the Premier's Priorities in the way that they were reported as well.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Just using the two that we used this morning as examples, how do they fit into this new structure?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Just to your line of questioning this morning, I guess my observation about the iteration of various things is the Premier's Priorities are very much non-Aboriginal people setting targets, and the Closing the Gap targets are common with some of those targets and very different with others, and that's a function of Aboriginal people leading the—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sure. The school attainment one, I assume, everyone wants that.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Everyone wants that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But obviously the re-reporting one is not one that Aboriginal organisations—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** They are far more concerned about child removals and preventative work in the first place.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, or the priority reform areas, which are fundamental reforms to the way government works with Aboriginal people and communities. So I think that that's—it looks a bit messy, but it's a maturation, perhaps, rather than just a sort of endless iteration.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's a very positive way of putting it.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Thank you.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm not sure that I agree, but that's okay.

**TIM IRELAND:** If I can just jump in, Ms Sharpe. There are seven regional alliances—seven accords that have been signed since the program has commenced.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So there's one outstanding.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Barang is the one that doesn't have an accord in place. It has agreements with agencies, and perhaps that will be the mechanism of commitment.

**TIM IRELAND:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Great. Thank you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I just want to turn back to those questions about the Powerhouse budgets. Before I do that, I might just check whether there were any of the issues that were taken on notice this morning that any of the officials would like to update on.

**KATE FOY:** Just in terms of SLM and the visitation numbers, the advice that I have received is that they are trending—the target is still 100,000 visitors, but based on their July and August visitation, which was 26,000 people, they're on track. If one was to extrapolate that, they're well on track to meet or exceed that. So I just wanted to land that with—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** In 2022, yes.

**KATE FOY:** Yes, correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Thank you. Any other updates? If not, I might ask about the Powerhouse budgets. We might start, I think, perhaps with Ultimo. That was the one that we had the most detail about. I think we agreed—I'm just really confirming this—that it's just over \$4 million in this financial year, and then in the four years of the forward estimates, a total of 179.5 million. Is that correct?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes, that's correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. So then the balance of the 500 million is just in the out years before 2028, when Treasury expects this to finish, noting all the uncertainties that you took us through this morning.

**LISA HAVILAH:** That's correct, yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Turning to the budget for Parramatta and Castle Hill, \$278 million has been spent; 246 is committed in this financial year. What's the total in the forward estimates?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I haven't got that in front of me.

**LISA HAVILAH:** The total budget for Parramatta and Castle Hill, which also includes other costs including the collection, digitisation and relocation project, is \$840 million in total. But in terms of breakdown of that budget, we're happy to take that on notice and give you those details.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Right. So \$840 million in total.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes. Of that, the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences has pledged to raise \$75 million through philanthropy.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Okay.

**LISA HAVILAH:** We're in the second year of a four-year philanthropy program.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. I will come back on that. Of the remainder—so that is the 840 million minus the 75 you're hoping to raise through philanthropy—that should be in the budget estimates, presumably, given you're looking to conclude this.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Sorry, may I just correct maybe a misunderstanding there.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Sure. Very good.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Maybe I didn't articulate it very well. The Government commitment is 840, and on top of that, we—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Is the 75.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Okay. That's really helpful. So we will have spent by the end of this year \$524 million. Can I conclude that the remainder of the \$840 million—that is, 840 minus 524—will be in the budget? It's in the forward estimate; it's budgeted for.

**LISA HAVILAH:** That's correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But you'll take on notice the timing of that—in which financial year it's timed—although "hopefully very soon" is the answer, looking at the time lines you took us through beforehand.

**LISA HAVILAH:** That's correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you. Of the \$840 million, you took on notice to tell us—perhaps in this session—what amount was allocated to Castle Hill. What's that amount?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I can take that one. The Castle Hill budget is embedded within the broader budget for Powerhouse Parramatta. So we'd like to take it on notice just so that we can extract it out properly, rather than trying to do it quickly on the fly.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Pitman, I'm not entirely happy with that. I mean, this is budget estimates and this is a key project. I would've thought it's a relatively simple question, isn't it? Isn't this something that would just be part of your overall planning for the project?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** It is, but because both of those projects are happening in parallel, there are a number of things—like, staffing, for instance, for our teams—that go across both of those projects that sit within that project budget. If I were to provide you with an accurate assessment of the cost of Castle Hill, we would just need to do the work to estimate that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Look, I think that is a reasonable answer—that some of those costs on staffing you should carefully attribute, and I'm happy for you to do that on notice. For the capital cost alone, though, that shouldn't be that complicated. What's the difference here just on the capital side between these two projects? What is the proportion allocated at Castle Hill?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The staffing costs are provided in the capital budget as well, so that's the work that we need to do, sorry.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm happy for you to take staffing aside. The other costs, though—construction, refurbishment—must be known here. You're at budget estimates.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Yes, and bear with me one minute.

**KATE FOY:** Maybe they could come back at the end of the session with that, if they can find it.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, I'm happy to pause and come back to that as soon as they're ready to respond. It would be fair for her to have a bit of time to sort through, but I do think that's a reasonable issue to press on. Separately, secondly, I might put this to you at the same time: What are the digitisation program's costs as a breakout of that?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I'm happy to answer that. The total collection digitisation and relocation project is \$65.7 million.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Is that a one-off? Is that how you're thinking about it? Presumably, this will also be a bit of an ongoing program. But this is a one-off digitisation, the way you're describing it.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes, the project which we've been delivering over the last three years—we're just in the final year this year—will capture 384,000 objects from our collection. But it's not just the digitisation; it's the assessment, packing, digitisation and relocation of each of those objects.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, which is obviously very complex.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That \$65.7 million is allocated in this financial year, given the time lines you're working to, is that correct?

**LISA HAVILAH:** No, it has actually gone across three financial years.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But this will be the last financial year that's relevant, is that correct?

**LISA HAVILAH:** That's correct, yes.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I can give you the construction contract award amount for Taylor Constructions, our builder for Castle Hill. It's \$24,467,396.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you, I really appreciate you giving that answer. Can you just give me some sense of what might be attributed to Castle Hill but is not in that? I think the staffing is common sense. Is there anything else?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** That would not include the design costs. It wouldn't include the staffing, as we said, and I believe the land acquisition isn't in that number as well.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is the land acquisition cost?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Off the top of my head, I can't—I can try and get it to you for the end of this session.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes. Could you come back and attribute the other two on notice? Again, I would have hoped the land acquisition would be known at this point in the cycle, if you could tell us that now. I think it would be appropriate to take away the other two matters and attribute and then come back on notice. Thank you for those. I might keep going through some Powerhouse questions. Ms Havilah, is the fit-out process you were describing all included in the budget—that is, the \$840 million and the \$75 million? None of that is additional, is it? Those additional processes are all budgeted for in that total, aren't they?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes, that's correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I just wanted to confirm that.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You talked about the philanthropy, the fundraising. I want to come back to that point. How are you travelling on those targets?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I'm happy to let the Committee know that at the beginning of year two of the four-year project, we have achieved \$46 million in contributions. That is a number of incredible partnerships that will not only contribute to the development of the museum but contribute to ongoing programs. If I may, I'll take you through each one of those.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**LISA HAVILAH:** The first one is a partnership with the Lang Walker Family Foundation to establish the Lang Walker Family Academy, which is a 60-bed academy where we'll have over 10,000 young people a year come and stay from across regional New South Wales and western Sydney and immerse themselves into STEM education. We're really excited about that project, and we've already started working across six local western Sydney schools. We have the Lang Walker in-schools program, and that is very successful in terms of its rollout. Last week we had a female NASA astronaut at East Hills girls high school, which was really exciting.

Our foundation university partner is Western Sydney University, and they've contributed \$10 million. We're working with them on a whole range of educational initiatives, and that program is really about developing pathways for young people across New South Wales into future STEM jobs and also connecting them through the Lang Walker Family Academy. It's a very embedded pathways program. We just recently announced a partnership with Holdmark, and that will establish the Holdmark Gallery. But embedded into that program is a biannual exhibition focusing on design and architecture. We will also, as part of that, have an annual program working with local councils across western Sydney and embedding architects and emerging architects, looking at addressing design issues or design problems.

We also have a great partnership with the Vitocco family to establish the Vitocco Family Kitchen, which is a 200-seat production kitchen which will engage young people with agriculture—leaders in agricultural science, food production, chefs—and really tell the great stories of agricultural science across New South Wales. We're really excited about developing that program, and they have also supported a full-time curator that will develop stories and programs leading up to the opening of the museum.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** There's been some publicity around those things, and they're part of the attraction of this site. You've run through a range of those, and you've been clear about the quantum for some of them. Do all of those go to the \$75 million that you need to raise to deal with the capital challenges here, or are some of them for operational costs that might be ongoing?

**LISA HAVILAH:** It's a combination of capital and programming, because what's really important is not only, of course, meeting our capital target but also embedding great programs into the museum.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How much of the \$46 million that you've raised goes to helping with the capital target?

**LISA HAVILAH:** To date—let me just find that for you, if you give me one second—from the \$46 million contribution, \$38.2 million will be contributed to the capital campaign, representing 51 per cent of the \$75 million target being met. The remaining \$78 million is a contribution to Powerhouse Parramatta programming, including the delivery of the Lang Walker Family Academy.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think that means you've got \$36.8 million still to go to be able to deliver this.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What's the timing of that? Obviously this project is moving very quickly. Are you confident you'll meet the short time lines that you've got to complete the project?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I feel completely confident. We have a really exciting pipeline of partnerships that we're looking forward to announcing over the next year, and we feel very confident that the target will be met and exceeded before the museum opens.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What are the salaries paid in total to the fundraising team?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I would have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm happy for you to take that on notice. What is the ongoing operating budget for the Powerhouse at Parramatta?

**LISA HAVILAH:** We have an integrated operating budget for Parramatta, Castle Hill and Ultimo. We also operate Sydney Observatory. I'm happy to give you the total budget for 2023, if that's helpful.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is the total budget for 2023?

**LISA HAVILAH:** The opex budget is \$56.5 million, and the capex budget is \$3.9 million, with a total of \$60.4 million in investment for the 2022-23 financial year.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What will that increase to in 2024-25, given the opening that we talked about earlier?

**LISA HAVILAH:** It might be more helpful if I give you the end state Government investment—which is 2027-28—which is \$68.3 million.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Sixty-eight-point-three will be your ongoing operational expenditure. Is that—

**LISA HAVILAH:** Correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You're comparing those two numbers.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** At that point, what will be the breakdown between those four sites that you mentioned?

**LISA HAVILAH:** Each site will have its own operational cost, but it's an integrated model of operating. It's very hard to break down the cost of each location because it's all integrated. We have one facilities team that runs the facilities operations across all of the sites. I'm happy to take that on notice and look at how much detail we can give you.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm happy for you to take that on notice and come back. I can see the point you're making. I think it's also a legitimate question to get some sense of what the break-up here is.

**LISA HAVILAH:** It is.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I appreciate you've given me the key figure for operating. I really appreciate that. But, if you come back on notice, we'll pursue that on notice, if we then need more detail on that front.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I have the land acquisition costs.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Fantastic. Thank you.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** It's \$2,710,889.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Thank you very much for that. That's appreciated. When it comes to what you described as the end state, Ms Havilah, 2027-28, what is the commercial take at the moment across those four sites that you expect to be supplementing the funding you get from Government?

**LISA HAVILAH:** The revenue target that we've identified, which will continue to be adjusted, is currently \$38.8 million.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Per annum, but that's the 2027-28 figure.

**LISA HAVILAH:** Correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Feel free to answer this in any way you like. What proportion of the space will you really need to have commercialised or really be rotating people through in order to reach that target? Obviously, you'll be reaching it in a range of ways.

**LISA HAVILAH:** The model of operation at Powerhouse Parramatta is a very dynamic, changing programming model. We'll have seven new exhibitions each year, but we also have spaces for a whole range of commercial and community events that are adjacent and integrated into the museum program. They include event space alongside food and beverage spaces, where you have a rooftop garden. Those spaces will be used for both commercial activity, and education and museum programs.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you. When it comes to staff in 2027-28, how many staff do you expect to be operating at each of those four locations?

**LISA HAVILAH:** If you just give me one second, I think, I can answer that. Yes, 400 in total.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Thank you for the total. What about between the four locations, for each of the locations?

**LISA HAVILAH:** We do have that, but I'll have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. I would've hoped you're able to provide that in detail.

**LISA HAVILAH:** We can.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I would've thought that's a reasonable—

**LISA HAVILAH:** I can give you an overview. The majority of staff will be at our flagship, which is Powerhouse Parramatta.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you say "the majority"—perhaps more than 200 at Parramatta?

**LISA HAVILAH:** I don't want to guess, but at least half at Parramatta.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** At least half, but feel free to take it on notice. I'm just going to ask for a general position here, although I might put some other questions to you later. I wanted to ask about the conservation management plans commissioned for the Powerhouse Ultimo Renewal project. Why were two conservation management plans commissioned?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** There's only one conservation management plan that we have produced. There's only one that was commissioned. There's only one that we have produced.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Only one's been produced, only one's been commissioned, in your view?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Mm-hmm.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Cox, I want to just go back to the Destination NSW overseas offices. Can you explain to me the KPIs that they operate under?

**STEVE COX:** Yes, Ms Sharpe. Before I go on to talking about KPIs—I said I'd try and get back to you with the salary bands. They're not in the GSE Act, they're in the international offices. That's why I can't give you a band number.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's fine.

**STEVE COX:** But they're paid between 120 and 200. It depends upon the market conditions. We tend to line them up with similar roles for Tourism Australia and contracts from the local market employment conditions. It's a case-by-case local market assessment that occurs. There is some variance, obviously, due to the cost of living in different locations, but we don't pay additional living expenses.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are most of them recruited in country? Or do we have a mix?

**STEVE COX:** To my knowledge, Ms Sharpe, they've been recruited in country. In my time there's only been one vacancy—that is currently being recruited—which is for the India country manager role. We would look to recruit that in country. Generally, we look for people with local, on-the-ground experience, connections, understanding of the visitor economy et cetera. So they tend to come from the market—obviously, language, a deep understanding of that area.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Great. Thank you. How do you measure how well they're doing?

**STEVE COX:** Ultimately it comes down to the volume of travel from that destination into New South Wales. We have an international target. The international target is broken down, country by country or area by area and region by region. Then they are assessed against how much travel expenditure we're getting across, bearing in mind they influence most but not every single piece. Students is an important part. Business travel is an important part. It's those pieces. It's the execution of campaigns and how effective they've been. We do partnership campaigns with airlines and the like. It's ensuring that the New South Wales product, beyond Sydney, all of New South Wales product is represented in their major partners, if you like, within the ecosystem so that, if you're in India and you go into Mumbai and you want to buy a trip to Australia, the New South Wales product is well represented—proportion of the product that we have and how that's represented in those top operators. There's a few different pieces. The biggest measure, ultimately, is the dollar value.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Where would I find this dollar value?

**STEVE COX:** We don't have it in the annual report broken down country by country, but we've got the total amount.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Could you provide it to me on notice, country by country?

**STEVE COX:** I need to have a look at that. But I will certainly take the question on notice and provide what we're able to do.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you concerned that you're not going to be able to provide or that you're not going to want to provide that publicly?

**STEVE COX:** No, not at all. We certainly know the targets that we're getting across the different international markets, Ms Sharpe. There's no concern with relation to that. I just need to go back and double-check on the process around individual targets for those people.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I think, right at the beginning of the year, you travelled with Minister Ayres to London. Is that the case?

**STEVE COX:** That is correct.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Trying to steal the F1 Australian Grand Prix from Victoria. How'd that go?

**STEVE COX:** I'd rather not call it steal.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I think the Victorians would call it stealing.

**STEVE COX:** Give it the opportunity to be raced in the premier location in the Asia-Pacific is perhaps the way that I would like to think about it.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sure. How's that going?

**STEVE COX:** It was a good process. At the end of the day, a decision to stay in Melbourne has been made by Formula 1.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** How long have they decided to stay there?

**STEVE COX:** Off the top of my head, Ms Sharpe—it is publicly recorded. I think it was to 2032. I would need to reconfirm that number.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So they're not coming here anytime soon.

**STEVE COX:** No. That's correct.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Thank you. I was trying to work out how this is reported. But I'm interested in the number of events and the amount of support provided between east of Parramatta and west of Parramatta. You may have to take that on notice. But, as I was preparing for this hearing, I saw many, many events this side and not very many events on the east side. So I'm trying to get a bit of a sense of the split literally. I know that you sort by regions. If you have to do it, sort by regions. But the line I'm looking for is the north-south line east-west of Parramatta. You going to be able to provide that for me?

**STEVE COX:** I can certainly provide the information, Ms Sharpe. What I can certainly also say is that we recognise the opportunity for some more major events in the Central River City and the Western Parkland City and we have work in progress right now with Destination management plans for both of those regions.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When are they due to be finalised?

**STEVE COX:** Within this calendar year, Ms Sharpe. We are also working on—and we've been doing extensive consultation with all the different stakeholders in the Central River City and Western Parkland City to try to identify those large-scale major events that we might be able to bring into that region. So it's a work in progress and we can certainly provide you the information that you've requested.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Where's the funding for events like Parramasala up to? It's been an ongoing issue over many years.

**STEVE COX:** I don't believe that we fund that one.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** It sits in the budget of Multicultural NSW, from memory.

**STEVE COX:** Destination NSW—for us to invest in an event, it needs to drive ex-region visitation. So there are some wonderful events that occur, such as this one, and certainly as part of that work in looking at the Central River City and Western Parkland City, we do look for and we have been looking for events that are more community based at the moment that perhaps could be taken to that next level to drive, in particular for us, international visitation. Something like Parramasala, anything that attracts those large communities—if we can bring an international flavour to it, there's certainly an angle there. But for us to invest, an event has to be a major event and a major event defined by the level of visitation from outside of the 50-kilometre radius to the event.

There are some wonderful events that are community events that we do not invest in, but we certainly look at those kinds of events and look for opportunities to how could we, with a bit of extra effort, make them larger and something that people will travel interstate—and really internationally is what we're ultimately looking for.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But you will on notice be able to provide me with a breakdown east to west on the number and the amount invested from Destination NSW?

**STEVE COX:** The amount invested is commercial in confidence.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are you able to provide it to me as a global figure?

**STEVE COX:** We would be able to provide an expected visitor spend related to the events that we are investing in.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** No, that's not the question that I'm asking. I'm wanting to understand, of taxpayers' dollars that go into tourism in this city, how much money is being spent by Destination NSW west of Parramatta?

**STEVE COX:** The events budgets are commercial in confidence for very good reason—for the people of New South Wales.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sure, I'm familiar with this argument. We've been having this over many estimates in various forms but that's not really what I'm asking.

**STEVE COX:** I'm happy to report to you the number of events and the value of the visitor spend expected to come from those events, absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Well, no. With respect, Mr Cox, that is not what I'm asking you to provide. I'm not asking you to identify event by event. I'm asking to understand how much taxpayers' dollars spent in Greater Sydney in your agency for events go west of Parramatta versus east of Parramatta.

**STEVE COX:** Ms Sharpe, the level of investment that we make in events, whether it's individual or combined as a total, is a commercial-in-confidence number.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I mean, this has been an ongoing issue for quite a long time. I didn't really anticipate that this was going to be that hard. I don't understand why you cannot provide that amount, the funding, if it is not identified event by event.

**STEVE COX:** I'm happy to take it on notice and, if we can provide that information, I'm certainly happy to do so. I'm not trying to be obstructive in any way.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Well, you're not agreeing to tell the Parliament how much money you're spending.

**STEVE COX:** I will take it on notice and provide what we're able to provide at that time.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I just encourage you to do that. I agree with my colleague. That is the baseline public transparency we would expect. I'm glad Ms Sharpe raised it, because I have some similar questions later on. But, if you can't provide that on notice, you're just inviting the upper House to inquire in far more detail by requesting some of these documents. In my view—I'm not speaking for the Committee—that is a totally reasonable expectation.

**STEVE COX:** I understand, Mr Graham.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think that'll be a much more efficient way to provide it than the other ways that we might seek the information.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It's not a threat, by the way.

**STEVE COX:** I understand. I agree—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I just suggest it's a wise—

**STEVE COX:** I'm just not in a position to sit here right now and say definitively yes or no. I'm happy to take it on notice—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I will also remind the Minister that perhaps that might be better in terms of answering this question rather than going down the other route, so that will be fine.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** We could always defeat the SO 52.

**The CHAIR:** Good luck.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That hasn't been going so well for you, so we'll see.

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** The unholy alliance on the record.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm thinking of the poor DPC officials, who in so many other areas have been so helpful.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's right. And trust me, I don't want to be trawling through boxes and boxes. I just want that information and I want it deidentified. I'm not actually asking you for commercial in confidence—I've actually conceded that point.

**STEVE COX:** I understand. And, look, Ms Sharpe, certainly all the events that we invest in have a big flow-on to the broader community. We know that many people who come into the city will stay in western Sydney and then come into the middle. Sometimes it's with relation to where the facilities are and the stadiums are and the like, but we'll certainly try to provide you with the information that we can.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'd be careful getting into that stadium issue if I were you. I wanted to ask some regional youth questions, Ms Ryan.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Could I just correct the record very quickly?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, of course.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** I'm sorry, I seem to be doing this repetitively today. We have been unkind to our Commonwealth colleagues. They in fact fund 50 per cent of the \$70 million for Aboriginal housing, plus the \$50 million for Aboriginal community infrastructure. So it's 50/50 with the Commonwealth across the whole—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So it's \$120 million and the State's putting in \$60 million.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** It's \$120 million and it's 50/50 across the lot. My apologies.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's good. Yes, I think this is partly why there's confusion over where the money's coming from and who's deciding how it's spent. Ms Ryan, I wanted to just ask you some quick questions about the Office for Regional Youth. Before the break you took us through some of the number of young people that have participated in a range of programs. Are you able to tell me how many people have participated in the youth radio program?

**JULIA RYAN:** Our youth radio program was a grants program. We have 15 projects that were funded across 17 LGAs. We're targeting a figure of 306 young people that'll participate in youth-led broadcasting programs throughout regional New South Wales.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When did that start?

**JULIA RYAN:** It was opened and closed already. The grants have been assessed and the projects are all listed on our website now.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When are they due for completion?

**JULIA RYAN:** The grants were announced in April this year. I don't have the finish date. I think it'd be within a year of the contracting being finalised.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You anticipate around 306 young people will participate in that, is that correct?

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** For the Regional Gap Year program, how many young people have taken a regional gap year? Do you measure it by calendar year or do you measure it by financial year?

**JULIA RYAN:** Our gap year campaign consists of a website where we promote opportunities for young people to travel in regional New South Wales and take up opportunities. We have a whole lot of information there about how to find jobs, resources for young people to refer to if they need help with work information, minimum wages, if they've had any concerns. It was started during the COVID lockdown when there were no international tourists and we had a worker shortage in regional areas. We were particularly trying to attract young people to travel. We didn't use it as a tracking of seasonal job applications or how many young people have travelled.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So you have no idea how many young people have taken up a regional gap year in New South Wales?

**JULIA RYAN:** I do have a figure of—in the 2020-21 financial year, our social campaign reached 1.95 million people and generated 15,979 click-throughs. We've interviewed young people in New South Wales who have taken a gap year. We've got a lot of case studies but we don't track numbers of young people who take a gap year.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So where did you find the young people that have taken a regional gap year?

**JULIA RYAN:** Really through our networks in regional New South Wales. We have obviously our regional development offices that are in regional areas who work with the community, but now the Office for Regional Youth—we have established roles. Youth community coordinators, we call them—and we have 10 located across the State with support staff and they're working with young people, with youth services, with community providers, and we have a strong connection there to find case studies.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But just to be clear, you're finding a case study. You have no idea how many people have actually taken it up.

**JULIA RYAN:** That's not tracked through our gap year campaign.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I wanted to ask about the NSW Youth Parliament. The Minister has suggested that there has been a review of the bills from the 2020-2021 Youth Parliament. Has that happened?

**JULIA RYAN:** The Youth Parliament is administered by the Y, I believe. It's not one of the —

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I know that. What I'm saying is that the Minister spoke to the Youth Parliament and indicated that the bills from the previous Parliament had been gone through by, I assume, your department or your office. I'm just wondering if that has occurred.

**JULIA RYAN:** Not that I have personally gone through them, but our office does work with the Y and we have a lot of links together, so they may have provided those bills to the team.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But you don't know what has happened? Could you take on notice, in terms of the examination of the bills, which bills were examined and what action was taken as a result?

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And by whom?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That would be great. How many staff do you have in the Office for Regional Youth?

**JULIA RYAN:** I believe our current count is 45. I will double-check that. Yes, 45 currently.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Is that headcount or FTE?

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That was my next question.

**JULIA RYAN:** I've got it as a headcount.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Actually, Mr Coutts-Trotter, I have noticed that public servants during this round of budget estimates have been reporting more on headcount than on FTE. Has there been a change in policy in relation to that?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, not to my knowledge.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It is a genuine question. I've had some toing and froing with a variety of different public servants in relation to this.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** It's just people doing it?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Just random, I think.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's fine. Does the Office of Regional Youth have any involvement in the Stronger Country Communities Fund?

**JULIA RYAN:** That fund is administered by the Department of Regional NSW. There was a stream three, which had a youth portion, so \$54.4 million of stream three of the Stronger Country Communities Fund was allocated to youth projects. Those are all underway and somewhere—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Sorry, they've all been allocated?

**JULIA RYAN:** Those youth projects from stream three. There have been subsequent rounds of Stronger Country Communities Fund, and I believe there's another round open at the moment. It is not administered by the Office for Regional Youth, but it is administered by the department.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** But you sit within Regional NSW?

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes, so our department does administer that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Right. Sorry. I probably shouldn't have let Mr Hanger go home.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** For the current round, does that include a youth component in the way that stream three did?

**JULIA RYAN:** No. There's no fund of money put aside for youth projects.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I understand. Because it was such a big focus for stream three, is it envisaged that there will be in future?

**JULIA RYAN:** It is definitely something I am advocating for. We also, as I said, have our youth community coordinators. We're encouraging people to put youth projects forward.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** There's nothing that precludes people from applying in these other rounds? Even though it might not be a youth round, you anticipate that there will be youth projects?

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes, I would hope so.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What role does the Minister play in relation to this fund?

**JULIA RYAN:** This fund is administered under the Deputy Premier.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes. But does your Minister have any role in relation to seeing the grant applications, giving advice on the applications? Is there an expectation that he will be consulted in relation to the youth applications?

**JULIA RYAN:** There's no formal process for the Minister's involvement in this current round of Stronger Country Communities Fund.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Previous rounds?

**JULIA RYAN:** There was, in the youth round—there was a role for the Minister.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What was his role?

**JULIA RYAN:** That was the former Minister for regional youth.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's okay.

**JULIA RYAN:** Let me just find the detail of that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The former youth Minister was Ms Taylor, wasn't it?

**JULIA RYAN:** Ms Taylor, yes. I would have to take that specific role of the Minister on notice. I've got some further figures around that round, which was \$54.4 million, as I mentioned.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** If you can provide, on notice, where they went and how much they were? Are all of the grants online?

**JULIA RYAN:** All announced grants are listed online.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Terrific. I won't ask you to provide them; we can look them up ourselves. But I am very interested in what role the Minister played in relation to that. Do they formally have a role? Was it just consulted, Minister to Minister? When did she first see a list of those, and at what stage of the process—and whether she had any formal sign-off as well?

**JULIA RYAN:** I will definitely take that on notice. I wasn't in the role at the time, so I don't have them directly.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's fine. Where I'm getting to with this, obviously, is it is a significant amount of money. There is a lot of money in that Stronger Country Communities Fund, and there have been some significant recommendations around grants administration. I'm trying to understand the role of the Minister in this particular grants program. Just to be clear, you're not sure what the role of Mr Franklin will be?

**JULIA RYAN:** No, Minister Franklin has no role in the current Stronger Country Communities Fund.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So he won't be seeing any applications and he won't be asked for any recommendations, even though your coordinators are working throughout the State to encourage youth organisations to apply for them?

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Are they reporting to you about the applications that are coming through?

**JULIA RYAN:** The youth community coordinators won't be assisting with applications. It is more in terms of their day-to-day interaction with providers—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Encouraging people to apply?

**JULIA RYAN:** —that they would let people know it is an available opportunity, in the same way that other parts of the department promote the availability of grants in their day-to-day work.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Terrific. Thanks.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I might turn to some other issues. The first of those is back to the questions about the old Registrar-General's building. I might firstly ask, Ms Foy—we talked about this earlier. You heard the Minister's answer. Can you give us any other details about the process here?

**KATE FOY:** I think, as the Minister said, that is all a matter before government at the moment, so I'm really unable to give any more detail at this stage.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I ask specifically about the potential demolition of the 1960s Peter Hall building at the rear part of the building. Is that contemplated? Is that a possibility?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** Are you a fan of that building?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm just simply asking. I'm more interested in whether Ms Foy is.

**KATE FOY:** I'm afraid I would have to go back and get some detail, and take that on notice, as well as considering what Cabinet confidentiality might apply to the whole project.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Understood. If you were able to answer that on notice, that would be appreciated.

**KATE FOY:** Of course.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I turn to the issue about the Parramatta Female Factory. We've talked a lot about funding for other areas—for the Powerhouse in its various incarnations. How much money is currently allocated to this site in the budget?

**KATE FOY:** Give me a moment because, under the previous arrangements, there was Heritage and a bunch of arts agencies working together. I'll defer to Ms Pitman and any information she might have around Parramatta North and the Female Factory, if that's okay, Mr Graham?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The Government announced in December last year a \$53.8 million commitment to Parramatta North, and that was to secure, restore and preserve the Heritage Core in particular. That funding will be to support the conservation and upgrade of 11 heritage buildings as part of the 10-year program of work across that Heritage Core; prepare final business cases for cultural facilities and for an immersive museum experience for the Female Factory; upgrading two hectares of public open space; and a temporary activation and long-term tenancy of buildings and open spaces, including space for the western Sydney creative and social enterprise organisations.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Just to round out the areas we've been discussing, what's the current budget commitment to the old Registrar-General's building?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The current, for the Registrar-General's building—I have that.

**KATE FOY:** I think that's Macquarie Street East.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Sorry, yes.

**KATE FOY:** For the Macquarie Street East project, I think the Premier is on the record talking about the importance of that precinct. There was an allocation through a different portfolio, not ours. I'd defer to that portfolio to report on their own budget figures. Of course, the Registrar-General's building is one site or one element of that broader precinct project, but that's managed through Property NSW.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And any budget allocation for that will be within that broader Macquarie Street East allocation.

**KATE FOY:** That's my understanding. But I'm happy to come back and say who owns that budget line, just to give you a point of reference.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I turn to one issue with Sydney Living Museums. The Minister made the point that the CEO is not here, so feel free to—

**KATE FOY:** I was wishing he was.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm sure that's right. I did just want to ask about his salary. The public reporting is quite good on this, as it is with all the institutions. That is reported publicly, certainly, for 2021—the most recent report. The one question I had was, this is allocated as a 0.5 FTE in the report. That's because of the administrative arrangements that are in place between SARA and Sydney Living Museums. Is the salary that's publicly reported also 0.5 of the salary or is it the total?

**KATE FOY:** I'm afraid I don't have the document in front of me, but I'm happy to go back and confirm that to be the case. But your assumption around 0.5 being shared between the two budgets—for Sydney Living Museums vis-a-vis State Archives and Records Authority—I imagine that assumption to be correct. I'll come back and confirm that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think it's entirely reasonable to come back on notice. Perhaps with the merger that's now been announced, is that salary changing at all?

**KATE FOY:** I do not believe that the salary changes or the role changes. It simply will confirm that that is the ongoing structure of the position. So my belief is no, it doesn't change. If that is incorrect, I'll confirm that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That's appreciated. There's been a process ongoing about the leases down at Walsh Bay. Can I get a progress report on that issue?

**KATE FOY:** Yes, of course. I'll invite Ms Pitman, who has been leading that particular project.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** We have nine tenants at Walsh Bay Arts Precinct. Those tenants include Sydney Theatre Company, Sydney Dance Company, Bangarra Dance Theatre, Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, Gondwana Choirs, The Song Company, Australian Chamber Orchestra, Australian Theatre for Young People and Bell Shakespeare. Those tenants are all now operational in the precinct. The precinct is operational. The individual arrangements with the individual tenants have been negotiated through individual leasing. The majority of those leases are in place. All of the agreements to lease are in place and all of the tenants are operating under the agreements to lease. Finalisation of those is ongoing.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When you say "the majority" of leases have been signed, how many of the nine?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I'll need to come back to you with the specific information.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So you'll tell us how many of the nine, and can you tell us which institutions?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Yes, I'll tell you how many and which.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** How long has this signing process been ongoing?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The final leases couldn't be signed until the building was complete because the specific areas in the building needed to be included in the leases. So it depends on the tenant, frankly, how long it's been going—some of them slightly longer than others.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm catching up here, though. Can you just give us some sense of how long it might have taken for some of these?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** For the tenants who are occupying Wharf 4/5, it would have been going for about a year. For the tenants who are in Pier 2/3, I believe all three of those tenants have executed their leases. But I'll come back to you with confirmation.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So it's more a Wharf 4/5 issue?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What has been the hold-up?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** You can appreciate that the tenants have all—their financial circumstances have changed quite a lot since we originally executed the agreements for lease, years ago now. The tenants have rightly taken that into account in their discussions with us.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** In the course of signing those leases and in the course of coming to those agreements, have you stepped outside of the commercial framework that was originally envisaged for these leases or are you still operating within the same Government policy that's been articulated for some time?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Like I said, the leases were individually negotiated with the tenants. I'm not aware—I'm not fully understanding what you're asking, I'm sorry. But they are within the bounds of—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** They were moving to a commercial benchmark, a proportion of a commercial rent space. Is that still the case for each of these leases?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The leases in Walsh Bay are a little bit different. I think you're referring to our Infrastructure Support Policy, which is a broad policy which governs the tenancies across all of our properties. That provides office accommodation for tenants at 30 per cent of the market value. I believe that's what you're referring to. For Walsh Bay, it's slightly different because the different tenants provided some of their own significant costs toward their fit-out of their spaces. So that's been taken into consideration when it comes to negotiating the leases.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** One of the things that the Government has announced is the WestInvest Fund, a proportion of which is allocated to government agencies. One of those six streams for transformational projects relates to arts and culture. Can I just get an update about where this has progressed to from the point of view of the agencies dealing with arts and culture?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** We were really excited when WestInvest was announced, and specifically that arts and culture was one of the key focal areas. My team is both involved in assessing some of the community proposals as well as putting forward some of our own proposals for the government funding.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** In that latter category, what's the process from your point of view? How are you plugging into it, and what's the timing?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The process is that we have to provide some detail—business case information—about the proposals that we're putting forward. My team is working through that now.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Will the business cases that you put forward as part of that process relate solely to government-owned or government-funded cultural institutions? How much could this potentially spread out to some of the more commercial organisations?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** The guidelines for the program require it to be a government—I'm sorry, I—

**KATE FOY:** DPC is leading the WestInvest process, so maybe Mr Coutts-Trotter will have that.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, I haven't got down that briefing note; that's for Wednesday. The government-led process is really being coordinated out of the Treasury, so it's quite distinct from the competitive community process.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Pitman, is there anything else you want to add on that?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** No.

**JULIA RYAN:** If I could just clarify? I do have a bit more information about the assessment process for the Stronger Country Communities Fund, if you would like me to update that now.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, that would be terrific.

**JULIA RYAN:** There was a departmental assessment of eligibility, viability, community support and alignment with objectives, and then a prioritised list of the projects for each LGA—there was an allocation for each LGA—was submitted to the Deputy Premier based on the assessment and the funding available. The department was able to recommend part-funding, where appropriate. This is in the guidelines that were published publicly for the 2019 Stronger Country Communities Fund. The Deputy Premier will consider the prioritised list of eligible and viable projects with community support and make final approvals in consultation with the Minister for Regional Youth. That was the assessment process.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Do you know, in terms of the prioritised list that went to the Deputy Premier and the Minister for Regional Youth, whether those were changed?

**JULIA RYAN:** I don't know that.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Could you take that on notice? In fact, what I would like, ideally, is the list of the prioritised projects as recommended through that process, and then the final list that was provided.

**JULIA RYAN:** I will take that on notice.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I noticed that the Minister has announced the Our Region, Our Voice funding program in the past few days. That is \$40 million. Is that correct?

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I think we're having a break. We'll have to come back.

**The CHAIR:** We're having a break. We'll be back in 15 minutes, at 3.45 p.m.

**(Short adjournment)**

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Ms Ryan, I just wanted to come back to you about the Our Region, Our Voice program. I've got to admit that we couldn't find that in the budget papers. Whereabouts was it located in the budget papers?

**JULIA RYAN:** You'll remember there was a \$59 million allocation for Regional Youth in the budget. The way that we put forward the proposal for the funding for the Office for Regional Youth was that we will be directing our funding towards projects that are priorities for each region. Rather than rolling out a statewide response to regionally specific issues, we will be looking at work areas that are informed through our framework, which you would be familiar with, which was informed by 4,000 young people, and then directing our investment into those priority pillars. Then we have work areas within those. What we embarked on, following the confirmation of our funding, was a consultation across regional areas with 2,000 young people, where we delved into what their priorities are within the work areas of those pillars.

We have created our Regional Youth Insights, which is also available online. That provides an in-depth picture of the differences in the regional priorities for young people. We've done that through surveys and interviews, and we've also triangulated back with government and service providers to crosscheck the validity of those priorities. These are now publicly available. The Our Region, Our Voice funding program has come in to support those priorities and those insights. We've opened up for applications, but the applications will be assessed based on the priorities that came forward for each of those regions, so we're actually directing the funding to young people's priorities.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** When does that close?

**JULIA RYAN:** I think it's the first Tuesday of September.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That can't be right.

**JULIA RYAN:** October, sorry.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So there's a month?

**JULIA RYAN:** The first Tuesday of October. A month, yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What's the assessment process? Who's assessing them?

**JULIA RYAN:** We will be creating a panel of assessors. We've got some other government organisations that will be part of that panel. It will be the secretariat from the Office for Regional Youth, but we're bringing in experts from the Department of Education. We've also invited the departments of health and skills. We've got other government partners that we've invited to be part of those panels, and we'll lock the individuals in as that gets closer. But it will be, primarily, an eligibility assessment by our department, and then a panel assessment following that. Then we will—

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** The panel assessment will rank the applications?

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes. Again, it can propose part-funding, if reasonable. Then that list of preferred and recommended projects will be sent to the Minister for consideration and endorsement.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So the Minister is the decision-maker?

**JULIA RYAN:** The Minister is given advice by the panel to accept or not.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** He will be given a list, and then he can, I presume, change that if he wishes to?

**JULIA RYAN:** I don't know that "change" would be the right way to describe it.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Reprioritise?

**JULIA RYAN:** There could be a conversation based on what the Minister saw, but the panel's recommendations are a matter that is reflected within the department's record keeping. That will be the recommendation made by our panel.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** What happens if the Minister doesn't agree?

**JULIA RYAN:** That would be a process. We would need to take legal advice. I've been asked this question before. It hasn't arisen in the Regional Youth space in terms of the Minister making changes to proposed grant applications. The framing that we have is that the Minister has the opportunity to endorse the panel's recommendations.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Maybe this is to you, Mr Coutts-Trotter: Hasn't the Premier put out a Premier's memorandum in relation to grants administration?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** The product of the grants administration review is a new guide, which is empowered in legislation, as you would know. That is gazetted, effective 19 September. The guide becomes operative from 19 September. It is prospective in its operation, so I don't know how it would interact with the process that's underway.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** So it would be outside—

**JULIA RYAN:** The process has been reviewed to be—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** To be congruent—to be in line with the recommendations of the review.

**JULIA RYAN:** Yes, it is compliant.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** In that case, if there was a decision by a Minister to fund something that was not recommended by the assessors, that is fine, if they're the decision-maker. They just have to make that clear publicly.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** That's where I was getting to. I was trying to understand when that had been turned on.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** It turns on 19 September. My colleague tells me that—

**JULIA RYAN:** We've prepared ourselves to be compliant ahead of time.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Great.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** They also have to provide a reason, under those guidelines.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, that's right.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Where does that reason appear? Is it when it's announced? So you go through the process and it's announced. Is it on the website?

**JULIA RYAN:** All successful grants are recorded publicly. They're publicly announced within 45 days of the decision. All decisions and interactions with the Minister are reported, and records are kept of any of those interactions.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Reported where?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** We are working towards a whole-of-government grants portal akin to the Commonwealth's, but we start from where we start from. I assume there'll be a period where this kind of thing would be reported on an agency's own website. We are trying to aggregate that so there is one place you go to find out about grant opportunities and one place you go to find out about decision-making.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** You would anticipate, Ms Ryan, then, that the announcement of this program—there will be the list. Would we expect, at the same time, a link or whatever that would explain whether the Minister has deviated from the recommendations? Where would we find that?

**JULIA RYAN:** I will take that on notice. I think it would be a functional issue of the process of approving the grants.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** A footnote at the bottom of the list?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** No, it would be as open as any other information about the decision-making in the grants program.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Just to clarify, though, the baseline commitment is—I understand the point about centralised versus the agency. But it'll be a public—

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, absolutely.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —commitment? And that's contained in the guidelines?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Yes, it is. Absolutely.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Graham's about to walk away, and I think that I'm actually done.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I just ask about how that relates to Mr Cox's activity? Do you have an exemption from that approach where all grants awarded need to be published?

**STEVE COX:** Our grants that we operate are published, and the guidelines are on the Destination NSW corporate sites. We have got a number of grants that we run throughout the course of the year—Refresh And Renew programs et cetera. Investments in events are separate to grants, and we've got an agreement on the way that we're able to work with those.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** With whom is that agreement?

**STEVE COX:** The Information and Privacy commissioners, in the way that we release our information with relation to contracts.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** When was that agreement reached?

**STEVE COX:** The exact date, I'll have to take on notice. It was in the last few months.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Did that relate to this process about changing the whole-of-government approach on guidelines?

**STEVE COX:** No, that was a separate issue. There'd been a longstanding discussion between DNSW and the Privacy Commissioner that predated my time. We brought that to a head and got it resolved.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And now resolved?

**STEVE COX:** That's correct.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And resolved to your satisfaction?

**STEVE COX:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And how would you describe the settlement?

**STEVE COX:** In effect, the information that we release for each of our events gets released, but on a case-by-case basis we're able to redact commercial-in-confidence information.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I have seen, for example, for your accommodation providers that information is reported and reported in the way I would consider as standard for other agencies. I did want to ask about the \$24 million music venue funding, which was very welcome to the sector. I didn't check back in the lead-up to this, but it came out of your budget, Mr Cox. Is that correct?

**STEVE COX:** The live music venues support program?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**STEVE COX:** It was administered through us, yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Very good. And when you draw that distinction between coming out of your budget or being administered by you, why do you draw that distinction?

**STEVE COX:** Similar to something like Business Events Sydney. Sometimes we hold the funding and then we release it to Business Events Sydney, so we oversee the process—similar to that.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And to who were these funds awarded?

**STEVE COX:** I'd just need to get that detail if you excuse me for one moment—\$24 million for the live music fund, closed on 19 April. The program assisted 86 venues in Sydney and 77 in regional New South Wales which had been significantly impacted by COVID-19 related restrictions over the past year.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I'm familiar with the program. It was very welcome. It was one of the first times that sort of funding has been available from the State Government in New South Wales. It was a really important program to getting these venues through for COVID. Which venues received the funding?

**STEVE COX:** I'm happy to take that on notice. I don't have the full list. There's 163 venues, so I can take it on notice and I can provide you the detail.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. But that's the sort of program that you would be expecting to just provide in public?

**STEVE COX:** Yes.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** And the reason I ask is, I don't believe it has been. I haven't checked for a little while but—

**STEVE COX:** Ordinarily it's in our annual report, and this was in this financial year and our annual report hasn't come out yet. Our grants funding is provided in the annual report on an annual basis. That has not been released as yet.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** If you could provide that on notice, that would be useful. As the secretary is changing the approach on the grants culture in the Government and requiring other agencies to publish their grants perhaps earlier than just in the annual report, will you be changing your culture at DNSW and publishing this information ahead of the annual reporting process?

**STEVE COX:** We will certainly align with the requirements of the review and the work that the secretary has just spoken to.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Excellent.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. So we should anticipate a change then given that answer.

**KATE FOY:** Yes, correct.

**STEVE COX:** Pardon?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** We should anticipate a change then given that answer.

**STEVE COX:** Yes, we will be fully compliant of course.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. I wanted to turn to the question about the Feel New in NSW expenditure. I was mainly focusing on getting an answer from the Minister, Mr Cox. So, firstly, I wanted to give you the opportunity to put anything else on the record about this campaign that you wanted to.

**STEVE COX:** If you just give me one moment. Excuse me for a minute, I just need to find the appropriate note. We were delighted with the performance of the campaign. Today you were talking about the split of New South Wales versus other States, so the valuation of the visitor spend, 49 per cent is intrastate spend so it's quite appropriate to try and protect and retain visitation in New South Wales and to ensure that our communication resonates with New South Wales residents as well.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Just explain that figure—49 per cent of the—

**STEVE COX:** Of the visitor spend—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** —of the visitor spend is intrastate.

**STEVE COX:** —is intrastate, 24 per cent is interstate, and 27 per cent is international under ordinary circumstances, of course, off the back of the pandemic.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So 24 per cent within the State. No, sorry, you've now lost me—49 per cent is—

**STEVE COX:** Forty-nine intrastate—intra.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Intrastate. Got it.

**STEVE COX:** Twenty-four inter.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, got it

**STEVE COX:** That's 73 per cent domestic. 27 per cent international.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, great.

**STEVE COX:** And there is a deficit. So New South Wales residents spent pre-COVID \$12.5 billion interstate. So the more we can convince New South Wales residents to have their visits within their own State, the better for the economy. And of course as well this is removing the deficit to the international markets, which off the top of my head is circa \$14 billion in the year 2019.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What's the value of the interstate expenditure in New South Wales? That is, you've given us the figure for New South Wales residents going and spending in Melbourne or other places. What about residents from other States coming here and spending?

**STEVE COX:** I've only got the 2030 projection so I'll need to come back and take on notice the current numbers. But the 2030 projection, which is at that \$65 billion number, was 15.9.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** \$15.9 billion. Is the interstate expenditure here—

**STEVE COX:** Yes, of the \$65 billion target.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great, and focusing on 2030 what's the intrastate figure?

**STEVE COX:** Thirty-one point nine.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. And the other figure we already had we talked about but maybe if you gave me that—

**STEVE COX:** International 17.9—0.96 to deal with your \$1 million that is missing there.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** One billion dollars.

**STEVE COX:** A billion, sorry. They are rounding. So 0.96, 0.91, so 49 per cent, 24 and 27.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** It's a rounding error, not interstellar.

**STEVE COX:** Yes, exactly. So 65.83 is the target for 2030.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. Thanks for that. That is quite helpful. Really the policy questions that unfold from that are these: I accept that it's a valuable thing to get someone 50 kilometres from their home in New South Wales. That generates economic activity; that's an important goal. The question here is about the best use of these funds though and it does seem counterintuitive that the best use of these tourism advertising dollars might be so close to home. It just naturally raises the question: Why are we doing this? Do you accept that that's not the balance of spending that Victoria, for example, is unfolding, that they're not spending the greatest proportion—not a majority but the greatest proportion—of their expenditure, for example, in Victoria?

**STEVE COX:** I don't have their breakdown, Mr Graham, but, as I also said to you, the reflection of why the weighting is slightly heavier to New South Wales was a result of when the brand strategy launched.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I think that's a fair point to make. You must be in discussion with your interstate colleagues.

**STEVE COX:** It's very competitive, Mr Graham. We don't tend to share with each other exactly where our marketing investments are.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** You must be in discussion with someone. Is this best practice?

**STEVE COX:** I think the work that we're doing is absolutely best practice—the brand work, driving awareness, consideration and conversion—and bearing in mind there are lots of different channels that we touch to drive visitation to New South Wales, the Aviation Attraction Fund included.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I accept that answer. Can I just be more specific in the question. What is best practice when it comes to spending these sort of tourism marketing dollars? What's the balance between interstate and international expenditure that you would regard as best practice?

**STEVE COX:** Best practice really relates to the return on the marketing investment dollars made as opposed to where that's done.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Precisely.

**STEVE COX:** It's about, if we put a dollar invested, how much return do we get? That's more what best practice is about. It depends on lots of different factors as to where your visitors are, where the target market is, time of year et cetera, whether borders are open, whether borders are closed.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** That's exactly the sort of assessment I was hoping you would be doing. What can you tell us about the return on investment between these three categories: advertising in New South Wales, advertising interstate and advertising overseas? Give us some guidance about how you think about that?

**STEVE COX:** I don't have a breakdown, but I will take that on notice and if we've got the information, we can provide it to you. But we work across the board for our return number as opposed to breaking down specifically, campaign by campaign.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** In future campaigns will we see something different to what we saw here, acknowledging COVID, and what can you tell us about the guidance you're applying as you look at the return on investment?

**STEVE COX:** So, again, future campaigns will vary. There'll be more focus no doubt on international now the borders are reopening, more focus on interstate now that there's two-way travel. It doesn't look like we're going back to it, and the return numbers that we expect which goes through the full process for all of our campaigns over \$250 million with the Department of Customer Service, there are assessments pre and post that are completed to ensure that we are delivering best practice, and that will continue.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I ask about the boundaries for a small number of councils? I asked the former Minister some questions about this in the previous estimates. This is primarily about the Blue Mountains, Penrith and Hawkesbury and the couple of times they have been moved around within, really, inter-regional tourism and then back into the city. One of the questions I asked the Minister was why the local tourism network in his own seat was moved into the regional tourism area, and he gave some background to that. I wanted to ask you, Mr Cox, about the fact that these three councils have now been moved back out of Sydney Surrounds North and into the city. Can you give us any background on how that happened or why that happened?

**STEVE COX:** Certainly, Mr Graham. When the Destination Networks were originally established in 2016, the Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Penrith and Wollondilly local government areas were included in the Destination Networks prior to the Western Sydney City Deal, which was signed in March 2018. The Western Sydney City Deal was the catalyst for a collaborative approach across the three tiers of government to create the Western Parkland City and the new Western Sydney Airport and the Bradfield City Centre. Our focus in the Visitor Economy Strategy is delivering across the State Government's vision for Greater Sydney region into three distinct cities, which is the Eastern Harbour City, the Central River City and the Western Parkland City. Those government areas were aligned with the Western Parkland City, and so they have been realigned and they will benefit from the focus of the work of Destination NSW to making sure—and also the greater investment for that Western Parkland City area. As I spoke to earlier on, we are currently in the process of doing—and this is collaborative with councils and local operators—the destination management plans for those two areas.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What consultation happened with these three local government areas as those changes happened?

**STEVE COX:** Destination NSW undertook an internal review and made recommendations to the Ministers. The Minister approved the recommendations with relation to boundaries, so I would need to take on notice the exact detail of what consultation.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So you consulted the Minister. I want to know did anyone consult these local government areas?

**STEVE COX:** I'll take that question on notice.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Are you aware of concerns from these local government areas that this change has happened and they feel disadvantaged now, in some senses, relative to where they were?

**STEVE COX:** I'm aware of a small number of concerns, but I'm also aware that when we have spoken to them in relation to the way that they will be included in the Western Parkland City and the focus of those areas, at least the people I have spoken to—which is only a small number of those people—have been quite positive about the focus that they will get from that. I think it's seen as a new transition.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** For the record, I don't agree with that assessment that they're making. In fact, my concern is quite the opposite in that it looks like these councils, including the former Minister's own area, have been moved around to follow the money—first, into regional New South Wales when there was regional funding, then into the city to follow the money that was attached to the western city deal. I can't put that question at estimates to the former Minister, but can you give me any detail, Mr Cox, about the background here?

**STEVE COX:** Mr Graham, I have already advised you the reason why they have been aligned. They are aligned with the Western Parkland City alignment and the Central River City, so they are aligned to those boundaries.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** But it's possible they were never asked. You will take that on notice, but that is possible?

**STEVE COX:** I will take on notice the consultation.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I ask for some details about the Creative Kids vouchers—just an update on the number of these that have now been issued and used?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** As you may know, the Creative Kids program was established in 2019. The purpose of the program is to ease the financial pressures on families and encourage children and young people to participate in creative and cultural activities. New South Wales parents, guardians and carers can claim a \$100 voucher.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Ms Pitman, I'll just interrupt only to say I was really just looking for an update about the information that had previously been given at the previous estimates, which was just some very specific—

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Just to save you some time. At the last estimates, we talked about the number of these that had been issued—that is, downloaded—and then the number that had actually been used.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** I have that. As of 18 August of this year and since the program was launched in 2019, more than 4,527 New South Wales creative and cultural businesses are participating in the program as providers. Over 2.1 million vouchers have been downloaded by parents, and over 1.6 million vouchers have been redeemed by New South Wales children and young people.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What's the value of the amount that has been downloaded?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Well, they're \$100 each.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I can do the maths, but I was hoping you might just place it on record.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Sorry. Doing maths while people are watching me is never a good idea.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** No worries.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** So \$160 million.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** What is the budget allocation for 2022-23 for this program?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** So we received funding of an additional \$22.9 million in this year's budget to extend the program to 30 June.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** So those figures you've given are consistent with the March ones—slightly updated, a small increase. Could I get a breakdown since 2019 of how many have been downloaded and utilised in each financial year?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Sure.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I won't ask you for that information now. I was keen to ask this of both Mr Cox and also of Create—this is the Minister's commitment today that he gave about the minimum fee of \$250 for musicians; other States have adopted this. Mr Cox, I asked you about this at a previous estimates. I asked you about the policy. Quite correctly, I shouldn't have put that to you. But what I want to know now, having put that to the Minister, is do you have any operational concerns if this policy was adopted by the Government about how it would unfold in your areas?

**STEVE COX:** Sorry, which policy is that, Mr Graham?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** This the policy of if there is public funding for an event, then there would be a minimum guarantee for a musician that performed at the event. It's a policy which has been campaigned for around the country and adopted in some other States by their creative agencies. For your programs funded by Destination NSW, can you foresee any operational problems?

**STEVE COX:** Mr Graham, I haven't considered that previously, so I would need to take that on notice and give it some full diligence.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Okay. I would be happy with that on notice. Ms Pitman, perhaps from a Create point of view?

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** As the Minister said this morning, our grant application forms require applicants to acknowledge that they're paying industry rates, and if they're not, they need to provide an explanation. If the policy changed, then we would fold that into our agreements.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Great. I'd be happy, on notice, if you want to provide any policy guidance about operational issues. I think that would be welcome. I understand the point you're making but, yes, if you were able on notice to provide some background, that would be helpful.

**ANNETTE PITMAN:** Okay.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Can I ask of Tourism—we talked, Mr Cox, just before about some of the accommodation grants that had been given, particularly the grants to deal with the issue in regional New South Wales about substandard accommodation—people wanting to travel in New South Wales and perhaps the accommodation isn't up to standard. There is a program for grants to those accommodation providers. What assessment has been done about the benefits of that grant program? I want to be clear that I'm talking about the accommodation, not the experience grants.

**STEVE COX:** I understand. I just need to take that on notice at this moment in time. I think if you're referencing the Refresh and Renew Fund—

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** I am.

**STEVE COX:** —which targets New South Wales, 787 applications, 104 successful recipients were awarded the funding. Your question is about the follow-up assessments. I would need to take that on notice, Mr Graham.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Just to give you some background as you're doing that, it's an unusual program in that you're really funding a private benefit. There's a public policy issue there. These motels essentially have to show that people have complained about their facilities, and then they're given public money to build something that they then use to capture private profit. While there's a problem, it's quite an unusual grant scheme in that most of the benefit goes to the private operator rather than into the public interest. I'm interested in what assessment has been done and what public benefit you are showing as you assess this way of handing out quite a significant amount of public funding.

**STEVE COX:** I understand, Mr Graham, and I'm happy to take it on notice.

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Can I put a plug for room nine in a motel in Moree, right next to the plant room? You cannot sleep at night.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Having just got back from AgQuip, I've got some specific—there's some I could take on notice in the Tamworth and surrounding area too. But I think that is a good point. There is an issue there, but it's an unusual program. That balance of the public and private benefit is the question. Mr Cox, I invite you to respond to Treasury's concerns in the budget about the New South Wales tourism trade deficit. The Treasury was really clear about this in *Budget Paper No. 1*, not in this budget but in the previous year. Unusually, they were quite critical of the problem in the budget statement. In great contrast to the figures that Destination NSW puts out about the significant growth in tourism—all of which are accurate—they point to a different view, which is that while we are increasing tourism, other countries are increasing tourism more rapidly. Our tourism trade deficit is getting worse as more people come here from other countries or other States. Can you give us your reflections on that critique that was in the budget papers?

**STEVE COX:** I haven't read that specific critique, Mr Graham. But I think, as opposed to more people coming here, you were talking about us spending more overseas than what overseas is spending here, I believe?

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes.

**STEVE COX:** Certainly in 2019, off the top of my head, I think that the deficit of New South Wales to international was circa \$14 billion. It is absolutely a number that I would think is an enormous opportunity not only for New South Wales, Mr Graham, but for all of Australia. It's the purpose of the Aviation Attraction Fund. If you can't fly here, it's difficult to bring visitors, so the Aviation Attraction Fund is about building back Sydney Airport with a higher capacity visitor spend than what it had pre-pandemic. We've got the new Western Sydney Airport, which is a real game changer and aligns with the "accelerate" stages of the visitor economy strategy. Western Sydney Airport opens at the end of '26, and it is the first time we will have a curfew-free 24-hour airport bringing those direct flights back in.

I agree with you, Mr Graham. I think Australia as a whole—it's not only an issue related to New South Wales—has a deficit with international visitation, and we certainly need to continue to work on filling planes of visitors in and planes of visitors out, as opposed to planes of Australians going out and a shared flight on the way back in. We are very focused across the international markets as we emerge from the pandemic and the lockdown. As I said, the Aviation Attraction Fund is one of the key pillars available right now. That's co-funded, so that's \$60 million from the New South Wales Government matched generally with the airports. It's all about getting those direct flights back in from international. The direct flight that Qantas is doing from Bengaluru is on 14 September, this month. It's about bringing those volumes back in. I share the concerns, and I think it's an enormous opportunity not only for New South Wales but for Australia more broadly.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, I think it's a good point that it's a challenge for other States as well. The concerning thing about the Treasury analysis is not that there's a deficit but that the deficit is getting worse, and it is accelerating. The particular graph doesn't have the figures for the tourism trade deficit for New South Wales. Could you provide your view on notice about what the deficit has been in the years previously? Perhaps the past 20 years would be useful, given the Treasury analysis.

**STEVE COX:** Of course, Mr Graham. As I said, the 2019 number off the top of my head—but we'll give you the exact number on notice—is \$14 billion.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Yes, I would have thought it's just run of the mill for you to have that.

**STEVE COX:** I'm not sure how far back we can go. Twenty years may be a stretch, but we will certainly go back as far as we can. That data comes from the Federal IVS data et cetera, so we should have the information; I'm just not exactly sure when that started and what the dates are.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Mr Cox, I want to come back to you about events, and I appreciate the information you gave to me over the break. Just to confirm, I think the information you provided to me is that you'll be able to provide the information on the number of events plus the total dollar amount that's invested.

**STEVE COX:** The total dollar investment across the total number of events, that's correct.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Is that across the three cities? Is that right?

**STEVE COX:** We can do that across the three cities, the Central River City, the Western Parkland and the Eastern Harbour.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** Yes, that's great. Can you separate out Sydney Olympic Park in terms of the number of events when you're breaking that down?

**STEVE COX:** Yes, we can show it as a line.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I just know that it's such a large driver.

**STEVE COX:** Yes, it is.

**The Hon. PENNY SHARPE:** I'm interested in what's happening outside of that precinct.

**STEVE COX:** Yes, absolutely. Happy to, Ms Sharpe.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** The one other issue I had meant to ask was the follow-up to that question, which I might just ask now and I'm happy for you to take on notice. Given the commercial-in-confidence arguments that Destination NSW wants to assert—and there is hot competition between the States for event funding—the problem it creates is there's just no way to assess whether or not there's a public benefit when we're looking at the events you fund. That information isn't available to the Parliament or to interested parties. We're left relying on the agency's analysis and the fact that a Minister hasn't inserted themselves into the process. Could you explain on notice what is the process that you're using to analyse the benefit of those events? I'm particularly interested in how it compares to the INSW framework, for example. Do you have a benchmark for the benefit-cost ratio? Are there thresholds that you must clear in order to be funded, or is it a free-for-all and you'll measure against those criteria but make a choice in the end? I'm happy to invite you to respond briefly now, but I'd be equally comfortable on notice.

**STEVE COX:** Yes, I'll take it on notice. But it is a process agreed with the Treasury guidelines. It's certainly not a free-for-all, Mr Graham, but we'll take it on notice and provide information.

**The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM:** Thank you. That's all.

**The CHAIR:** Anything from the Government?

**The Hon. SHAYNE MALLARD:** No, we're satisfied. Mr Coutts-Trotter, are you okay there?

**MICHAEL COUTTS-TROTTER:** Oh, thoroughly.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, everybody, for your attendance today. We appreciate it, as well as all of the work that you do. A number of questions were taken on notice, and the secretariat will be in touch. Responses will be due within 21 days.

**(The witnesses withdrew.)**

**The Committee proceeded to deliberate.**