

PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - REGIONAL NSW

Tuesday 20 February 2024

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

**SMALL BUSINESS, LANDS AND PROPERTY,
MULTICULTURALISM, SPORT**

CORRECTED

The Committee met at 9:15.

MEMBERS

The Hon. Mark Banasiak (Chair)

Dr Amanda Cohn

The Hon. Greg Donnelly

Ms Cate Faehrmann

The Hon. Wes Fang

The Hon. Scott Farlow

Ms Sue Higginson

The Hon. Emma Hurst (Deputy Chair)

The Hon. Mark Latham

The Hon. Tania Mihailuk

The Hon. Cameron Murphy

The Hon. Peter Primrose

PRESENT

The Hon. Stephen Kamper, *Minister for Small Business, Minister for Lands and Property, Minister for Multiculturalism, and Minister for Sport*

CORRECTIONS TO TRANSCRIPT OF COMMITTEE PROCEEDINGS

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

**Budget Estimates secretariat
Room 812
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY NSW 2000**

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Welcome to the first hearing of Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW's additional round of inquiry into budget estimates 2023-24. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the land on which we are meeting today. I pay my respects to Elders past and present, 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. My name is Mark Banasiak. I am Chair of the Committee. I welcome Minister Stephen Kamper and accompanying officials to this hearing.

Today the Committee will examine the proposed expenditure for the portfolios of Small Business, Lands and Property, Multiculturalism, and Sport. I ask everyone in the room to please turn their mobile phones to silent. Parliamentary privilege applies to witnesses in relation to the evidence they give today. However, it does not apply to what witnesses say outside of the hearing, so I urge witnesses to be careful about making comments to the media or to others after completing their evidence. In addition, the Legislative Council has adopted rules to provide procedural fairness for inquiry participants, and I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of those procedures.

To the witnesses, I welcome and thank you for making the time to give evidence. Minister Kamper, I remind you that you do not need to be sworn as you have already sworn an oath to your office as a member of Parliament. Most witnesses who appeared at the initial hearing before this Committee also do not need to be sworn in. However, witnesses who are appearing in a different capacity or did not attend the initial round of hearings will be sworn prior to giving evidence.

CORRECTED

Ms KIERSTEN FISHBURN, Secretary, NSW Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, affirmed and examined

Ms MELANIE HAWYES, Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces, affirmed and examined

Mr LEON WALKER, Deputy Secretary, Property and Development NSW, affirmed and examined

Ms JENNIFER HICKEY, Chief Executive Officer, Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW, on former affirmation

Mr STEWART McLACHLAN, Chief Executive Officer, Valuation NSW, sworn and examined

Mr TOM GELLIBRAND, Chief Executive Officer, Infrastructure NSW, on former affirmation

Mr JOSEPH LA POSTA, Chief Executive Officer, Multicultural NSW, sworn and examined

Ms KAREN JONES, Chief Executive, Office of Sport, affirmed and examined

Ms KERRIE MATHER, Chief Executive Officer, Venues NSW, on former oath

Mr KEVIN THOMPSON, Chief Executive Officer, NSW Institute of Sport, on former affirmation

Mr GREG WELLS, Chief Executive Officer, Service NSW, Department of Customer Service, on former oath

Ms CASSANDRA GIBBENS, Executive Director, Department of Customer Service, on former affirmation

Mr CHRIS LAMONT, Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Commission, on former oath

Mr GRAEME HEAD, Secretary, Department of Customer Service, affirmed and examined

The CHAIR: Today's hearing will be conducted from 9.15 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. We are joined by the Minister for the morning session, from 9.15 a.m. to 1.00 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 11.00 a.m. In the afternoon we will hear from departmental witnesses from 2.00 p.m. to 5.30 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 3.30 p.m. During these sessions there will be questions from Opposition and crossbench members only. Fifteen minutes will be allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. We will begin with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, how are you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Very well, thank you, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you remember that last time you struggled with my name a little bit? I created this: the Wang count. They've said that it's a prop, so I'm not allowed to use it; however, I'm going to propose that I'll keep a count here. If you get my name wrong, every time you do it, I reckon you should donate \$500 to Sydney Children's Hospital. What do you reckon?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that first question on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Probably like the rest, right, Minister? How many events has the Hon. Mark Buttigieg attended on your behalf since 1 May 2023?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm sure that's on record. I can't give you a number of how many events Mr Buttigieg has attended. He sits there—

The Hon. WES FANG: It's a fair amount, isn't it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —and he supports me as the Parliamentary Secretary.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is it a fair amount?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Hopefully, it's a fair amount, because we want to be out there and connecting up with our multicultural communities. That's what we're doing.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you take the number on notice?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: And the fact that we've got a great representative like—

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you take the number on notice?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take the number on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is it more or less than the number of events that you've attended yourself in the multicultural space?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've attended multicultural events regularly. Every week there are a number of multicultural events. I think my wife would take offence to you suggesting that I haven't attended a lot of multicultural events.

The Hon. WES FANG: We are not here to—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know what you're trying to get to but—I don't know what you're referring to. I think last time you referred to a diary in relation to events. Events aren't included—aren't disclosed in that diary. You may have gotten that wrong in the past and thought that they were.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, it's a simple question. Have you attended more or less multicultural events than the Hon. Mark Buttigieg?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I wouldn't have a clue.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you take that on notice as well?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice as well, yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Buttigieg has been very dedicated in attending multicultural events. Are you grooming Mr Buttigieg to be your successor as the Minister for Multiculturalism?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not grooming anyone to succeed me.

The Hon. WES FANG: You probably should be, no? Have you attended more corporate boxes than multicultural events since you became the Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: No? Are you confident on that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You asked a question and I gave you the answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: Speaking of the Parliamentary Secretaries, given the Premier has said:

We don't have a foreign policy in the state. We don't have a minister for foreign affairs. The people of NSW elect us to solve the problems in NSW ... And I can understand people feel passionately about international affairs but honestly, if that's your passion and that's where your desires are, your policy interests are, well run for federal Parliament.

Minister, why hasn't the Hon. Anthony D'Adam, MLC, been stood down as the Parliamentary Secretary?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's not my call.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's not your call?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's not really a question that relates to any of my activities as a Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you not the Minister for Multiculturalism?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am the Minister for Multiculturalism.

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't take any responsibility for that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I take responsibility for helping the community within New South Wales when it's going through really difficult times, and we have a concerted focus on—

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't take responsibility for the comments of your backbenchers and your Parliamentary Secretaries?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Chair, can I have one question at a time?

The CHAIR: Can we stop the continual interjecting over the top of each other, otherwise Hansard can't hear.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's fair.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm answering a question and he's interjecting on top of me. I'm not—

The CHAIR: Minister Kamper, can you proceed to finish answering the question without interruption from the honourable member.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My focus as the Minister for Multiculturalism, together with the fabulous representation at Multicultural NSW, is to engage with the community during really tough times. That's what you're referring to—a really difficult period of conflict overseas, and there's—

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm going to redirect you now, Minister, because that's not what I was referring to. What I was referring to were the comments of the Hon. Anthony D'Adam. Why is he still the Parliamentary Secretary? Have you made representations to the Premier?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't made any representations to the Premier.

The Hon. WES FANG: The Hon. Anthony D'Adam said in New South Wales Parliament:

That means that when a genocide is occurring, like what is happening now, countries like Australia and the rest of the world must take action to prevent it.

Do you agree with his comments?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Point of order: The honourable member has made the very valid point, as has the Premier, that none of these are within State jurisdiction. These are all Federal Government matters under foreign policy under the Australian Constitution. Why should a State Minister be subject to questions about foreign policy when we have zero jurisdiction for this and waste a huge amount of time on something that is nothingness out there in the public debate?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To the point of order: These are comments made by a member of New South Wales Parliament. This is the Minister for Multiculturalism. This relates to an issue which is of concern to the multicultural community in New South Wales. It's a valid question for the Minister to answer.

The CHAIR: Are there any further comments? While I might agree with Mr Latham's comments about relevance, any member of this place is free to ask questions how they see fit. If others see it as a waste of time, that is up to them. If the member wants to pursue this path, he can, and the Minister can answer accordingly as he sees fit.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, do you agree with the Hon. Anthony D'Adam?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Anthony D'Adam is entitled to have his own opinion and express that opinion.

The Hon. WES FANG: And express it in Parliament?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: He is entitled to do what he likes as a parliamentarian.

The Hon. WES FANG: Have you apologised to the Jewish community for the comments of the Hon. Anthony D'Adam?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't apologised to the community for the comments that were—

The Hon. WES FANG: You don't feel that you need to. You don't feel the Premier needs to?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We've been quite clear, throughout this whole period of conflict—and let's keep in mind, Mr Fang, there has been an enormous loss of human life throughout this whole period. It's a very, very sensitive issue.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, which is why those comments in the Parliament are probably unhelpful.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The last thing we want to be doing is stirring the pot even more. I tend to feel—

The Hon. WES FANG: And yet, you're not reining in your Parliamentary Secretaries.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I tend to feel that your questioning is doing that.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, your Parliamentary Secretaries are doing that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am really serious—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Wes, settle down, mate.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: One thing that I've been fairly serious about in terms of working on over the last—since the 7 October incident, has been trying to keep peace within our community, trying to keep peace within our multicultural communities, just passing commentary every single day, as the Minister for Multiculturalism in New South Wales. We know—

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, I'd read the note you were handed. Read the note you were handed.

CORRECTED

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order: The Hon. Wes Fang, Chair, not only asks questions but continues to try to answer them as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, the Minister is not answering them, so—

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Again, I would ask him to let the Minister respond and then the honourable member can continue to ask questions.

The CHAIR: The Hon. Peter Primrose is correct. It's a very simple proposition: question and answer, question and answer. You might disagree with the answer being given or how it's being answered—that's for the follow-up question. It's not for shouting over the top of. The Minister has the call and then, once he's finished with that answer—

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, at the moment, it's question, blabber, question, blabber.

The CHAIR: —then you can ask your follow-up question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I was saying, we've got a successful—

The Hon. WES FANG: Did he read the note yet? I can't tell.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —multicultural society in New South Wales and one thing we want to— probably one of the most successful in the world. The one thing we want to protect is that we—

The Hon. WES FANG: I'll redirect now, because I'm not getting anywhere with this. Minister, you made an election commitment to review the New South Wales Government's advertising practices to ensure the role of independent multicultural media is elevated and supported. What is the status of the review?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, we've—

The Hon. WES FANG: There's your note. Let's have a look.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We called the review and it's being conducted through Minister Dib's office, obviously.

The Hon. WES FANG: At least he's competent.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, he is competent and he's a fantastic Minister.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, he's good.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I could sit here and talk about Minister Dib all day, if you like—

The Hon. WES FANG: We won't though.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —and I'm very happy to do that. From what I understand—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Let's talk about your portfolio, not Minister Dib's.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, why did the review take well over 100 days of you being in government before it started?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The review was committed by us prior to the election as it was a campaign commitment at the time, and that was because—

The Hon. WES FANG: Right, so when did you release the results?

The CHAIR: Order! Let him finish his answer, please, Mr Fang.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: As I said earlier, the Department of Customer Service has undertaken the extensive stakeholder engagement, so we can get it right, so we don't have a situation like we had during COVID when ethnic communities weren't communicated with the risks of COVID at the time. So it was really important that we get this right and make sure that we distribute—

The Hon. WES FANG: So what's the outcome of the review?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass to Joseph La Posta, who oversaw the review and—

The Hon. WES FANG: We can ask Mr La Posta later.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, you've asked a question—

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: All right.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —I'd like to get the facts out there.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you can learn yourself, is that right?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Good morning, Mr Fang. My team, lead very ably by our director of communications, has been working very closely with the Department of Customer Service to make sure that the voice of our independent multicultural media agencies is heard and understood. You're quite right, Mr Fang—

The Hon. WES FANG: I usually am.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: —there was a commitment made by the incoming Government around reviewing the spend to multicultural media and, as the Minister said, I think it was one of the key election pillars around trying to boost the investment in that space to make sure that the lived experience and also the blockages that would occur previously in communicating with multicultural communities would be addressed. I'm pleased to say that that review is concluded and the Cabinet's made a decision. But as Minister Kamper said before, it really is a decision for Minister Dib to announce, and I believe that a decision is imminent on that. I would also like to acknowledge and thank—

The Hon. WES FANG: After estimates, is it?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'd also like to acknowledge and thank the independent multicultural media organisation that we've been working very closely with, for their time and energy in helping us co-design this process as well.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's how you answer a question, Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Just on that point in terms of the interviews, how many outlets were interviewed as part of the review?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can take the specifics of that on notice, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: And that's how you ask a question.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, thank you. That was good.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's absolutely right.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, were multicultural media provided an opportunity to give feedback as part of the review? Which outlets were provided the opportunity and how did you select them? I think Mr La Posta is busting to answer.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: How they were selected? I'll pass back to Joe in relation to that to give us the detail.

The Hon. WES FANG: Smart move.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thanks, Mr Fang. Thanks, Minister. With respect, there was some strong representation made to the aspiring now Government in the lead-up to the election around some commitments that the Victorian Government had made about an additional investment in the multicultural media spend. We've worked with a number of the really important organisations, to be frank, that my agency has partnered with for over 40 years—you know, *Chinese Daily*, *Chinese Herald*, a number of the Arabic-speaking publications, a number of the Vietnamese-speaking, one who's on our advisory board, Mr David Giang, who does a fantastic job in communicating with communities down in south-western Sydney.

To be honest I would estimate—and I'm happy to take the specifics on notice, Mr Fang and Mr Farlow—but there would probably be about 15 to 20 different publications in the room helping and designing solutions for what's best to help the New South Wales Government take forward the multicultural media proposal and help guide Minister Dib and Minister Kamper in the Cabinet in terms of a decision that, I guess, considered all the different perspectives. One of the challenges that we have, I think, in terms of how we're currently looking at multicultural media is there is a tendency to overestimate the reach of the digital footprint that we can have, and that doesn't necessarily help people like the Minister's extended family, my own extended family and others.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, thank you for that very comprehensive answer. I'm just going to move on. Minister, are you aware that this review undertaken by the Department of Customer Service did not actually address any of the issues that multicultural media outlets were raising?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I'm not aware of that.

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: No-one has made you aware?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't accept that.

The Hon. WES FANG: You think it did.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: A lot of the multicultural media that came to me prior to the election were calling for a greater percentage of spend on multicultural—

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, I am now going to redirect.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If I can complete my answer?

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm going to redirect now. Are you aware of what the actual issues affecting multicultural media right now are?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Essentially, their concerns were that they're being delivered content for them to introduce into their media distribution to communities, but they weren't getting paid for it. That's what the greatest concern was at the time.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you confident of that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm very confident of that.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, and that's why they called for a greater—

The Hon. WES FANG: There's the note. He's got the note now. It's all right.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They called for a greater percentage of spend to the multicultural media groups and that's what they were fighting for. They wanted a 15 per cent of overall media spend going to the multicultural media groups. That was their key issue at the time and that's why they advised that they weren't—

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you, Minister. I'll pass now to my colleague.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How are you, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Good, thank you, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Very good. Minister, you may remember we had a discussion the last time around on the speedway. Ms Hawyees indicated that you'd been aware of the process when negotiating a new operator for the speedway and you indicated your dealings with motorsport in New South Wales. You understand that the speedway now has a new operator?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Were you involved in that decision at all?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. That was a decision from Minister Scully's office.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Were you consulted about that before the appointment of the new operator for the speedway?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I wasn't.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, you weren't. And with respect to the speedway, do you have concerns that this \$110 million speedway is still not operational?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Obviously, I'd like to see the speedway operational, but, yes, I don't have any specific concerns. I haven't had much to do with that. As I said earlier, it's under Minister Scully's responsibility.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you don't any specific concerns about the operation of the speedway?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't have definitive issues because I'm not across the issues there.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're not across the detail? Is that what you were going to say?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not across that detail, full stop. It's not within my remit.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, were you made aware or did you have any discussions with the Minister for planning concerning Western Sydney International Dragway, acting as the venue manager for the speedway?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass that over to Mel Hawyes, who's had—

MELANIE HAWYES: Thank you. These questions are more appropriately raised in Minister Scully's session.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I understand that. But this is the Minister for Sport, and the Minister for Sport does have operation over the regulation of the motor vehicle and motor-racing industry.

MELANIE HAWYES: But the Minister has no role in the decision about leasing or subleasing on that site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No. I'm just asking if he's been consulted about that or informed.

MELANIE HAWYES: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, and that's a question for the Minister. Minister, were you aware that the Sydney International Speedway Pty Ltd was registered nine days before they were announced as the venue operator?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I wasn't aware. As I said, it's under Minister Scully's responsibilities. I'm sure you could probably keep that question and ask Mr Scully.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, are you aware of Mr Troy Boldy at all? Does that name ring a bell to you or—no?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Doesn't ring a bell.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Troy Boldy has purported to be the CEO of the speedway. Are you aware if he's come to the attention of the Office of Sport in any other areas?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, just from what I've read in the newspaper in relation to that, but I can pass you on to Karen, who's got, probably, a greater understanding of what's happening there.

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister. I can advise, from the Office of Sport's perspective, yes, we applied the administration of the regulation. Therefore, they would need to apply for a licence to operate the speedway. We have received an application for that licence and it's currently under assessment. That application was made by another person and not Mr Boldy.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, are you aware that Mr Boldy also operated the Wollongong kart track and that the Office of Sport cancelled the motor vehicle racing ground licence for the Wollongong Kart Raceway?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, not aware. Wasn't aware of that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was the Office of Sport aware of that?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, we are aware of that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you think it's appropriate for somebody who had a licence cancelled for the Wollongong racetrack to be operating the \$110 million Sydney speedway, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Back to Karen. I mean—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You don't know?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not familiar with it.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, do you have an opinion on this?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not across all the detail on this. I don't have a strict opinion.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I can't ask bureaucrats their opinion, but I can ask you as the Minister your opinion. Do you have an opinion on whether it is appropriate for somebody who has been struck off before and had a motor vehicle racing ground licence revoked from your office to be put in charge of a \$110 million speedway?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't form an opinion because I'm not across the detail. As I sit here—

The Hon. WES FANG: You should be across the detail, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

CORRECTED

KAREN JONES: Minister, if I can answer. The Minister has not yet seen the application for the licence because the licence is still with the Office of Sport, under assessment. The Minister should not be across that level of detail until such time as he's received advice, from the Office of Sport, around the appropriateness of issuing that licence.

MELANIE HAWYES: If I could also clarify. The Minister has no role in the leasing or subleasing of the facilities and the site, and Mr Boldy is not a director of the speedway.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you take it that a 76-year-old woman, Yvonne Boldy, is actually acting as the director of the speedway?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think these questions are more appropriately framed towards Minister Scully. But you asked a question as to Troy Boldy's role. He is an employee in the speedway.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And he has purported to be the CEO of that speedway.

MELANIE HAWYES: He has, and in my other portfolio we've taken steps to address that behaviour. I'm happy to provide more fulsome responses in Minister Scully's.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. I'm sure we will be raising this next week as well. Minister, with respect to the speedway, are you confident that the speedway season will start, as has been advertised, in March?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Again, that's the plan. Karen, have you got any information that may suggest that there may be a delay?

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister. The Office of Sport is aware of their desire to conduct events. We are working towards that time frame, but we do need to go through a due process in accordance with the legislation and assess the application before us. Like I've already given evidence on today, that application has been received by the Office of Sport and is currently under assessment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's nice to see that the Office of Sport goes through due process. Thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I'll now pass to the crossbench, starting with Ms Hurst. Then I'll throw to Mr Latham.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Good morning, Minister. Minister, you are responsible for Crown land; is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's correct.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Could I ask what the current status is, of the lease of Crown land at Wentworth Park to the Greyhound Breeders, Owners and Trainers Association?

MELANIE HAWYES: Perhaps throw to me to update on the current state, if that's okay? It's an operational kind of question. Just bear with me.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: That's all right. Minister, while we're finding a bit more information there, it was announced under the previous Government that the greyhound racing track would be closed by 2027. Is it still your intention to end the lease?

MELANIE HAWYES: If I am able to clarify the status, there's currently a licence which runs to 2027. There is a proposal that the space is returned to open space, but no decision has been made at this point. There is currently a licence in place.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, no decision has been made at this time.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The previous Government announced that it would be closed by 2027, so you're saying that Labor is not supporting that decision; that you're reconsidering it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At this stage we're reconsidering. We're looking at options into the future. Whether it will be closed and what form it could take in the future I think is under consideration.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I understand from relevant stakeholders, including the City of Sydney council, that they have been waiting for the new Labor Government to indicate its position on whether it is going to uphold the previous Government's commitment to end the lease. Why is there a hold-up on making that decision? I understand there has been correspondence to the relevant Ministers about that decision. What has changed? Why is that now under reconsideration?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're just looking at a variety of options and considering the activity in and around that area with the new fish market and the proposed development, and residential development in and around Blackwattle Bay, what would complement that whole area overall. We're looking at the options, maybe even potentially the continuity of some form of racing, but also in that precinct there is great opportunity to introduce other activities, more community-based activities in conjunction with—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry, for the use of that Crown land?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, for that Crown land.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You said that you're considering continuing—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're considering looking at a variety of options there.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: So the original plan to turn it to green space is no longer—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: A lot of it is open space, it's green space, and how we utilise that—we haven't got a fixed view on that right now. We're just looking at a variety of options, as I said to you earlier.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: As part of those considerations is there any consideration to ending the lease earlier than 2027 given that this has now been identified as one of the most dangerous greyhound tracks in Australia? Eleven injuries occurred just on Saturday, and one death of a dog. Is that part of the considerations as well—to end the lease earlier?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's not part of the considerations. We know that there's a lease that is going to end at a certain date, and we've accepted that that is the case.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry, what do you mean by that? I mean obviously—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There hasn't been consideration to close the operations or to end the lease agreement before—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Is this something that you've been briefed on at all?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I haven't had a detailed briefing on that.

MELANIE HAWYES: If I could clarify, the role of Crown Lands is the landowner, so other parties are involved in decisions about the future use of the land.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes, absolutely.

MELANIE HAWYES: But the current situation is that there is a lease and licence until 2027.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. With that in mind, Minister, have you met with the Minister for racing or the Minister for planning, as obviously they will be part of that as well? Have you had any meeting with them given that this is Crown land and will fall under your portfolio as well as theirs?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Just general discussions, general discussions about the options on that land and what could be there in the future. We're just working through ideas at the moment.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: How many meetings have you had with those Ministers—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't—it may not even have been meetings, but phone calls, conversations maybe, not formal meetings.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Is there a time line on when you're going to be making a decision?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, no, it's just been general conversation at this stage, but we will in the future look at nutting out what the best options are.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: So when can we expect a decision? This year?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't give you that—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm not asking for a specific date.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Maybe this year, maybe early next year. I can't give you that date.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Everything sounds a little bit loose and waffly at the moment.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, but you're not going to get me to give you a date right now—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I just said I don't need a date.

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —for something that hasn't even progressed to—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, I've just said I don't need a date from you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I understand that you're not at that stage yet.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: What I'm asking for is obviously some certainty for the City of Sydney council but also for the greyhound racing industry—everyone that's involved in this decision. The answers that you're giving me today are very waffly about the fact that it's on the table, you're having casual conversations but there's no timeline, no decisions.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We will continue and have formal conversations moving forward but at this stage, it's just early stages of conversation. You asked me where we are. I'm trying to give you the best description of where we are.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, at your last appearance in October 2023, I asked you about concerns regarding the use of personal information supplied by Valuations NSW by a former New South Wales solicitor to target vulnerable people, to try to get their properties on the cheap. I asked you whether you were aware of the concerns and you said—and I'll read this straight off *Hansard*—"that's just been brought" to you. However, I have correspondence showing that the issue had been raised with you long before the estimates. In fact you had responded to those concerns on 7 June, prior to estimates. I can hand you up a copy of your letter and the letter that you received. Would you like to correct the record from your previous answer—that you'd only just heard about the issues?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, I appreciate that that may have been how you interpreted my response, but my intended reference was to what was said in the question rather than the issue in totality. The way it was described in the question is what had just been brought to my attention. I was, and remain aware, of the privacy issues surrounding the provision of property sales information and I understand that these issues have been addressed by Valuations NSW on behalf of the Valuer General. It's also important to note that the Privacy Commissioner has confirmed that the improvements made satisfy the relevant privacy concerns, and for any specific details about the steps taken by Valuations NSW, I'd ask that these be directed to Mr McLachlan in his capacity as CEO of Valuations NSW.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I will obviously have more questions for Mr McLachlan this afternoon, but Minister are you aware that this former solicitor is still apparently trawling court lists and distributing lists of people facing repossession? Are you aware that's still occurring?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass to Mr McLachlan because I'm not aware, but Mr McLachlan might be.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm sorry, Mr McLachlan won't be able to tell me whether or not you are aware.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, I'm not aware.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You're not aware of it. Two lists have been provided to my office that were distributed this month containing the addresses of numerous people who are potentially facing repossession of their homes. Does that concern you that that information is still being distributed?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, it concerns me that information is being utilised in that fashion, of course. But I mean public property data, property information, has been on public record forever and a day, so how it's manipulated—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, you do realise that other States have actually made sure that that information isn't provided in that way and it's just occurring in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might just Mr McLachlan to actually—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry, Minister. Again the question was are you aware of that? I have a lot of questions I'm sure Mr McLachlan will be able to answer this afternoon.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

CORRECTED

The Hon. EMMA HURST: But my question is: Are you aware that in the Northern Territory, ACT, Tasmania, South Australia and Victoria that that information isn't provided in the same way it is in New South Wales where people can be targeted in the way that they have been in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not aware specifically in terms of the differences between the way— what information they do provide and we provide.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Have you been fully briefed on this issue as well, Minister, or have you sought a briefing from Mr McLachlan?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Probably sought a briefing, yes, and have been spoken to about it, but in terms of the particular detail and the comparison between what data is provided in one State and all the other States compared to ours, you know, I haven't got that sitting in my head—

The Hon. WES FANG: It's good to see he's over the detail.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —in terms of the differences between the data.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: What steps is your department taking that you're aware of, then, to ensure compliance with the privacy protections that have currently been put in place?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Look, Mr McLachlan, again, just to give the correct detail there.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I won't use Mr Latham's time.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's the department.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I will speak with Mr McLachlan this afternoon.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The CHAIR: Mr Latham?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Just back on Wentworth Park, isn't the key fact that the decision of the previous Government to terminate the lease, or not renew it, was predicated on GBOTA wanting to leave Wentworth Park? GBOTA has now flipped and said they want to stay and that they're not making any plans to move anywhere else. It's the pre-eminent greyhound racing facility in the State. It's a big deal, a big project and a lot of money to move them to a different facility, along with the football teams that play in the centre of the racetrack. Why would the Government want to even be thinking about moving GBOTA now that they've said they don't want to move?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's right, Mr Latham. That's why we're looking at a variety of options— because there has been an interest to continue. We're looking at what that would look like, how we can better activate and get better value out of that site, and how we could all work together to do that and have a mix, potentially, of community offerings there—maybe even revitalise activity and make it a place that the community can enjoy, and attract tourism to that site.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I'm a tourist from Western Sydney, but I visit there and really enjoy it, so I hope it stays there. Wouldn't it cost billions for the Government to move the facility, given the cost of the grandstand, the track and the facilities? You couldn't expect GBOTA to do that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: These are all things—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: The Government is not examining the billions that are needed to move them to a different facility?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What we're looking at is getting the best outcome and if it can be a great financial outcome for the State. We should also consider that it's prudent, if we can get a positive outcome there without it being of enormous cost to the State and the enormous cost to move organisations, I think—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: But there's no work underway on costing moving them to a different site?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not at this stage, no. Absolutely not.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: On a different relocation proposal, the Government has received an unsolicited proposal from the Australian Turf Club to sell Rosehill racecourse and the land around there for housing, and to move the training facilities, which are quite substantial—it houses the facilities of Chris Waller, Australia's leading thoroughbred racing trainer—to Crown land in and around the Sydney International Equestrian Centre at Horsley Park. What work has been undertaken on the feasibility of that?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll pass that on to Karen.

KAREN JONES: The unsolicited proposal process is actually managed through the Cabinet Office, not necessarily the Office of Sport. Of course, we are absolutely aware of the desire of the ATC to build a centre of excellence in a co-located fashion at the Sydney International Equestrian Centre at Horsley Park. We are happy to provide advice in relation to that co-location, as well as any sort of consultation process with the stakeholders.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What advice have you provided so far?

KAREN JONES: We have not as yet, because the unsolicited proposal process is in its very early stages, and the Office of Sport—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: So there's no work undertaken on the feasibility of it?

KAREN JONES: Not from the Office of Sport.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: A proper racehorse training track is an enormous space of land, along with the stables, the walking machines and the swimming pools. Is there enough land on this site? I would've doubted there's enough land on this facility to accommodate the relocation. Is that right?

KAREN JONES: The actual planning of that facility and the spatial requirements of that facility are not yet defined. I know that the ATC has been doing stakeholder consultation based on their own desires for the area. But in terms of the Office of Sport providing a specific and formal response to that, we have not yet been asked to do so.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No-one has looked at the feasibility of the size of the land, if equestrian facilities need to be moved out, or the cost of it? Nobody has done anything on it so far?

KAREN JONES: I think you'll find that the ATC is currently out there doing some consultation on that. They might already have some spatial plans.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Have they consulted with you?

KAREN JONES: We have met with them, and also with the Cabinet Office, in line with the unsolicited proposal process. But for the Office of Sport, we will be providing advice once we are formally asked to.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What was the outcome of your meeting?

KAREN JONES: The outcome of the meeting was a walk around the site—just familiarising everybody with the site.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Do you think there's enough land there for a major training facility?

KAREN JONES: I think it's too early to tell at this stage.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Too early to tell.

KAREN JONES: Yes, too early to tell.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What is your own estimation from having walked around the site?

KAREN JONES: I don't have the specific dimensions or the plans of what the ATC want to put on that site. Again, that's all through the unsolicited proposal process.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: They want to put on there the training facility that they've got at Rosehill. Could you fit Rosehill on the land that you've got at SIEC?

KAREN JONES: I wouldn't say that it is an exact replica of what they would want. Obviously, being the Australian Turf Club, and anybody that would want to move to a new location, they would also like to contemporise their facilities and make sure that they're—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, make it bigger and more modern.

KAREN JONES: I don't know if bigger is also what they're seeking. I think that is a conclusion that, perhaps, you're drawing and not necessarily a position for the Office of Sport to make at this stage.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I've spoken to some of the trainers, and they're expecting a more modern facility, with updated facilities for their horses, that would be bigger than what they've got at the moment. Could you fit Rosehill onto vacant land at SIEC?

KAREN JONES: That's not the proposal. The proposal—

CORRECTED

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: I'm asking could you? It is certainly what has been spoken of publicly.

KAREN JONES: I'm not prepared to comment on that, Mr Latham.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You walked around the site, but you've got no opinion?

KAREN JONES: No, Mr Latham. That's not the proposal. The proposal is for a centre of excellence on our site, not a brand-new racecourse.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: No, the racecourse is the training facility. You understand that they get up in the morning at 4.00 a.m., and they train the horses and run around the track that exists at Rosehill right now. It's a racetrack that's also used as a training facility. Is there enough space for a training facility at site?

KAREN JONES: Mr Latham, we will consider the proposal that is put to us through the unsolicited proposal process. I am not prepared to speculate today about what can and can't fit.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What about the concern of Chris Waller that it's too hot at Horsley Park, and—he'd prefer if Government did this—to relocate to Melbourne, which would be a tragedy for New South Wales racing and tourism and investment and income, because we would lose Australia's best racehorse trainer to another State.

KAREN JONES: I would suggest that the temperature difference between Rosehill and Horsley Park is marginal. In fact, we actually have a weather station actually located on our site, so if whoever is making those representations here—sorry, I forgot his name. But whoever is making representations to you, if they want to have a look at that weather station—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You forgot his name—Chris Waller.

KAREN JONES: Chris Waller. My apologies for that.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You don't know who Chris Waller is?

KAREN JONES: I do know who Chris Waller is.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Have you had any consultation with him to address his concerns? He is talking about moving to Melbourne. I think we need to get ahead of the curve here and make sure we keep Australia's biggest and best racehorse trainer in our State. I mean, the whole V'landys model of racing is we fight against Victoria. I think it's foolish to do so. Why would we be putting forward a proposal now where we lose our biggest and best trainer to the other State that is supposed to be our enemy?

KAREN JONES: Mr Latham, I am going to take that more as a comment as opposed to a question.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Fair enough. I suppose it was a comment.

KAREN JONES: From the Office of Sport's point of view, we will follow the right process—the unsolicited proposal process—and we will consider the proposal once it's tabled to us.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Is there a timetable for turning the unsolicited proposal into something other than a thought bubble?

KAREN JONES: That's a question for the Cabinet Office not for the Office of Sport.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: We unfortunately lost Minister Crakanthorp over this, but has there been any progress with the Hunter-Newcastle sporting precinct redevelopment—a business plan from Venues NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: With Venues NSW, I just want to say that we've focused on our business model over the past 12 months. It's been about getting the greatest financial outcome on our asset base, and it's all about generating and continuing to generate positive revenue moving forward so we can work on upgrading and improvements and changes, whether it's the Hunter or whether it's down on the South Coast at WIN Stadium there and improving those precincts and doing what we can do there. We are currently looking at that at the moment. The Hunter Park redevelopment is a transformational project that the people of Newcastle and the wider Hunter deserve. Venues NSW has concluded the initial stage of planning for the revitalised precinct, including a new entertainment centre and a relocation of harness racing that will result in a connected and thriving sports and entertainment destination, and Hunter Park will attract local, national and international sport and entertainment events and turbocharge the Hunter visitor economy.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: So the Government is committed to this redevelopment. When do you expect the final business plan to be available and made public to the people of Newcastle?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice, if that's okay.

CORRECTED

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: On another great sporting venture, are you happy with the success of the UFC, which I find, where I live, very popular. It fills the pubs and everyone is interested in it. Has there been an evaluation of the success of the initial UFC in Sydney, and when is the next one coming up, because we're all looking forward to it?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That was funded by Destination NSW, but I was exceptionally happy with the success of it.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What does the evaluation show?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was something like 100 million people tuned in to the City of Sydney, and I was quite surprised by the support for UFC by, you know, the amount of women that love the fight, the professional people and the cross-section of the community which really got behind it. We had, I think, 18,000 spectators there on the day, who were able to enjoy the event. The next event, I don't know if the date has been set yet. I'm not sure about that, but Destination NSW will have that information for you. But it was an amazing success and there are another two events under the agreement with the UFC.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Fantastic. That's great news. Thank you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I will pick up from Mr Latham's line of questioning with respect to Rosehill and the Australian Turf Club. You were at a boardroom lunch with the Australian Turf Club on 14 November. Was there any discussion from them about the sale of Rosehill at that stage and the redevelopment for housing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There was absolutely no discussion with me in relation to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No? Has anyone had any discussions with you prior to the announcement about the redevelopment of Rosehill for housing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There have been general discussions with many people around that. It's been a big-ticket item in the media, so—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Prior to the announcement—not post the announcement but prior to the announcement?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No? No discussions with Morris Iemma or Graham Richardson in that regard?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what is "affordable housing" defined as?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Affordable housing is, essentially, a discounted rental home that can be available to people—you know, for key workers—that require housing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. So you think that is the actual definition?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Generally. I mean, it's housing that's available for members of the community, such as key workers, that are requiring housing and it has a discount environment. The owner of the property is bound to a discounted framework, and generally—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, let me help you out with this a little bit. So are you a discount to market rate kind of guy or are you a percentage of income kind of guy when it comes to affordable housing? Where do you think it should line up?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: A percentage.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of income?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What are you referring to?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Well, it's affordable housing, so how do you think it should be defined? Is it defined as a discount to market rate or is it defined as a percentage of a person's income?

The Hon. WES FANG: Give him some time to read the note first.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I haven't really thought about the definition or which one—how it should be defined, but I'll—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, this is very important because you are in fact—

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This is Minister Jackson's—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You may say that, Minister, but you are the lead Minister when it comes to the land audit. Part of the land audit is a 30 per cent affordable housing requirement. I would think that the Minister who is responsible for that land audit would actually understand what affordable housing is.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The land audit is establishing unused government land that could be made available to deliver on our housing policy, and housing delivery. That's the purpose of the land audit: to provide the details of that land. Now, I don't know how you're extending it to the question in relation to the setting—

LEON WALKER: Minister, I can help with that, if you'd like me to.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, Leon.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You might need it.

The Hon. WES FANG: Come and save him.

LEON WALKER: The Minister's role is to identify land that can be used for residential purposes; it's not to come up with the Government's policy on what is affordable housing or the eventual use of that land. So I don't think it's appropriate that the Minister should be answering that question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But you will concede that affordable housing is a big part of that land audit and about delivering affordable housing for the people of New South Wales?

LEON WALKER: No, the land audit is about identifying land that is suitable for residential use. What is then developed on the land and the percentage of affordable and social housing is determined by another part of government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Yes, but it is a key Government policy, when it comes to that. But let's talk about the land audit, Minister. You are, of course, responsible for the audit of government land with the potential to provide housing, which the Premier announced in May and said would be completed within months. Considering it's been nine months since the Premier made these comments, when is the audit set to be completed?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The audit is ongoing. We're developing a list of land that is most appropriate to get—

The Hon. WES FANG: You haven't done that yet?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's an ongoing process and, if you want to know the details in terms of where we are on it by percentile—

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, we want to know where you are at.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —I can ask Leon to provide you that information.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're the Minister. You're supposed to be across the detail.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: :Point of order: It's not that hard to actually ask a question. Most of these comments are coming forward as statements. Can we have questions, please, as per the standing orders?

The Hon. WES FANG: Questions need to get answers, though. There are no answers.

The CHAIR: Order! I am hearing the point of order of Mr Latham, not the commentary of Mr Fang.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: As per the standing orders, questions are actually needed.

The CHAIR: Yes, that is correct.

The Hon. WES FANG: Answers are also needed, Chair.

The CHAIR: No. I'm talking; you're listening.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's right.

The CHAIR: Try to listen. It's a question, not a comment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, given you're saying in terms of the development of the list, has the developmental portion of each longlist site been assessed yet?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's a component that has been assessed and there's been a prioritised list there. One thing we need to appreciate is that the housing requirement moving forward is about, I think, 75,000 a year. Under just normal settings we'd achieve probably 50,000 a year in New South Wales. What the audit is

CORRECTED

trying to establish is the component of land—or it will establish the component of government land that can be utilised towards increasing the delivery of housing in this State. What we expect is that, potentially, government landholdings could contribute to about 10,000 a year on average, so that's a very big part of the shortfall that we have currently, and I think we shouldn't take offence to a land audit, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'm not taking offence, Minister; I'm asking you where it's at.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think it's really, really important work, and we're doing that as we go and we'll categorise that and we'll prioritise—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. Minister, your own—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might ask Leon just to clarify some of the—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, I'm going to put this to you, as the Minister: Your own methodology stated that the developmental portion of each longlist site would be assessed by quarter three, 2023. Was that completed?

LEON WALKER: Minister, if I can add, the New South Wales Government is probably the largest landowner in Australia and so the process, as the Minister pointed out, will be ongoing. We've assessed about 3½ thousand lots to this point. From that, a shortlist has been identified. A number of those sites have been identified for further assessment and they will be going to the Government for determination, which is obviously a Cabinet-in-confidence process, but that process is ongoing and I would expect that that would continue in at least the next two to three years ahead. That's the volume of properties that we're looking at.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, let's get to the shortlist. Wasn't it the case that on a shortlist 30 sites per tranche would be investigated for primary due diligence by the end of quarter three, 2023? Did that occur?

LEON WALKER: That's an estimate. The actual number depends on the attributes of the site. So the process, as you've alluded to, is that we simply look at a particular site. We then assess it based on those attributes to determine if it would be suitable for residential use.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many sites were assessed by the end of quarter three, 2023?

LEON WALKER: I'd have to take that on notice, but it's in the hundreds.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, we'll continue on. During quarter three and quarter four, the intention was to identify and cost risks, identify opportunities for housing yield. Has this process started as well? Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, I would—

LEON WALKER: Sorry, can you ask the question again?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: During quarter three and quarter four, 2023, the intention of the Government was to identify and cost risks, identify opportunities for housing yield. Was this process completed?

LEON WALKER: It's not completed; it's ongoing.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's ongoing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have any site-specific delivery strategies been drafted or finalised for any of the sites?

LEON WALKER: That is for determination by the Government. As I said, it's Cabinet-in-confidence.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So it's ongoing as well, effectively?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So nothing has happened? Nothing has been completed with any of those site-specific strategies?

LEON WALKER: As you'd appreciate in one of your roles, getting a property to a position where it is development-ready takes many, many months, so the initial due diligence phase has been completed. Government decision is required and it then will be determined, you know, if it's a government development agency or a private sector developer that would be given the opportunity to develop those sites.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, have any recommendations for funding approval and the eventual transfer of land to delivery agencies been submitted to the governance committees overlooking this process of the land audit? Have you signed off on any of those?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice.

LEON WALKER: Minister, I can answer. "Yes" is the answer. As I said, there's—

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm glad you know what the Minister has done. The Minister doesn't.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: There is constant interjection from the Hon. Wes Fang. He's making comments rather than asking questions. You ought to call him to order, and he ought to stop and treat the witnesses with respect.

The CHAIR: I agree. The interjections are persistent. If the member does persist, he will be called to order. And there will be a suggestion that we don't hear from him in terms of questioning the witness, and I'll just refer to Mr Farlow for questions. I don't want to do that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You can't do that, I believe.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't do that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, when will the first home be delivered as a result of the land audit?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't give you that date, Mr Farlow. It's impossible.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You don't have any projections at all?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Do you want me to take a punt?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I would've thought you—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're working fast—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —would have a program.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The role that we're playing is to deliver the stock that's available to boost our housing supply. We inherited horrendous settings. For 12 years, your Government did nothing to boost housing supply in New South Wales.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When we came to government, 27,000 homes were delivered by your predecessors.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: When you came to government—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We were delivering, on average, over 55,000 in the last five years.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —supply was meeting demand in the marketplace.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Point of order—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're doing what we can, and this is part of the process to assist with the delivery of housing.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't provide an answer, but you can throw a bit of heat.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm providing you with a proper answer. This is what you need. You should ask a proper question.

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't answer a single one.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Can I take a point of order?

The CHAIR: It's probably going to be the same point of order that I take, Mr Primrose, but go ahead.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I look forward to your ruling.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I actually took a point of order.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: My point of order is simply that, under paragraph 19 of the procedural fairness resolution, witnesses must be treated with courtesy at all times. I presume part of that courtesy is allowing

CORRECTED

them to answer a question that they've been asked without having a tirade of abuse directed at them by the person who doesn't like the answer that they're receiving.

The CHAIR: That's pretty much exactly what I was going to say.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: We're at one, Chair.

The CHAIR: We can't have this situation where members are shouting across each other in the room. It's not good for Hansard. It's not good for anyone. It's not good for getting answers. It's good for the imaginary media that are in the room that are taking notice of your antics, but it doesn't achieve anything else. Can we just follow the simple rule of question, answer, question, answer and let people finish? Stop with the incessant calling out and silly comments.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Back to the original question, do you have any time frame or projections in terms of actually realising development on any of these sites?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't give you a date when something is going to be developed. I can't give you a date when a house is going to be built. All I can tell you is that my office is working on the audit program that was required to deliver the stock, or the list of stock, that is going to be put towards housing supply. That's where it sits. You can't even pick what day you'd finish a house renovation today, right—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But, Minister, you're not working—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —so I'm not going to buy into that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —to any time frames in terms of delivery?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: All I'm saying to you is that we're doing what we have got to do to contribute land which will provide the housing that this State desperately needs.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, there is no time frame for delivery. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What are we delivering?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Homes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're delivering the list of the land, which government will then work out how it's going to be developed and how it's going to be delivered. That's a separate question. Maybe you can put that to the appropriate Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So Property and Development NSW has got no—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: How about you put that in your pocket and keep it for the appropriate Minister?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're not working to any time frame in terms of delivery?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm working to a time frame of delivering the property list that's required so that we can move forward and deliver proper housing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And that was a time frame that the Premier said when he announced this program would be completed in months. We are now looking at nine months and it still has not been completed. There is still not the first parcel of land to be developed on. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's an ongoing process. You know how—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: An ongoing process the Premier claimed would take months.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think you'd have to appreciate that to put together and to start a project within nine months is not a reasonable thing to expect, and I think the fact that you're sitting—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So the Premier was unreasonable, expecting this to be completed within months.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This questioning is just unreasonable, just to ask for a date, whether—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, no. So the Premier was unreasonable in expecting this to be completed within months; is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't quote the Premier. I can't—

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you believe—

CORRECTED

LEON WALKER: I think the—

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr Walker, I just wanted to ask the Minister. Minister, do you believe the Premier would agree with your assertion, that these questions around when New South Wales' residents will be able to access land is ridiculous?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're not asking the Minister that's been charged with delivering the actual housing. We've been asked to deliver, basically, a list of property which is suitable for housing, for the Government to make a decision on. So the line of questioning is off the mark.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And there's not one property that you have identified yet and have actually brought to the level that it could actually be delivered by the Government in terms of new housing at this stage.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's not correct. That's not correct. Leon, could I ask you to clarify that again?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Point to the property that the Government's commencing a development on.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let's go back. No, let's answer the question. Let's answer that question.

LEON WALKER: As mentioned earlier, the process is working very well in terms of the fact that there's been a large number of properties initially assessed. A proportion of those properties have gone through to a shortlist, where they're having more detailed due diligence undertaken. That's gone through a government committee process to review the opportunities, and Government will be shortly reviewing those opportunities with a view to making decisions on those sites' availability for residential development.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, given the Transport Oriented Development Program and the changes to low- and mid-rise housing, will this impact the priority locations at all, considered under your land use audit?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This is probably a question Kiersten could answer. It's a planning question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No. This is a government policy, and I appreciate Ms Fishburn's attendance here today, but this is a government policy. It, of course, has bearing in term of the yield that will be able to be realised in certain locations. Has that influenced your land use audit at all?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll have to ask—I'd say it would have.

LEON WALKER: Minister, the answer is yes. Even without that announcement having been made, it makes sense that the land audit, because of the sheer volume of properties that the Government owns, should concentrate in areas that provide the greatest opportunity for a residential dwelling supply. So around transport nodes, like train stations and the like, makes perfect sense. That's where we should start our effort.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As part of that land use audit, are you looking at transferring any commuter car parks, for instance, into residential developments?

LEON WALKER: There's no property that's not in scope, other than things like national park and the like. If there's a State Government owned commuter car park and it's determined that there's a higher and better use in the form of residential use, which doesn't necessarily exclude commuter car parking—residential can, obviously, be built above a commuter car park—then it's on the table for assessment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, will the Government be selling land found in the audit to private developers?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's a decision to be made later on, through the process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So the Government's not ruling that in or out at this stage?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Essentially, the Government's objective is to deliver housing. How it delivers the housing depends, I suppose, in many respects, on the particular site. But the objective is to deliver housing. It's really important, to us as a government, that we deliver the housing that's required, because of, as I said earlier, the previous 12 years. We've just fallen so far behind. There's a chronic need in the society, within our community.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, that is a decision you have not made as of yet; is that correct? That decision has not been made?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Each particular site has its own merit, has its own unique attributes. There may be a situation where—as long as we get the housing outcome, that's what's the most important thing here. But these are decisions made in government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, wouldn't that fly in the face of your promise not to privatise public assets?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But it's in accordance with our housing. We need to deliver housing and if we're going to utilise government land to provide housing, how that eventuates, how that works within the transaction, that's yet to be determined.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The Government will break its commitment to—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not sure. I'm not sure.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —to not privatise public assets?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. It's not a breaking of commitment and not privatising public assets, what we're doing here.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How is the sale of public land to a private entity not the breaking of your commitment?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, whatever it is. Essentially, if the Government builds housing and then sells that housing is that a privatisation too? It's about delivering on the housing needs.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Well, you're selling public land so, yes, it would be.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's essential that we deliver and how we do that and what mix of transactions—

The Hon. WES FANG: I don't think you know.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —that will be determined.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thanks, Minister.

The CHAIR: Ms Higginson?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you. Minister, just following on from where my colleague was going in relation to the land audit, there's a concern here. Can you just make clear: Have you made any decisions with your colleagues about whether public lands will be sold to private developers for the purposes of delivering houses to New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Ms Higginson, no, I haven't made any decisions because in my capacity as the Minister for property—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Are you aware of any decisions—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —my role has been to deliver the property audit, and that's what we're doing, and we're doing that efficiently.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you. Are you aware of any decisions, or are you receiving any pressure that this is part of the delivery program going forward?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have not been part, or am I aware of any decisions on any particular specific piece of land.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you, Minister. At this point, is it your understanding that your Government and your role in supplying possible land for housing, that that will not be for the purpose of selling to private developers for the delivery of housing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: It's a yes or a no.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, it's not really. I think at the end of the day with these land holdings—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You think you will end up partnering with private, selling private land?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There are ways of delivering this through partnership arrangements and a mix of settings that will deliver the housing requirements that we need. So I don't want to be fixed on any particular statement because to be half in, half out, so—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So, Minister, are you advocating that perhaps the best approach from where you sit is that we maintain these lands in public ownership and deliver public housing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My personal opinion is we need to deliver as much housing to the market as possible and that includes 30 per cent social and affordable, and how we do that, there could be a variety of ways in which we deliver that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I didn't hear any public housing in that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I said affordable and public housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: No. You said affordable and social housing. Do you understand the difference?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm sorry.

LEON WALKER: Social housing is public housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And public housing.

LEON WALKER: As in Homes NSW provides to people in need, yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is it your intention, or is it the intention of the land audit working group, that once these lands are assessed and put on the table for available for development, is it your understanding, as one of these lead Ministers in that, that you will partner with Landcom as the main housing provider, or is there a different plan?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That hasn't been totally determined and my role won't be—at this stage hasn't included conversations around that, but I think—

LEON WALKER: Can I add, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

LEON WALKER: So Landcom is one of the government residential delivery agencies. There will be some sites that are suitable for Landcom to develop, understanding that they're usually developing residential subdivisions, not necessarily houses on those sites. There'll be other sites that go to the Aboriginal Housing Office and yet other sites that go to the former Land and Housing Corporation, now Homes NSW.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So is it fair to say, Minister, that from your office the drive is that once this audit's completed—sorry, just to digress, firstly, I understand that now, from what you've given, this is an iterative ongoing process that you—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And please correct me, Minister, if I'm wrong here, that you have already delivered some potential sites and that that will continue, and that you're doing that in tranches. Is that kind of a fair understanding of what's the evidence you've provided today?

LEON WALKER: I don't think it's even tranches. It's just an ongoing process. As I said, the New South Wales Government is probably the largest landowner in Australia. There are tens of thousands of lots.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So that we can understand this a bit better in terms of the shortlist, have you prioritised that shortlist from locations where you think there's the greatest demand? How did that initial shortlist that you've delivered as potentially usable and available land, what determined that that's the first shortlist?

LEON WALKER: It's multifaceted. There are some sites that landowning agencies already identified are underutilised or surplus. Even under the previous Government, those sites were constantly brought forward to try and get a better, more productive use. Then the audit has been established, and it has looked at, as I say, transport-orientated sites.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is it fair to say that transport-orientated sites was a criteria that fed into the first shortlist?

LEON WALKER: Well, it's feeding into the work that we're doing now. I wouldn't say the first shortlist because, as I say, it's just an ongoing iterative process, so we're reviewing as many lots as we're able to with the team that we've got on that project. The other aspect is, obviously, regional sites. The regions aren't neglected in this process, so we're looking at a number of regional—

CORRECTED

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is it fair to say there are regional sites on that first shortlist?

LEON WALKER: Yes. Don't hold me to a number; I think there are about eight or 10 regional centres where we're looking at opportunities as well.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, we're talking about \$11.5 billion worth of land value. What additional corruption safeguards have you put in place since the revelation of the department of planning fiasco and the referral to ICAC?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, I think that's best—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: No, Minister—

LEON WALKER: I think what you're referring to is a planning matter not a—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: We're talking here about \$11.5 billion.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're profiling land, defining its dynamic, and that's what we're doing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes—potentially available for development.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's government land, and the Government's going to make a decision on that land. I don't get that question.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, right now, New South Wales cannot be guaranteed that this land will not be available for private developers into the future to develop housing. We know that, right now, this is a hothouse for profit-driven—and where we see that we see elements of corruption. What anti-corruption mechanisms and safeguards have you taken the initiative to assist your department and your office with since the revelation that we're already seeing potential corrupt behaviour when we're looking at development for housing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're just defining property.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is that no, you've done nothing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's defining property. It's not we have done nothing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So what have you done?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's trying to define you're asking me to do.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, the last time your party was in government we saw corruption out of this world. Could you please tell the inquiry now what measures, if any—and if the answer is none, please just say none.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My office is not dealing in the property. It's evaluating and profiling property for government to make a decision on it.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You are evaluating land. It is \$11.5 billion worth of land.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Point of order: Again, there needs to be a question rather than statements.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm asking for the answer. Could you please answer yes or no.

The CHAIR: Sorry, Ms Higginson. A point of order has been taken, so I have to rule on it. We can't just disregard a point of order.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You didn't take mine before.

The CHAIR: Because it was resolved. Can we once again keep the statements to a minimum or to zero and just ask questions. You might not like the answer. The time for statements and evaluation of the Minister's answers is during PMSs, adjournments or other motions in the House, not here.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, could you just answer the question? It is, "Yes, I have done something" or "No, I have done nothing", in relation to any further anti-corruption safeguards, given we're talking about \$11.5 billion worth of property in New South Wales potentially available for housing and private development.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass you on to Kiersten Fishburn. Whatever's been done, it's been through the Planning portfolio, so I—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Sorry, with respect, Minister. This is a question to you. It's a very simple question. What have you done? If the answer is nothing, that is fine, Minister. Just tell us. Have you done nothing?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm selling nothing. My ministry is not selling anything. It's providing information, so I really don't understand where you're going with the question—

The Hon. WES FANG: Information? You're giving information?

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —or reference to historical situations.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Minister, respectfully, have you done anything to implement or to even discuss any further anti-corruption safeguards or mechanisms within your department, within your office, in relation to the land audit since the revelation that we are seeing potential corruption in government and in the bureaucracy in relation to the delivery of housing in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll ask Leon, have there been—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I pick that up, please? Conflicts of interest in the department are managed by myself as the secretary. We take accusations of corruption very seriously. I'm not going to speak to the specific matter which you're referring to, which is currently before the ICAC. That would be inappropriate for me to do that. In relation to conflicts of interest, all senior staff need to make a conflict of interest declaration annually and update that if matters materially change.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you, Ms Fishburn. Chair, can I just finish this question?

The CHAIR: No, the bell has gone, sorry.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Have you done nothing?

The CHAIR: Sorry, the bell has gone. You can pick it up in the next round of questions. It's my turn now. Minister, last estimates I asked Ms Haylen about the inquiry into land acquisition and the recommendations that were made by that Committee. There were 10 recommendations. Nine out of those 10 recommendations related to the Government doing something or the Government taking action. Some of that was legislative. I asked the Minister about what was happening with that. She's done the five-eighth flick pass to you, now that it's your responsibility, so I now ask you that same question. Where are we up to with implementing those 10 recommendations? I note that your party, when you were in opposition, supported all of those 10 recommendations.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's great, and I must note we both spent time on the Valuer General's committee. We have done some fantastic work together on that. I acknowledge the question from the Chair. Compulsory land acquisitions are necessary at times to allow State infrastructure and other public projects to proceed for the benefit of the wider community, such as schools, roads, water and electricity infrastructure projects. Land may be acquired by agreement or compulsorily. Compulsory land acquisitions are not undertaken unless it can be demonstrated that there is a significant benefit to the broader public. The Government's framework for property acquisition strives to strike the right balance between the rights of landowners and the public good derived from essential public infrastructure.

However, there is always room for improvement, as reported by the Legislative Council Portfolio Committee No. 6 – Transport inquiry in 2022 into acquisition of land in relation to major transport projects. In late 2023 the New South Wales Government, led by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, commenced the land acquisition review. The land acquisition review will include a legislative review of the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991, involving both the New South Wales Government and public consultation and a review of the whole-of-government approach to acquisitions.

During the review the department will consider stakeholder comments, relevant legislation in other jurisdictions and feedback from the public consultation on this discussion paper. The department will also consider feedback and information from previous reviews into the Act, including the inquiry. The department commenced internal government consultation in September to provide acquiring authorities and key agencies an opportunity to provide detailed, evidence-based information about potential amendments to the Act and the whole-of-government acquisition process. To address current risks and inconsistencies, a discussion paper has now been drafted to assist to guide the public consultation. The community will be invited to have its say early this year in order to put forward recommendations to the New South Wales Government late this year.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well read. Great. Good job.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Thank you, Wes.

The CHAIR: Minister, so we don't have an actual date yet for when that discussion paper and that consultation paper goes live?

CORRECTED

LEON WALKER: It will be shortly.

The CHAIR: Shortly? Okay, thank you. Can I go to some Crown land issues? I'm not going to go too deeply into the Cooper Island issue, because I know that's being handled. But I'm interested to understand what level of engagement you've had with NSW Fisheries on this matter. As you may be aware, we pay upwards of \$500,000 out of Recreational Fishing Trust money for access officers, so I'm interested to hear what level of engagement your department has had with those access officers, if any, around the Cooper Island issue particularly?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might ask Mel to assist you with engagement.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, thanks, Minister. This was raised with us in response to a change in the situation down there whereby people began using a Crown causeway for recreational fishing. The local council and police raised concerns with us about shared access of what is quite a narrow strip of causeway which is used by a landowner to access his residence and business. Our involvement has really been around safety of access and egress and making sure that there's an ability for people to share that space. We are engaging in discussions now with council, the police, the landowner and local interests, but I'm more than happy to engage with Fisheries if you think that that's appropriate.

The CHAIR: I'm asking whether they've actually engaged with you. As I said, we pay their salaries out of our trust fund to manage and secure access, and protect assets.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, and they may very well have at the local level. I can take on notice who exactly is talking with who. But, just to be clear, our involvement here is as the landowner from the point of view of safety—community and public safety—using that strip of land, and to prevent conflict of use.

The CHAIR: Yes, sure. More broadly on this point, obviously your department deals with a lot of Crown land road issues and Aboriginal land claims. One of the projects that has been funded from the trust fund to the tune of \$150,000 is to review high volume of Crown Lands road closures, Aboriginal land claims and other public land disposals to secure angler access for the future. It seems like the Fisheries department is taking the money of our trust funds to do your job because it seems like that's your role, to manage Crown land closures and—

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't really speak for another department, but I'm happy to go and talk to them about their remit versus ours.

The CHAIR: This was a project that was put to a trust fund committee to agree or not agree with that expenditure. Were you consulted by Fisheries as to the appropriateness of this project?

MELANIE HAWYES: Down to the level of funded projects, I'll have to take on notice the local consultation that's occurred. I personally haven't discussed it with the head of Fisheries, but there may very well have been local connections and discussions around projects that have been funded by our colleagues in Fisheries.

The CHAIR: This seems broad; it's not just a local area. It seems like this will cover the whole State in terms of inland waters, so I would imagine it wouldn't be handled by a local decision.

MELANIE HAWYES: So you are talking about a funded project?

The CHAIR: This is a funded project to look at access on Crown lands and Aboriginal land claims across the whole State relating to inland water access, and it seems like it's clearly crossing into your remit of work.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The CHAIR: And it seems like they haven't consulted you on it.

MELANIE HAWYES: No, I didn't say that. I said I'd take on notice the detail of that consultation.

The CHAIR: Yes.

MELANIE HAWYES: It may very well be that my executive director is liaising with his counterpart on that topic. We are involved in a number of cross-disciplinary committees across the sector looking at land use access—for example, with Transport and with other agencies. I'm not across the detail of this particular project, but I'm more than happy to take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Sure, thank you. Minister, in the last two minutes, can I start talking about the recent announcement to provide \$13.9 million for community language schools? You were obviously featured in the press release by the Premier on that. Why is this voucher system not being means tested while we've made decisions on other voucher systems for them to be means tested, like the sports vouchers and the Creative Kids

CORRECTED

vouchers? Why is this community language school voucher not being means tested and being offered to everybody?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: This was a commitment before the election that we made to boost and to assist families when they're sending their children to learn a second language, and as part of that funding there is also assistance to the schools per head. It's a comprehensive package, but it is something that's being delivered through Minister Car's office. So if you want the greater detail as to why and how it's being rolled out, I think it's probably best to ask the Minister for education.

The CHAIR: What level of input did you have in terms of how that funding would be distributed? You talked about additional funding to these schools. Is that going to be done in a similar way with the RAM funding that's handed out to normal schools in terms of it being based on the FOEI index, socio-economic status? Or is it just going to be a blanket—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From what I understand, it was, basically, a per-head payment to the schools for every student that completed. Plus there was a payment to the parents if—

The CHAIR: So doesn't take into—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass on to Joe for the greater details if he has any on that.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Through you, Minister. Mr Banasiak, great question. It's applied equally to every child. What was happening was there were other States that were investing more in their per-head community language program to encourage kids to be involved in community languages at schools, and so the Government as an election commitment made the commitment. I worked very closely with the Department of Education around the advocacy, access into schools, ensuring that funding is appropriately distributed. From time to time, you'll hear individual examples where language schools or schools themselves aren't getting the access that was committed under the Government's commitment to give them three years or aren't receiving the funding in the timely manner that they would like, and we advocate on their behalf, back through the Department of Education. But, as the Minister said, it's very much under the remit of Deputy Premier Car.

The CHAIR: Thank you. We'll just throw to the Opposition. We'll work out the times.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thanks, Chair. Minister, you have several portfolios, right? From the answers you've given today, it would seem fair to say that Small Business doesn't seem like a priority of yours. You're a pretty fun-loving guy. You'd prefer to be going to sporting events, being in the members' box, being wined and dined. You love your sport. You much prefer to be doing that than being the small business Minister. Isn't that correct?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Is this a statement? Or is this a question?

The Hon. WES FANG: It's a question.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: You haven't asked any questions about small business.

The Hon. WES FANG: I just did. You just talked over my question.

The CHAIR: Order! That was a long interlude. You just—

The Hon. WES FANG: You prefer being wined and dined than being the small business Minister. Isn't that right, Minister.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It is a long run-up.

The Hon. WES FANG: It was a long run-up. It was a lead-in.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: You're not a fast bowler, Wes.

The CHAIR: Order! Not a spin bowler either. Don't go with the long intro again. Can you just repeat the final part of your question?

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, you would've heard my introduction to the question. Do you prefer being wined and dined than being the Minister for Small Business?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can you ask that question again, please, Mr Fang?

The Hon. WES FANG: I think I've just asked it. You prefer being wined and dined than being the small business Minister, don't you, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not. I enjoy being the small business Minister. I've spent a lot of time with the small business community throughout my period as a member of Parliament.

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you think your disclosures reflect that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You just have a look at the forums that I've addressed.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you think your disclosures reflect that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Just have a look at the meetings that I've had with the small business community.

The Hon. WES FANG: We did. We didn't find that many.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Unfortunately, you keep looking at the diary. You don't realise that events aren't reportable. It's meetings. You fail to actually see the events. Someone's misinformed you—

The Hon. WES FANG: So you haven't asked the Premier to release you from the Small Business portfolio.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: He is talking over him.

The Hon. WES FANG: All right. That's the answer. Stakeholders have stated they find it difficult to get a meeting with you to discuss pertinent issues around small business—things like workers comp, insurance, payroll tax, electricity costs, skills et cetera. Before the election, the Minister for Small Business and the Premier stated that a Labor government will prioritise small business and financial support. Minister, when was the last time you visited a small business?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I visit small businesses regularly. I communicate with small businesses regularly.

The Hon. WES FANG: When was the last time?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My whole life was around small business community.

The Hon. WES FANG: You're talking at me. You're not providing an answer. When was the last time you visited a small business?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I visited small business all time. I can't give you that. I'll take that on notice, when the last time was. Could've been this morning. Could've been last night. I'll think about it.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. That's great. If it was this morning and you can't answer me that's pretty astounding. But, anyway, we'll move on. What explicit financial support is being offered by the New South Wales Government for small businesses?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let's just make it clear.

The Hon. WES FANG: No, let's just answer the question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Small businesses aren't—I don't know what you've done in your life.

The Hon. WES FANG: I've run small businesses, Minister, probably better—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Let me finish. My experience with small business is they never have their hands out. They don't want for much, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes, and I'm asking you what support is available.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They want support, unlike the last term of government.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, answer the question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm telling you.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. WES FANG: Answer the question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm telling you.

The Hon. WES FANG: What support is available?

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Wes, is it slow-learner week or something?

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm just trying to get an answer, Chair. I've never experienced this in my life.

The CHAIR: I've mentioned it several times. Let's not talk over the top of each other and have a shouting match across the room. That's for both of you. At this point, both of you, the Minister and the honourable member, were doing it. Can we stop with the constant shouting over the top of each other? It doesn't serve anyone.

The Hon. WES FANG: He's just covering for having to answer.

The CHAIR: Can you now ask your next question and then we'll get an answer?

The Hon. WES FANG: No, I'm going to re-ask the previous question. Minister, what explicit financial support is being offered by the New South Wales Government for small businesses? You're the small business Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We need to define financial support. When you're assisting—

The Hon. WES FANG: Just tell me anything.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —a business through an obstacle—

The Hon. WES FANG: Tell me anything.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —that has sat there because—

The Hon. WES FANG: Tell me one thing.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —of the lack of attention that your—

The Hon. WES FANG: One thing. What are you doing?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —previous Government—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: Someone is here to save you. It's all right.

The CHAIR: I'll hear the point of order.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: My point of order is—

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Gibbens will save you. It's all right.

The CHAIR: I'm hearing the point of order, Mr Fang.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: —basically decency and respect. We have a Minister of the Crown here—

The Hon. WES FANG: If you don't know, just give up the portfolio.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: You're talking over—

The CHAIR: Wes—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It's decency and respect. You have a Minister of the Crown here at the table endeavouring to answer your questions, and you're just talking over him. There has been fair warning given to the honourable member.

The Hon. WES FANG: Just one support program, Minister. Just give us one.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Now he's talking over—

The CHAIR: Now he's talking over the point of order. Mr Fang, I'm still hearing the point of order. You are wasting your time—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And everyone's.

The CHAIR: —and everyone else's time but, more importantly for you, your time.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I simply remind the member to show due respect and courtesy to the Minister at the table.

The Hon. WES FANG: Stop running cover for him, Greg. He doesn't deserve it, mate.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: I repeat myself for the umpteenth time: Stop yelling across the table at each other. It is disorderly. You have now got one second to ask the question.

The Hon. WES FANG: He hadn't answered a single rebate—

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: How could he?

The CHAIR: You can put—

The Hon. WES FANG: He couldn't provide a single answer.

The CHAIR: You can put out a press release—

The Hon. WES FANG: Shame on you, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can I just say that whenever I start to answer a question, he interrupts and asks another question within my answer.

The Hon. WES FANG: There is no answer; that's the problem.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's continuous. It has been happening from the moment we started this morning. I don't know what you expect me to do. I've got to try to speak over that behaviour.

The CHAIR: It has been noted. Based on my previous experience in a past life, trying to speak over the top of someone and raising your voice doesn't solve the problem, because the other person invariably raises their voice. When we come back from the break, if we could all maintain a level of decorum, or find our level of decorum that we seem to have lost—

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I think it's time for playlunch, isn't it?

The CHAIR: We're about to go to playlunch, unless the Government has any more questions.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: No questions, Chair.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: We're well and truly satisfied with the Minister's responses.

The CHAIR: Excellent. We can all go and have a cup of tea, and we will return at 11.15 a.m.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back after that brief interlude. I will throw back to the Opposition for the remaining 15 minutes of the session and then we'll go to the crossbench.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Minister. Minister, are you aware of the changes to the local sport defibrillator program that has limited eligibility to certain postcodes?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I am aware of those changes and there was some concern with clubs associated—

The Hon. WES FANG: Take the note.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Was that a question?

The Hon. WES FANG: I was saying you need to take the note.

The CHAIR: Minister Kamper, I suggest you don't encourage interjections by inviting them like that. I would just continue with your answer.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am just trying to establish whether it was a question or not, Chair.

The CHAIR: No, it wasn't.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: He's offended by me having information that I can provide you an answer with. Is that the issue?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I think he was giving you a heads-up that you were having a note.

The Hon. WES FANG: I was telling you you need to get the note.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, of course, and that's right. I have wonderful public servants that assist me with running, with operating, my portfolios—

The Hon. WES FANG: It seems like they run the whole show.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: And that's really important that we celebrate them.

CORRECTED

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Hear, hear!

The Hon. WES FANG: How about you answer the question?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I must say before I became a Minister I had a different perspective in relation to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, your love for the public service is well known.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're absolutely right and I've got champions sitting all behind me.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But let's get to the sport defibrillator program.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I want to acknowledge them. It's extremely important.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do it in your own time.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Over and above the interjections, I think we should interject and do that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The local sport defibrillator program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Local Sport Defibrillator Grant Program is aimed at improving availability and access to automated external defibrillators in community sporting and recreational facilities for use in emergencies involving cardiac arrest. Prompt access to the device in the first few minutes following a cardiac arrest can make a critical difference in the health outcome for the person. I have a personal friend that was actually saved by the defibrillator in my electorate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's an important program.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I stress it's so important that we try and roll as many out to our sporting communities. In 2023—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, given that—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Sorry?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I was just saying, given the importance of that program, in the Penrith electorate, the Penrith Giants Junior AFL Club based at Grey Gums Oval within the 2749 postcode are not eligible for a defibrillator whereas the Penrith Emus Rugby League Club, just a three-minute drive away across Andrews Road in the 2750 postcode, is eligible. Can you explain to the Penrith Giants why they are not eligible for this vital defibrillator?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That specific situation, I might pass to Karen Jones to provide some information on why.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With due respect, we can ask Ms Jones some questions on this in the afternoon.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You should.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But, Minister, it is a choice of your Government in terms of the criteria for these programs, so can you, as the Minister, please explain why one club wearing the Penrith name gets a defibrillator whereas another doesn't?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's under the program guidelines, which have been put in place and set by the Office of Sport.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But you approved those guidelines, didn't you, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I did, but if you want—if you're asking about—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So, Minister, it is a question for you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You're asking about one specific club, so I think it would be great—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But, Minister, I'm asking the question in terms of the program guidelines, which you have approved.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Why have you approved them in such a way?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I approved them in a way because the lower socio-economic groupings of clubs were missing out on different grants in the past and it was about boosting it and making sure that we even that out and get it across as many communities as we can.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So the Penrith Emus Rugby Club should get one?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If you're from a really wealthy strong club, you'll get a defibrillator, but the clubs that weren't as strong financially were actually missing out, many times because of their ability to administer.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are you saying the Penrith Giants Junior AFL Club is a wealthy club?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've asked Karen Jones to specifically reply in relation to that.

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister. Yes, it is actually a part of the program guidelines for this year's program. Can I just reiterate that the defib program, instead of saying defibrillator—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Easier to say, yes.

KAREN JONES: Yes. The defib program is an incredibly important program and this Government has continued that program to the tune of \$500,000 a year. And yes, you are correct in terms of the program guidelines. The program guidelines do actually rely on the SEIFA index and primarily focuses on those communities that have a lower capacity to pay in terms of getting priority funding for defibs for their clubs. This year's program, under those program guidelines, was highly successful. In fact, we had to close the program early because of oversubscription, and that was solely based on those postcodes that you talk about. And, in fact, we had about 195 successful applications and defibs go into the community through this year's program.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Ms Jones. Minister, with that being said, two clubs bearing the Penrith name—the Penrith Emus Rugby Club and the Penrith Giants AFL club—in adjoining suburbs where they play out of, of course, would have the draw of members across the Penrith district, but one club gets a defib and one club doesn't. Do you think that's fair?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's just the way the program's been developed to try and get to a greater amount of communities and clubs.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But the Penrith Giants are missing out now.

KAREN JONES: Again, Minister, in terms of that issue—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With due respect, Minister, this is a question for you. This is a decision of government not a decision for the bureaucracy. Do you think this is fair?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The decision wasn't specifically to that example.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: But that is the consequence of the decision.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was a general position we took to try and make sure that a greater amount of communities had access to defibs. And I mentioned earlier, it was so important in saving the life of a very good friend of mine last year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And we understand the importance, which is why we don't think it should discriminate on postcode. But, Minister, I will give you another example. In East Hills, the Milperra Lions football club play in postcode 2214. They are ineligible for a defibrillator, while the Condell Park FC in postcode 2200, just across Milperra Road, are eligible under the program. Will you explain to the Milperra Lions why they're not eligible?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm advised that the SEIFA index highlights those areas that are most vulnerable.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, don't you concede that the draw for these clubs is not necessarily on the CFA index. If you're playing for the Penrith Giants AFL club, you could be drawn from anywhere within the Penrith district. Don't you concede that that's the case—that people are drawn from all over an area?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I concede that when you embark on a program like this you do get those oddities—where there is a border—where there's one that's in and one that is out, and that goes with many programs that government runs.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, you've talked about the life-saving work of defibrillators, which I, of course, agree with, but do you think heart attacks rely on postcodes?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I took a position to support this approach because I don't think that people that are a lower socio-economic grouping should be disadvantaged over others that are—and this was one way of addressing that issue. I still believe that. I think it would be lovely to have funding for every single club and every single sport code. It would be, but we are trying to do the best we can with the funding that we have.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, on the Central Coast, the list includes all four Central Coast Labor electorates but excludes the only Liberal electorate, Terrigal. Can you explain why this decision was made? Was it a deliberate decision of your Government?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I will ask Karen, who is more in tune with the—

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister. Again, it's based on the SEIFA index, which goes to those groups that are in the lower socio-economic group. I think the issue of electorates and particularly in terms of LGAs where you're saying that some suburbs are eligible and some are not or, in this instance, some clubs are eligible and some are not—on the whole, that is really reflective of the diversity that we have across our communities, and when you are looking at prioritising those communities that have a lower capacity to pay, the SEIFA index is an appropriate tool to use.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, of course, priorities—and this comes down to priorities. Did you implement the SEIFA index because funding for this program was actually cut? Minister, that is a question for you. It's not for Ms Jones; it's for you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, no.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So the funding has remained the same?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's remained the same. There was just a concern that there was—

KAREN JONES: If I can, Minister. Under the former program, under the former Government, the program was for \$1 million, but it too was categorised. It actually had three different zones that were eligible and, again, if you were in Greater Sydney, then you had to pay more for the defibrillator because there was a co-contribution required under the former Government's program. Under this Government's program, we are looking at a program that is \$500,000 per year. The program is ongoing, year on year and for us, as I said before, highly successful. We had 195 successful applications. There were a number of ineligible applications because they had actually already received defibrillators under former programs.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Ms Jones. So, Minister, the program was at \$1 million a year, it is now at \$500,000 a year, and you state that that is not a cut?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I will pass that back to Karen—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, Minister, this is a question for you. You were the one who made the assertion—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was a different program.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —that the program was not cut in its funding, it was the same. It's \$500,000—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was configured differently and, as Ms Jones said, it required a co-contribution, so I will ask Karen to confirm—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, Minister, the question is for you. The question is about the funding and the funding which is being delivered under this program. You've had to change the availability and the eligibility of this program because you have had a cut to funding. That's on you. That's not on Ms Jones.

KAREN JONES: Minister, if I may?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

KAREN JONES: If I can talk between the former program and the current program. I do think that it would be unfair of the Minister to provide any sort of commentary on the former program, given that he wasn't the Minister at the time.

The Hon. WES FANG: He can't even provide commentary on his own program.

The CHAIR: Order!

KAREN JONES: But what I will say is, under the former program, yes, you are right, it was \$1 million a year, but that was program was undersubscribed, year on year.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, so the program was undersubscribed and now it's oversubscribed.

The Hon. WES FANG: Grab your note, Kamper.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, will you be advocating for more funding and be changing the eligibility requirements for this program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll be reviewing the program, definitely.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And will you be reviewing the application of the program to certain postcodes?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll review the whole program and see what we can do better in the future.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you commit to not making further cuts to the program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I will take that on notice, in terms of what the cuts were and what the—I think it's detail that I haven't got in front of me.

KAREN JONES: Again, if I may—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, does it concern you that within the electorate of Leppington the Gregory Hills Football Club play in the 2577 postcode and they're ineligible, while the Eschol Park Football Club play in 2588, just seven minutes drive away, and that they're eligible?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice and I'll provide you detail.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Minister. Minister, are you concerned that people may have heart attacks in some of these postcodes that are ineligible and that they could have applied for a defibrillator if the SEIFA index was not applied?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I'm always concerned if people have heart attacks in and around a sports environment—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Parliament House—we need a few here, don't we?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: We've got a few. We've got them.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I am concerned and that's why I said I'll be reviewing our future approach.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you, Minister, for that. In the lead-up to the last budget estimates, the Premier announced that Moore Park golf course would be reduced to a nine-hole course, creating more green space for the inner city. Do you recall we put questions to you at estimates previously on that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, absolutely.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. Since then, there have been reports on 2GB of further facilities being reduced in size to create more green space. The strategy is to push the Minister to provide the details as to what's happening in relation to that. Minister, on 10 November you met with Golf NSW to discuss the Moore Park golf club. What was the outcome of that discussion?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I met with—we discussed many things on that day in and around golf. But the—sorry, could you ask the question again?

The Hon. WES FANG: On 10 November you met with Golf NSW to discuss the Moore Park golf club. What was the outcome of the discussion?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We discussed a number of things. Moore Park was a very small part of it. There were a number of issues raised in relation to golf and they also provided me with some fine detail in terms of the higher—

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can I—

The Hon. WES FANG: There is no detail there. Minister, the note in your diary disclosure that you—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: No, don't waste my time.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: No, point of order.

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: I will hear the point of order.

The Hon. WES FANG: Don't waste my time, Greg, or I'll—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You'll what? Increase your Wang index?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: The Minister was answering the question. You just simply jumped in again, straight over the top. You didn't say you were going to redirect, you just cut him off.

The Hon. WES FANG: Well, I'm redirecting now.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: That's just not reasonable.

The CHAIR: Okay, thank you. Being conscious of time, if you're going to redirect, redirect politely.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, noting your diary disclosure that you met with Golf NSW after your last appearance at budget estimates, why haven't you met with representatives from the Moore Park golf club?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I was just saying I met with Golf NSW. That was the original question, and you've changed it, but that meeting touched on Moore Park. But it progressed to a greater conversation about golf and the vibrancy of golf—

The Hon. WES FANG: Just on that issue, has the Office of Sport offered any assistance to Moore Park golf club?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The Moore Park golf club—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Time!

The Hon. WES FANG: No, you can answer it. I got the question in in time.

The CHAIR: He got the question in, so the Minister gets to answer it.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Conversation around the decision around Moore Park, that falls with Minister Scully. You keep asking me questions that don't relate to my portfolio mix and I'd appreciate it if you'd try to keep it within my portfolio. I'd really appreciate that, Chair.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you saying that Moore Park golf club is not in your portfolio area as Minister for Sport?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. WES FANG: Is that your answer, Minister?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Time's over.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Point of order: The Hon. Wes Fang's time is up.

The CHAIR: Mr Fang, you will get another go.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I am interested to understand any progress being made towards pay equity for women in sport. The Government's *Gender Equality Budget Statement* said that, in the absence of significant action, pay equity is unlikely to be achieved in the short term. What update has been made on projects in the *Gender Equality Budget Statement*?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Equal pay and equal prize money in sports is a complex issue and I think we've had conversations in and around that. I've met with the member privately on this, and together with representatives of Equal Pay for Equal Play, and achieving sustainable pay equality where women's sport is valued equally to men's requires buy-in and a significant shift in mindset across the entire sport ecosystem. This includes sports organisations, governments, news media, fans, broadcasters, corporate supporters, athletes, players associations and international sports bodies. The New South Wales Government is committed to addressing gender inequality. Our election commitment to increase funding to State sporting organisations to \$5 million in 2023-24 and \$10 million in 2024-25 and 2025-26 will see New South Wales become one of the highest funding States with direct support to these organisations. The commitment includes agreeing with State sporting organisations on specific outcomes for female participation, including providing plans to move to equal prize money for their events. This is a strong message on the importance of gender equality in sport.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Minister, if I could be more specific, we discussed this at last budget estimates and we discussed specifically the collaboration with State sporting organisations for equal prize money, which is an excellent initiative, but I am asking specifically about pay equity.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll pass to Karen, who has more to say.

CORRECTED

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister, and, yes, I did speak to this at last budget estimates and I did also acknowledge the excellent work that has been done. In terms of the Organisation Support Program and, as the Minister has spoken to today, the Organisation Support Program has actually been increased in value to \$5 million for this financial year and then it will increase to \$10 million for next financial year. Conditions on sports, the sporting organisations that receive funding through that program, have specific targets around women and girls' participation, and that goes to board composition, it goes to prize money and it also goes to female coaches and officials. In fact, we also gave \$250,000 to Sport NSW to continue their program around female coaching. That's a start for us, and then we will also work with them in terms of achieving more gender equality across the whole of the sports sector.

I think I spoke to this last time, talking about the importance of world cups and profiling women's sport, and I'm very pleased to acknowledge the success of the FIFA Women's World Cup—and good luck to the Matildas this weekend in their Olympic qualification—but it's by profiling those types of events that we're also attracting additional people, additional viewership, which then results in greater commercial outcomes and greater sponsorship, which also then goes to the issue around pay equity.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Acknowledging that there's an indirect link between many of those initiatives and pay equity, is the office or the Ministry doing any work to actually track the impact of those programs on pay equity?

KAREN JONES: Yes, absolutely. As part of this funding that's provided to sporting organisations, there is an acquittal process where they will actually have to demonstrate to us how they've complied with our requirements as well as their own women in sport strategies as well.

Dr AMANDA COHN: To be more specific, is there any tracking on pay equity, noting that for some of those grants, for example, it's about participation?

KAREN JONES: I'll have to take that on notice as to whether or not we're specifically tracking that.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thank you. I was also pleased to hear you acknowledge the success of the interest in the Matildas in the women's world cup. I'm interested in what the Government's actually doing to improve access to viewing women's sports more broadly.

KAREN JONES: That's actually a Commonwealth issue—sorry, Minister, through you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's all right.

KAREN JONES: That's actually a Commonwealth issue in terms of the siphoning rules around broadcast, but I am pleased to say that through the regular meeting of sports Ministers there is a greater piece of work that's being undertaken through a national lens around how we can improve commentary on female sport through all avenues of media.

Dr AMANDA COHN: And in addition to broadcasts during the women's world cup, there was a huge interest in public viewing sites and public events, not just watching televised sport. What work's being done to promote attending matches as a spectator for women's sport or other public-type events?

KAREN JONES: Again, through you, Minister, the actual viewership or, if you like, attendance or fan attendance at female sport events is really driven by the sports and the promotional activities by the sports. Of course, as much as what we can do through the Office of Sport, we assist in that promotion activity.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I've got a question about the Level the Playing Field Program, which states it aims to:

Increase utilisation of sport and recreation facilities for people with disability, First Nations peoples, LGBTQIA+ people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities.

I'm interested to understand how that program was targeted in advertising or promotion to attract applications from those particular communities.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think I'll pass and ask you to provide the information.

KAREN JONES: Yes. The Level the Playing Field Program is a \$30 million program specifically targeting sporting facilities and infrastructure that will help promote women's participation. For us, a unique component of this program is the requirement for applicants to generate an equal access policy to ensure that even though the Government is investing into new facilities there is also a policy that underpins that investment that requires equal access for female sporting teams or individual female participants. In terms of your question around promotion of the program, of course the Office of Sport puts the program on its normal channels as well as broadcasting it through our stakeholder groups. I can say that that promotional activity was highly successful

CORRECTED

because we have received a number—in fact, oversubscription of that program—and the program is currently under assessment.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Data from the 2020 Pride in Sport Index National Survey showed that 40 per cent of LGBTIQ were fearful of being a personal target of homophobia in sport and data from the Out on the Fields study showed that 80 per cent of people have either witnessed or experienced homophobia in sport, with 75 per cent believing that an openly gay person would not be safe as a spectator at a sporting event. I've been advised that grants such as Level the Playing Field are really hard to reach for sporting organisations at a grassroots community level and, because those organisations are largely staffed by volunteers who don't have the resources to apply, what support exists or might be planned to actually assist that level of organisation engaging with these programs?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You could answer.

KAREN JONES: Again, we go through our stakeholder groups and specifically the State sporting organisations, who are the overarching governing body of many of those grassroots clubs. Another important stakeholder group that represents those grassroots sporting clubs are local councils. In fact, local government is the highest, or the one that has the most, number of sporting facilities within their portfolios. I would encourage, if there are any grassroots clubs that are struggling to get access to our programs, then by all means they can contact the Office of Sport directly; but, more importantly, to get the extra support that they might need to help prepare their applications, contact the relevant local council and/or their State sporting organisation as well.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thank you. I'll come back to this this afternoon. I'm running out of time. Has the Office of Sport publicly promoted the Australian Institute of Sport's concussion guidelines that were released earlier this month?

KAREN JONES: Through you?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister. Yes, we are absolutely aware of the concussion guidelines that have been released by the Australian Institute of Sport. We are currently reviewing those guidelines. We have put in a request to the Australian Institute of Sport for their representative to actually come out and to brief not just the Office of Sport but also the relevant State sporting organisations on those guidelines. Our response to those guidelines is still in development. The guidelines were only released a couple of weeks ago, so we're still working through them.

Dr AMANDA COHN: As part of that consultation, is it planned to do engagement with those State sporting organisations and promotion? I understand that type of work was previously undertaken in 2018 and is now out of date.

KAREN JONES: Absolutely. The guidelines were actually prepared in response to the parliamentary inquiry that was held at the Federal government level. Now that those guidelines are released, it is now entrusted with the relevant State jurisdictions to share those guidelines across State sporting organisations and to feed information or feed any feedback back to the Australian Institute of Sport. We're going through that process.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Is the Office of Sport doing any work to aggregate data on repeated head trauma?

KAREN JONES: No. I'll say no to that. What we do is we actually leave that up to the several research organisations around concussion and around head trauma. Of course, they do provide that information back to us. There are a number of organisations, particularly universities, that are specialising in this space, and the Office of Sport has a good relationship with those universities.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, can I just ask you some questions about the Crown Land Management Act, which you have carriage over? How many Indigenous land use agreements have you signed off on in your time as Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I would have to take that on notice. I don't have those numbers in front of me right now.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Have you signed off on any? Do you recall signing off on any?

MELANIE HAWYES: Could I—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'd prefer the Minister to answer.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'd like it if Mel could provide an answer for me, just to give you an accurate answer, Ms Mihailuk.

CORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: The land agreements, as you're aware, are binding agreements. They're available to us under the legislation to facilitate—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How many has the Minister signed off on?

MELANIE HAWYES: They're complex and long negotiations. They can be quite complex. But we are in the process of implementing a number, and the Minister has visibility of particular actions we have taken to complete the Aboriginal land agreement in Orange, which facilitates the transfer of a number of parcels, provides certainty over tenure over those lands and will facilitate development that will benefit the wider Orange community too. They do take time to complete. We have a number in train.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Thank you. Minister, can you explain your understanding of how the Crown Land Management Act applies to Aboriginal land claims?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's the Aboriginal Land Rights Act.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: That's your understanding—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, land claims.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: —of how it applies to Aboriginal land claims?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can you provide me with a specific question?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: They are very specific questions. Minister, have you or your department used its powers under this Act to extinguish any lease or licence due to a land claim?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I will pass you to Mel in relation to a specific—

MELANIE HAWYES: At Crown Lands, we administer a section of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act that refers to—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You make the final determination, don't you?

MELANIE HAWYES: It's a statutory process with non-discretionary criteria. We follow that process. Those criteria are set out in the Act, and it hinges on lawful use and occupation of the land on the date of the claim.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Minister, how many staff in your department are involved in administering this Act as it relates to Aboriginal land claims?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There are 15 assessors. I think we're increasing—

MELANIE HAWYES: We did.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We have increased it recently.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So there are 15 assessors?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How many of those are Aboriginal or identify as Aboriginal?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I wouldn't have that number in my head. We can take that on notice.

MELANIE HAWYES: We can take it on notice. Obviously, it's up to somebody to identify that they're Aboriginal but, if you want to know how many of the assessment team are Aboriginal, we can take that on notice.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: At the last budget estimates—and it might've been yourself that provided that advice on behalf of the Minister—there were 545 claims approved last year. Is that your understanding?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Keep in mind that there's a backlog of, I think, 40-odd thousand land claims.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I don't know if I'd call it a backlog.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Over the last two years, there has been a great increase—I think about 15 to 16 per cent in—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Applications?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, processed and approvals.

CORRECTED

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Sorry, can you explain? There's been an increase in the process? What do you mean?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The amount of land claims that have been successful. It was about 15 per cent, I think, increase in—

MELANIE HAWYES: Through you, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, if you could pick it up.

MELANIE HAWYES: Obviously we, in the past, inherited a significant number of unresolved claims, and we are taking steps to basically improve our capacity to process those claims, because it's in the interests of all to have certainty over tenure. So we have increased the number of people working on the assessment of claims, and we have done a number of changes to the actual process itself and, in particular, changed the way we work with land councils and other stakeholders. The net result of those steps is that we have picked up the pace in being able to process the claims. They are assessed against non-discretionary criteria. Some are refused and some are approved, and the pace with which we are able to do that has increased over the last couple of years.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Are those land claims subject to any council rates or land rates, to the best of your knowledge, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The claims themselves are not, no.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Not the claims but the land itself. Once the claim has been approved, are they subject to land rates or council rates?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They would be subject to land rates, but I will pass to Mel to give you some more specific information.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I think they're actually exempt from it, Minister.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, that's correct, because the statute is set up purposefully as a compensation regime to compensate—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: You might want to explain that to the Minister, because he just said they were subject to land rates, but they're not.

MELANIE HAWYES: The claims themselves are not, so the Minister is correct.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: No, the land itself. I'm referring to the land.

MELANIE HAWYES: Once the land is transferred through a successful claim process, that is correct. There are discounts—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Are you familiar with all the land claims at the moment in Central Coast, for example? Minister, have you had any discussions with any of the departmental staff about any of the controversies around some of the Central Coast land claims?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If you could be a little bit more specific?

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I am asking whether anyone's approached you within the department or as Minister—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I come across thousands of issues a week.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I know you're coming across a lot of issues.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Seriously, if you ask me on specific—and it's not really describing the actual, particular claim.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I don't want to describe it too much, because I don't want to make it too complex for you.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Thank you.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I will move on to another area that I want to discuss with you, and that is the faith council. Congratulations on setting that up, finally—that solutions warehouse that you've set up for New South Wales. Thank you. Can I just ask you, Minister, have you had discussions with members of the faith council or have they discussed with you directly their concerns in relation to some of the moves in recent times to erode much of the religious rights that these institutions have and places of worship, i.e. that Greenwich has

CORRECTED

indicated with his equality bill, which has now been delayed for a couple of weeks? Have you made your view clear on some of the legislation that's being proposed in regards to that bill?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. I'm allowing the faith council to discuss these issues and process these issues and produce their position. That's the purpose of it.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: How many times have you met with the faith council?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've met with the faith council. We've had two meetings with the faith council.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: When were those meetings?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The inaugural meeting I was at and also—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Through you, Minister and Ms Mihailuk, one at the end of the year and one just in February.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Was any of this type of legislation raised and the concerns that members of the faith council have that there's an attempt to erode much of the religious freedom and rights these institutions currently have?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The conversation in relation to those issues, that's happened without me there. And I think it's important that the faith council is able to express themselves.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: So you will support their view when it comes to discussions in the Cabinet?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Essentially, we will look at what the faith council's position is on a number of issues. We will take advice on occasions. We may not agree on occasions. There is greater public interest which is contrary to the faith council's position, but it is a great platform for them to be able to discuss these issues and be able to communicate directly with us on nuanced arguments—or whatever—that we may miss if we don't have the faith council working together in the way it is. I think it's really important that we appreciate the genesis of the faith council. It was all in and around the period of COVID when we had all the faith communities just get together and work through some very difficult times.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I know, but the faith council was set up last year, and the first two pieces—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It was set up last year. It was in the spirit of—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: —of legislation that they've had to deal with are actually attacking their very institutions.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But the ability of our faith communities to work together to try and solve problems within our community, it all started from that, and we thought it's a fantastic model. If we could continue, if we could move forward and formalise that grouping, it would be a positive thing for government. We're finding that a lot of the interaction is extremely positive. In many respects, when you have a variety of positions from different faith groups—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: Has anyone from the faith council raised concerns with you about this legislation actually eroding the ability for these religious institutions to be able to hire and fire staff that don't hold to their faith and values?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: They've raised a number of issues. These things are concerns, and we're waiting for a process—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: But you do agree that what they're raising is a huge concern.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I agree with many things and I disagree with other things. I won't go to—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Through you, Minister. I think, Ms Mihailuk, the obligation of the Government and the Minister and the agency is to create a platform to listen to and take advice and feedback from, but that's not, to the Minister's point, necessarily to affirm their positions.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: The Minister is the chief person that's been delegated by the Premier the power to work with religious groups in this State.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Correct.

CORRECTED

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I'm glad you agree with that. So it's really important that he be their advocate when it comes to decisions that are before Cabinet. There's legislation currently before Cabinet that, essentially, will erode the rights of these religious institutions.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I think the Minister has fulfilled his obligations in being an advocate to listen to them—

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: With two meetings.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: — and create a platform for them to be able to freely express their views. But, as to the Minister's point, he's got a number of different interests to balance. There's one. So we've created a good vehicle for them to have direct access to Government, and I applaud the Minister and the Premier for doing so. I think many of the faith communities are very happy about that, but that doesn't mean every issue they raise with the Minister has to—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The faith community has a variety of views on every issue, so it's about them making a contribution. If we can get a general consensus on a position, it's pretty valuable to us to know that. It's also a platform that's created nice, direct consultation with Government. I think that's really good as well. You say I went to two meetings, but I meet with the leaders of the faith communities and the representatives on a regular basis.

The Hon. TANIA MIHAILUK: I know.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think there's value in that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, can you provide us an update, please, on the progress of the new Sydney Fish Market project? Is it still set for completion by the end of 2024?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: In terms of if there's any changes to the dates of completion, I can ask Tom to talk on that. But before we do, when we got into government, just like everything else, there was a lot of unfinished work that was left on that project. There were some disputes and legal disputes between Government and—actually, I'm not sure whether I should actually speak more about that, whether I'm precluded to speak on that. The progress is still very much on budget and on target. It includes \$750 million worth of construction. Projects NSW is watching over that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I can just redirect you. That \$750 million was the 2019 figure. In 2023-24, this was revised to \$850 million. Has it been revised down now to \$750 million? Or is it still at 850?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Well, 836.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. Do you expect that figure to grow at all?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: At this stage, we don't. But I might ask Tom if there's been any movement at the station there of recent times. It's important we ask Tom that, because he's on top of—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, considering the importance of this project to the seafood industry and regional communities, can you comment on the status of significant design concerns that have been raised by the seafood industry stakeholders to both the previous Government and the current Government as well?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can. We appreciate that that design, the facility was all contractually agreed to from day dot and there's been a number of times when we've looked at concerns that they have raised, and we have modified where we've needed to. Essentially, there have been some contractual disputes there. We've made sure that we've helped. They've actually been assisted to represent themselves against us, so I mean we've been more than helpful in terms of the co-op actually getting the right representation. We've also developed a peer review process which is ironing out all of that commentary in relation to the design, and I think Tom could probably give us a bit of an update in relation to where that's gone, but firstly, in relation to the budget, I just want to confirm that we're pretty much sitting on the number we—

TOM GELLIBRAND: Absolutely, yes. The \$750 million relates to the actual construction of the new Sydney Fish Market and the difference between the 836 and the 750 is the cost associated with direct delivery costs that the Government might incur and other incidental things that are outside the contracted amounts that we've got with Multiplex for the delivery of the building itself.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr Gellibrand. Minister, in Sydney Fish Market's publicly released annual report for 2022-23, they reference a significant write-off of more than \$7 million due to, and I quote, "Inefficiencies and issues in the planning process conducted by Infrastructure NSW". Are you aware of what the inefficiencies and issues are that have caused the write-off?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I mean that's a statement by them. Whenever there's a loss in someone's P and L, generally there's an inefficiency occurring, and whether it's in-house or whether it's out-house—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you're saying it's on Sydney Fish Market.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I don't know what they're referring to, whether it's decisions they've made to pursue certain paths and they've lost money during that process—I can't comment on that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, what is the current status in relation to the signing of leases in the new market, in particular in respect of the current market grandfather tenants? Have you got any visibility on that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's a responsibility of the head tenant, which is Sydney Fish Market Authority—Sydney Fish Market, I should say. They're the head tenant and the subtenant arrangements are a matter for them, not for government. Could I just have that, Tom—

TOM GELLIBRAND: That's correct, Minister. Sydney Fish Market is the head tenant and they have subtenancy agreements with those people you refer to as the grandfather tenants—there are some 20-odd—in the existing building, the idea being that they'd come across to the new building.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, can you confirm the Government's stated position regarding sustainability, the use of renewable energy and delivery of vibrant public precincts will be delivered by the new Sydney Fish Market? Are you still adhering to all those commitments?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're adhering to the commitments within the contractual arrangement 100 per cent. I actually went out and met with a lot of the wholesalers and shop owners that were concerned about some of the commentary that was being thrown around in relation to energy supply and I cleared that up. I looked them in the eye and told them that we've committed contractually to deliver what we committed, and they were comfortable with that, the fact that a Minister went out and spoke to every single one of the subtenants on site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, keeping with the foreshore, can you provide an update on the Coffs jetty foreshore revitalisation project?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, that's a great question. In my two years prior to us forming government, I did a lot of regional work and met with a lot of regional communities. The general situation in the regions was that we want activation precincts, we want more housing—where there's a lack of housing, there's a lack of places for employees to work—and we want progress by way of development or for tourism to promote particular regions. As soon as I became Minister, what came across my table was the opportunity to develop the Coffs Harbour jetty precinct, and that included a concept of in or around 220,000, over a few hundred apartments, and again, key worker housing, general housing and social housing opportunities there, plus the revitalisation of the jetty and commercial opportunities in and around that jetty to revitalise Coffs Harbour.

We're moving forward with that and we're really excited about what that will do for Coffs Harbour and what it will do in terms of attracting tourism to Coffs Harbour, and the housing—housing for people who want to work in Coffs Harbour, who want to work in and around that area and can't find housing. A lot of the small businesses that I spoke to throughout that two-year period were saying, "We've got nowhere for our workers to live, nowhere to stay". Well, this is going to be a part solution to the problem out there in that region, so we're very excited about it.

The Hon. WES FANG: Great, thanks Minister. Do you consider the A-Leagues Unite Round to have been a success?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think the A-Leagues Unite Round was—it's the first time we've done that and it was a great concept. You determine success over a period of time, and I think—

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you attend any of the matches, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I was away at the time. I couldn't attend. I would have loved to have attended, to be honest with you.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you know what the attendance figure was?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I'm not across the attendance figures. We'll take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Is 47,250-odd about right?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. But it was also an opportunity to showcase all of our local teams in one spot and create a momentum—a new approach to try to build some momentum in football. There was also an issue around the grand final that was really vexed and was hurting the football community.

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: Just drilling down on the figures, the Unite Round was a double header. Was 47,250 the number of individuals attending both matches?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's Destination NSW that basically was responsible for Unite, so if you're asking for numbers—

The Hon. WES FANG: So you're not aware? I believe you've put a press release out and you've—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You may have some information on that, I don't know. Karen?

The Hon. WES FANG: Ms Jones?

KAREN JONES: The actual agreement with A-League around Unite Round rests with Destination NSW and so, therefore, any evaluation of that program or of that funding is a question that's best left for Minister Graham.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay, we might ask Minister Graham those questions when he comes up later on—or one of our colleagues will. Minister, of course, there has been a changeover from VenuesLive to Venues NSW. Can you explain what has taken place with VenuesLive at Accor and CommBank stadiums and their management?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. I think this is—what I might do is I might pass on to Kerrie to give us some greater detail on what the difference is and why we went down the path—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, I'll ask, while Ms Mather is coming—

KAREN JONES: Sorry, while Kerrie is making her way up to the table, we just might need to confirm if Kerrie needs to be sworn in.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Have you been sworn in, Kerrie?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: While that's arranged, I'll ask you, Minister, why did you decide not to issue a media release or statement with respect to the New South Wales Government regarding the change?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I thought we did—I'll stand to be corrected. I thought that there was.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will you take that on notice then?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I'll take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Can I just pause there, Minister, and say that there is some confusion about witnesses having to be sworn in. It is only if someone's position has changed between the last estimates and this estimates that we swear them in again or if it's their first time appearing. From our recollection, we have covered everybody that needed to be sworn in.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Mather certainly appeared last time and answered questions.

The CHAIR: Yes, so you should be right. You do not need to be sworn in unless your position has changed in terms of a title?

KERRIE MATHER: No.

The CHAIR: Then you're good to go.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll just ask Kerrie to give us detail of the change in terms of the contractual arrangements and the in-house provisions that have been made at Venues.

KERRIE MATHER: Thank you, Minister. The contract that you're referring to expired on 31 December last year. As a result of that, the food and beverage, which was the largest part of that operation, was retendered, so there was an extensive procurement process that was conducted last year. The winner of that tender was the Gema Group, who are actually a Western Sydney business. What we were excited about with their resulting bid was they're actually bringing the best of Western Sydney's diverse culinary culture to both Accor Stadium and CommBank Stadium. Is there anything else you need to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: No, I think that's fine from you, Ms Mather. Minister Kamper, was any financial feasibility study undertaken before the decision was made?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. It was an important decision, and one that would—I'm not sure how much we can talk about—

KERRIE MATHER: What was the question?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Was any financial feasibility done in relation to this—

KERRIE MATHER: Yes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —and there was. A decision has been made in and around the best potential model moving forward.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many jobs were lost as part of the change?

KERRIE MATHER: I'll answer that, Minister. The new catering provider, Gema Group, actually took all of the catering staff, and all of the operational staff were offered continuing employment. About 80 per cent of them took up those jobs. And then there were a handful of senior management, or duplicated senior management, positions and some duplicated back office administrative roles that didn't continue, and a number of those continued with the existing organisation.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Ms Mather. How much in redundancy was paid out to employees as part of this change?

KERRIE MATHER: I would have to take that question on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Could you also take on notice whether that was considered as part of the financial feasibility?

KERRIE MATHER: It was part of the financial feasibility, and the significant and ongoing savings more than paid for those redundancies.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, to continue with venues, it has been reported that the South Sydney Rabbitohs would like to move from their home ground at Accor Stadium to the new-and-improved Allianz Stadium. What is your view on this?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You say it has been reported. I haven't necessarily had that feedback—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: They've never reached out to you on that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —from the South Sydney Rabbitohs, no.

KERRIE MATHER: I might answer that question, if you like, Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The Prime Minister has never touched you on the shoulder about that one and said—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely not.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —"Get the Rabbitohs playing at Allianz"?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: They should. That's their local ground.

KERRIE MATHER: The Rabbitohs actually have a contract to play at Accor until 2030. The members of Accor love the Rabbitohs' content, and they have a very strong following in the market around Accor Stadium. They're contracted to play—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Why do they want to move to Allianz then?

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You can't fit two teams in at Allianz?

KERRIE MATHER: They're contracted to play eight games a year on average over the course of the contracted 10. We'd love to have the other two games that are uncontracted played in New South Wales and, in fact, in our network of stadiums. So we have talked to them about Allianz. We were successful in securing what was an Indigenous round in May last year. Due to scheduling conflicts, we couldn't make it happen this year, but we're hoping that will come back on the program for next year. We'd love to see more content.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, given that both stadiums are operated by Venues NSW, do you agree that the value of a dollar made at Accor Stadium is the same as a dollar spent at Allianz Stadium for Venues NSW?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Could you rephrase that? You'll have to ask it again, sorry.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The value of a dollar spent at Allianz Stadium is the same as the value of a dollar spent at Accor Stadium when it comes to Venues NSW. They're both your stadiums.

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, so the value of the dollar—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Why does it matter where they're contracted to play, so to speak? They're both your stadiums. Why can't you accommodate them at Allianz, like the fans want and the club has requested?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think Kerrie clearly stated that there's a contractual arrangement there. To be quite frank, I don't know whether Souths have actually expressed to me on any occasion that they wanted to move. You hear a lot of talking from fans who'd prefer them to be playing at Allianz, but I haven't been approached by Souths at any stage to have them move.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'll ask this question—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Are you a Souths supporter?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'm not, actually. I'm a Tigers supporter. I have got to say it hurts me a little bit to be asking these questions on behalf of the Bunnies. Ms Mather, can I ask you, through the Minister, have you had any requests from South Sydney to move to Allianz Stadium?

KERRIE MATHER: What's important to understand is that there are important—each stadium is like an ecosystem, if you like. Accor Stadium actually has a naming rights and commercial program, and it has a very significant membership program as well, and those commercial arrangements are actually underpinned by content.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With all due respect, Ms Mather, the question was have you had a request from South Sydney to move to Allianz Stadium? Yes or no?

KERRIE MATHER: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. Minister, just as we talk about the Allianz Stadium, have you at all looked at a roof on Allianz Stadium or done any assessment or seen any business cases with respect to a roof on Allianz Stadium?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've had general discussions about it, but, at this stage, there hasn't been a real formal approach to that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What about Accor Stadium, Minister? Have you had any assessment of putting a roof on Accor Stadium, or have you seen any feasibility studies of that program?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We've had conversations around that and the costings around that.

KERRIE MATHER: I can update on that one too.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Kerrie's got great detail on that.

KERRIE MATHER: Actually, the former Government provided a grant for the design, the development of a business plan and the development of a business case for a roof on Accor Stadium. That will provide a massive competitive advantage, actually, for New South Wales, both domestically and internationally.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'm sure, for all the Swifties, if they're heading out there—

KERRIE MATHER: Absolutely. We could accommodate more concerts.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —and it's raining on Friday, Saturday, Sunday or Monday.

KERRIE MATHER: We could get more concerts, but it would certainly enable us to compete very effectively against Melbourne. They have a number of stadiums and arenas with operable roofs, and we actually have none. We're now at the stage of the final business case, which is nearing completion, and then we'll be going through the INSW gateway process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So that's something that's being actively considered, is it, Minister— a roof on Accor Stadium?

KERRIE MATHER: Not at this stage—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not at this stage.

KERRIE MATHER: —but at the appropriate time, we'll be putting that forward.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, in terms of the South Sydney Rabbitohs, if they were to put a proposal to you in terms of moving from Accor Stadium to Allianz Stadium, is that something you would consider?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Always happy to receive proposals—consider. They're contractual arrangements.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So the door's open, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: From what I understand, the Rabbitohs are very happy with their current situation and the contractual arrangement that they have.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Minister, in terms of Penrith stadium, in 2021 the New South Wales Liberal Government announced \$309 million to build a new stadium at Penrith. It's now 2024 and construction is not expected to begin until 2025. Given your accounting background, why haven't you provided for inflation when it comes to the stadium and, as a result, you see that the people of Penrith are only receiving 1½ grandstands instead of a new stadium?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. You made reference to the previous Government and all its commitments. Its commitments were all over the shop. It was all focused on Stuart Ayres' seat and they changed the conversation every second day. But the truth is we made a rock-solid commitment that we'd commit to Penrith stadium. Very early as Minister, I went straight out to Penrith, sat down and said, "This is the cost envelope that we've got to work with, and we'll work from that and deliver a top-class facility for Western Sydney—for Penrith." We have gone about and done that. Projects NSW has sat down and worked out, I believe, an excellent scheme, and there is an increase in seating. I'm not sure what the exact amount is.

Also the facility is going to be world class. It will be available for greater use than just sport, and that's important. Venues NSW will be taking over the management of the stadium. We're quite confident that we can do that successfully, with profit. It's really important that we appreciate that Venues is capable of generating revenue so we can reinvest in all our other stadiums, like when—Mark, you mentioned earlier about our approach up north. Well, that all helps when you've got earning capacity so you can actually then turn around and borrow and rebuild or refurbish and repair our stadiums across the board. I believe that Penrith is a fabulous outcome for the local community—great for sport and great for Western Sydney.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Half a stadium.

The CHAIR: Thank you. I'll throw to Ms Hurst and then to Mr Latham. We'll see how we go.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, I understand that many Crown Lands offices in regional and rural areas are not currently open Monday to Friday. Is the intention to increase funding in the upcoming budget to allow these offices to open daily, or is that something that you're going to be advocating for?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. I might pass on to—I'm not familiar with our offices not being open.

MELANIE HAWYES: I'm not aware of the issues that you're talking about. If you've got particular offices, I'd be happy to discuss it. But I'm not really sure what you mean by we're not open for business.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The question is that not all of the offices are currently open Monday to Friday, so they're not open every single business day, Monday to Friday.

MELANIE HAWYES: Which offices are you referring to?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I don't have a list in front of me. I can provide one. My question was to the Minister as to whether or not he will be advocating for funding in the upcoming budget to make sure that these offices can open daily, Monday to Friday, in rural and regional areas. I understand that you don't understand; I don't have a list in front of me.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I understand. I'm just not aware of any offices that are shut from Monday to Friday, and Mel's not familiar with that either.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: If I'm able to provide you with a list of the offices that aren't open every day, Monday to Friday, will you advocate for funding so that those offices can open?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll advocate for those offices to be open Monday to Friday.

MELANIE HAWYES: If I may, it would be, obviously, fantastic to know which locations you're talking about. We do have a workforce that covers the entire State, so they do travel and it may be that you're talking about officers, say, out in Griffith, who cover a large land area and we drop in and share office space with other government departments. I would like to clarify which offices have been raised as a concern and then come back to you.

CORRECTED

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Okay, thank you. Minister, I understand that some assessments are taking up to eight years or more to complete in relation to the sale of Crown roads on private property. Are you able to explain why there is such a backlog and what is being done to reduce that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I've been in for a year and, in terms of processing those, I move them out of my office as soon as possible, once they've been assessed and determined.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: But in terms of what's happened over the past eight years, I'll ask Mel to give you some—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might come back to you in the afternoon to get a bit more detail on that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, that's probably best. That's good.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I wanted to ask about synthetic turf. I understand the Government's response to the chief scientist's report is still being finalised. Is that the case?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass to Kerrie on that, too—Karen, sorry.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: My question was just that—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I got someone else's name wrong this time.

The Hon. WES FANG: I was going to say, there is 500 bucks to the—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Order! My question was is your position still being finalised?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, the position is still being finalised.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Can I ask what the delay is? Why is that taking so long?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's probably a question for Kiersten. It's a planning issue, so I think—

KAREN JONES: That's correct, Minister.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Have you met with the planning Minister and encouraged him to prioritise the Government's response to the chief scientist's report?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: If I can just provide some further information, because it is a matter for Minister Scully. We have received a significant number of submissions to the report, so we're consolidating those to provide advice to Government so they can make a final report.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. Minister, there are very serious concerns about the human health and environmental impacts of the synthetic turf being used on playing fields, as well as the high temperatures that they can reach. What are you doing, as Minister for Sport, to take action on this issue?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I have spoken to Karen on a number of occasions about this and what we need to be doing. We're still waiting for a position from the planning Minister. But, Karen, could you just give us an update on what we're actually—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I can come back to Ms Jones in the afternoon. Minister, have you given any further consideration to imposing a moratorium on funding the installation of new synthetic turf, given the concerns and the delay in a response?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, and this is a concern. There is a lot of work in progress, there are a lot of projects that are occurring. There has been a dependency on synthetic pitches, especially in football and a number of other sports over the past five to 10 years. I talk about synthetic pitches in my electorate, in my community. I've got, I think, five or six, and I know how much the community depends on those synthetic pitches. There is the high utilisation of those pitches, which is so important for our sporting community and our local community. We've got to balance that with the health risks that are associated with the way we've constructed them and built them, in the future, and what we're—

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry, Minister, when I'm talking about a moratorium, that's talking about further funding for more use of this.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Karen can just give us an update on what's happening there.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I don't really need an update right now, Minister. I'm asking you what you're doing and what your position is on it. Is your approach essentially to do nothing until you hear about the planning Minister's response to the chief scientist's report?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We'll take the position once we get the response from the Minister and we'll move forward from there.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: The approach is to do nothing until you get that response?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Essentially.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Have you met with the Natural Turf Alliance, who are strong advocates in this space?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I haven't, but Karen Jones has.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Are you willing to meet with them, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely willing to meet with them.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I have some questions about asbestos as well. There has been significant concern obviously about the recent discovery of asbestos at numerous locations across Sydney, including several Sydney parks. Yesterday it was revealed that bonded asbestos was found at a sports centre as well. Have any investigations been undertaken to determine whether there is a risk of asbestos at any other sporting fields or ovals or other locations where children or adults are playing sport in New South Wales?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The asbestos issue is obviously a deep issue, it's a concerning issue and it's a whole-of-government problem. Obviously, the contractual arrangements that were put in place which have delivered this problem now are something that we have to manage and it's a whole-of-government approach. All agencies are working with the lead team. I will ask Kiersten to give us a breakdown on how that is happening.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Yes, thank you. The EPA is the lead agency responsible for asbestos. There has been a whole of New South Wales Government taskforce established. In relation to the Minister's portfolio, we have a representative representing public spaces and Crown lands, which crosses Minister Scully and Minister Kamper. We also have a representative—and I think this probably gets to your question—representing Office of Local Government who is working directly with councils. As you would be aware, most sporting fields are run by councils. Local Government NSW is also involved in those discussions. We're making sure that we're coordinating, and obviously taking direction from the EPA as the lead agency.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, prior to this wave of asbestos discovery, did you have any safety requirements in place for New South Wales sport grant recipients, such as checks for asbestos or regular audits?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Karen can probably answer in terms of the history.

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister. The normal standards would apply in terms of asbestos and treatment of asbestos. There was no reason at that point in time to impose any additional conditions in relation to sporting facilities.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Minister, I know there have been some questions already about women in sport, but I have some specific questions for you as the Minister. In regard to the Her Sport Her Way strategy, is it your intention and the intention of the New South Wales Government to renew the strategy in 2024?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're currently working on another version of that strategy.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Is it going to be something a little bit different?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, it might be a different brand.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Can you give us any details about how that is going to be different?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not at this stage, but we're currently working on it.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Do you have any specific targets, goals or strategies that you want to see implemented in this term of government regarding women in sport?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I want to do as much as I can to promote women in sport. I think it was Karen who spoke earlier about the momentum from the World Cup, but it's beyond that. Their performance in many, many sporting codes has inspired the community across the board. I think we have a long way to go to making sure that we have adequate facilities for women in sport where they feel comfortable to go and get changed and play from, so that's been a focus of ours with the Level the Playing Field grants, and we're going to continue to do more in that way. We have focused on administration—

CORRECTED

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Sorry, Minister, I am going to interrupt you only because I have 20 seconds left. Are you collaborating with the Minister for Women in relation to these issues and will you be working with the Minister for Women in regard to the new strategy you're proposing for 2024?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Absolutely. We're always collaborating with the Minister for Women, and many times we make the announcements in relation to what we're doing in women's sport together.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, what's being done to ensure Sydney keeps its iconic New Year cricket test match and fights off poaching from South Australia and other outlying States?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's a good question, Mr Latham, but again—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You are the glorious captain of our parliamentary team.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm the captain of the parliamentary cricket team.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: So I expect you to be to the forefront of keeping cricket at the SCG.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Why don't I just call it out there: We won again.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: The media's hopeless.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We beat the media on the last occasion. That falls in the hands of Minister Graham, unfortunately.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What, keeping the cricket test?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It does.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: He's yet to strap on a pad.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We're doing that. We've had positive conversations about cricket.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: He's never picked up a bat.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'd hate to see such an iconic test leave Sydney.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What are you doing to keep it here?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm working to convince the relevant parties that it's a good thing, and we should be doing whatever we can to support cricket through the process, not just for that event but overall.

The Hon. WES FANG: So you get your box.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Sorry?

The Hon. WES FANG: Wined and dined.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Wes, we're yet to see you at the cricket match or in the parliamentary team. So, mate, when you strap on a pad you'll have a bit more credibility to talk about cricket and other things. Staying at the SCG, Minister, do you support the permanent retention of parking in front of the Hordern Pavilion? When there's big events at Allianz and the SCG—you can have the new facility built, but there's still going to be chaos. We've got to keep the parking, haven't we?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, we have, and we've made way to make sure that we continue, and we've extended the parking arrangements there for a period of time up until we got—is Kerrie here? Maybe you could speak more about the parking, just in relation to the parking and what we're proposing in the future and what we're doing in between in relation to the existing grass parking there.

KERRIE MATHER: Yes. Thank you, Minister. Some appropriate transition arrangements have been extended to ensure that we've got sufficient multimodal access, actually, for our patrons. The cricket is particularly important because we do see large numbers of attendees actually coming from regional New South Wales down to Sydney, and parking is actually quite important for them. We are building on our own site a multi-level underground car park, which will actually create some green space on top, and it will allow the green space across the road to actually be returned to public parklands. So we're working very closely with Centennial Parklands at the moment, collaboratively, to look at what we can do to establish an appropriate transitional arrangement to enable the delivery of that multi-level car park in an accelerated way.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Minister, what's the next priority in terms of NRL investments? There's been a lot over the last decade or so: Allianz, which the Government now supports; CommBank; ongoing investments at the Olympic stadium; the Brookvale Fulton stand is a major upgrade; the Tigers' training centre.

CORRECTED

You mentioned the Panthers' approach, which is the right one, not to kick harness racing out of Penrith. Is the Government funding the Dragons' training centre. It's a very important priority. We need a lot of help.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We need a lot more training. Thanks for that question, Mr Latham. We're actually just discussing now what future outlook we have in terms of suburban stadiums, suburban support.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What about the Dragon training centre? Is that being funded?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's already funded.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: So that's going ahead. That's good news.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's going ahead. There's been some delays there.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What's the next priority? There's a lot of complaints down in the shire about Shark Park. The Sharks get a soft draw every year. Somehow they make the top four. They can't win a finals game, and they've only got about 12,000 in the ground. What are you doing for poor old—Speakman did nothing for 12 years, of course, when he was in government. What are you doing about Shark Park?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's a privately owned facility. So there's a different—

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Nothing for Sharks Park? What about an upgrade for Kogarah?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm not saying that there's nothing. What I'm saying is we're looking at our suburban approach, moving forward.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: What's the next priority? Is it Kogarah or Shark Park?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I was out at Kogarah the other night, Mark.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: How did we go? No good.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Kogarah's quite a good-quality facility. We've still got our fabulous hill there. We haven't lost our hill.

The Hon. WES FANG: You were in the box. You weren't on the hill.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Wes, you weren't there at all.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I wasn't, but five of my grandchildren were on the hill and I went across to meet up with them later.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Good on them!

The Hon. WES FANG: You can't even get them in the box? Come on, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm sorry, but I had to present the shield.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Come on, Wes. Wes, you're an attendee virgin, so we're waiting for you to attend any of these events and show an interest in sport.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not here to play cricket, Mark.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You're looking to play cricket next time.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not here to play cricket, mate.

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You're not here to play cricket?

The Hon. WES FANG: No. I'm here to do a job.

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I love this interjection now. It's good. It's about time.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: We could get Stuart Clark to send a few bouncers down to you.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Wes is an underarm man.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Wes is stumped.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: So you're looking at Kogarah and Shark Park and an announcement is imminent?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I wouldn't go so far as to say it, but we're looking at all the suburban needs and we'll sit down and work out a plan in the future.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Make sure you include Wes. He's a sporting ground expert.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Who do you go for, Wes?

The Hon. WES FANG: I go for The Nats. I'm here for The Nats.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: There you are. They're homeless and groundless and got no interest in sport. They're only interested in underground cables. Finally, what recommendations of the outstanding Mookhey public works committee report into the contaminated land at SIEC, Horsley Park? An Equestrian NSW grant had been implemented, which had been rejected, and why was there any rejection?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I might pass that over to Karen.

KAREN JONES: Thank you, Minister. I think, out of fairness, that report was handed down before the Minister came into government.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Yes, but it's a good report.

KAREN JONES: Yes, and thank you for your input into that report.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You're welcome.

KAREN JONES: From the Office of Sport's perspective, yes, we did respond to the recommendations from that committee and we have been implementing the recommendations. In terms of the status of those recommendations and the implementation, I'm happy to take that on notice and I'll provide that information to you.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Is the land still contaminated? What assurances can be given to users about the safety of the facility?

KAREN JONES: I think that was all fully explored during the actual inquiry hearing and the facility is still used—heavily utilised actually—by a number of stakeholders.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Do they still have emu parades to try and pick the contaminated plastics out?

KAREN JONES: They still go through a quality assurance process, making sure that there aren't any contaminants that would pose any sort of safety risk on the surface.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Thank you. I cede my time now.

The CHAIR: I'll pass to Ms Cate Faehrmann and I will say you will have five minutes at the end after the Opposition as well.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: You have three now.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Yes, great.

The Hon. MARK LATHAM: Thank you, Mr Latham.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Minister, the Auditor-General wrote to you on 14 June last year as well as 2 August last year asking you to, I think, ensure that the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust opens its books for the auditor. What was your response?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What was my response to the Auditor-General?

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: That's right.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That was a conversation with the Auditor-General? Is it a conversation?

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Did you respond? Did you respond to those written letters with a written letter to the Auditor-General?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I actually had a meeting with the Auditor-General, who came to the office. We discussed the Catholic cemeteries situation in detail.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: The letter to you on 14 June says, "Thank you for the meeting", so that's the meeting you're referring to?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes.

CORRECTED

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So the Auditor-General meets with you, expresses her concern and what does she say to you—that the CMCT, let's use that acronym, is a State-controlled entity, the only one that's not opening its books; I told you how serious that was? What did she say—something to those effects, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't recall the conversation, but we agreed to disagree on a number of things. But by the same token she was quite familiar with our position in relation to cemeteries, moving forward. That's no secret. That's been quite open and—

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: When you say agreed to disagree, you as the Minister for lands are disagreeing with the Auditor-General that this body, this State-controlled entity, needs to have its books audited by the Auditor-General. Is that what you were disagreeing with her about?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. No, I wasn't disagreeing with that. We understood that we had to look at changes moving forward until we can actually meet our audit requirements. Consequently, there's been a judicial finding in the Supreme Court.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Which didn't help your cause.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What the—there's a hundred pages there to read through to see where—

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So you have read the letter, I assume, where she says that her office has not been provided with any access and then she said, "This situation has not been encountered previously, and should not be seen nor accepted as appropriate." She continues to say that conducting these financial and performance audits, as in rejecting that, should not be normalised nor considered appropriate. She's written very strong words to you, Minister, on 4 June and, I understand, again. What was your response to her with this?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take on notice what my response was. I can't remember what I've written.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Well, what's your view now? This is budget estimates.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: My view now—I'm looking at where we are now—

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: This is budget estimates, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: —and there was a judgement on Friday that really changed it.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Should the CMCT be opening its books to the auditor?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The CMCT has their books audited every year.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: As a State-controlled entity—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: It's a State-controlled entity.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: —not by the Auditor-General.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The definition and the status of the trust, that's all changed in many respects. Friday's outcome has probably supported the CMCT's position on this throughout the whole period. I think there's about 100-odd pages.

MELANIE HAWYES: The CMCT contests that it is a State-controlled entity and sought judicial advice. That came in on Friday, and we're working through that advice to understand how to take it forward. There is a contest here about the status of that entity, as to whether it is State controlled or whether it is in the control of a charity or trust.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: If we would've moved forward with the two-operator model, part of the process would've been that we would've looked at an audit to comply with all of the requirements.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So you didn't respond to the Auditor-General as the Minister responsible for the CMCT?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'll take that on notice. I can't recall.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: You're aware of, in the State finances audit that was tabled just last week, the Auditor-General's extremely strong words about this—that the CMCT remains the only, just unprecedented, State-controlled entity. You're comfortable with that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I'm not comfortable with that. We said, and I've made commitments, that we're going to get to a position where an audit process occurs and we don't have—

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: By the Audit Office?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Things have shifted with the result of last Friday. We need to really sit down and evaluate what impact that has moving forward.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Can I check as well—I understand that the CMCT has been operating under the repealed Crown Lands Act 1989, using several extensions under the savings provision, up to, I think, eight times. The last time that was allowed—I understand Parliamentary Counsel was incredibly resistant to these extensions. It expires at the end of February. That's the last extension. What is going to happen with the CMCT? Is it going to be rolled into the new—well, it's not new; it's six or eight years old—Crown Land Management Act? Is the CMCT going to be rolled into that or considered under that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: We need to work through the judgement—the 100-odd pages. We'll work through that in due course and see what impact that will have on the operation moving forward.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: So everything in relation to you, as Minister, and the government department is suddenly resting on this one judgement on Friday? I'm not sure if you were aware of that when the Auditor-General—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, it's just impacted it.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: —met with you last year.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: There's an argument there that the position that Treasury took, the position that was taken in the past, was probably—there are three Supreme Court judges that have produced a unanimous decision in relation to the controlled-entity status and the status of the trust. It's a complicated judgement. I think we need to go through that judgement and establish where we move forward in terms of our position to have a two-operator model which includes the presence of the Catholic cemeteries.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: What is it now? Tuesday. If you're saying it was handed down on Friday, what do you understand of it? If you're saying it was many pages and it's complicated, have you had a summary? Has your office briefed you on exactly how that is supposed to impact the fact that the CMCT, the Catholic Metropolitan Cemeteries Trust, has been given extraordinary special treatment by the last Government and, now, as we know, by your Government?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The judgement was Friday. We really haven't had time to sit down and get a proper briefing. I think it has to all be digested and see what impact it's going to have. If I could ask Mel to give—

MELANIE HAWYES: If I may, just to your points about the Parliamentary Counsel and where we're at, the status of the CMCT is significant as to how to move forward. We've had discussions with Parliamentary Counsel about the need to potentially extend the transitional reg until we've sorted out their status going forward.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: I bet they weren't very happy about that.

MELANIE HAWYES: They understood that it was pending a judicial decision, so they understood that it wasn't a delay for frivolous reasons.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: Why has there been that delay? Why have they asked for so long to continue under the savings provision and not be moved into—

MELANIE HAWYES: I can't comment to the past, but we have been working—as you know, we have had multiple discussions about this to resolve their ongoing status going forward. With this incoming Government we have made progress in moving forward with respect to setting up the MMP and with seeking to resolve the status of the CMCT in the future market. The judicial review and the advice go to what is the status of the CMCT, and if it is a charitable trust, then it's not simply a matter of rolling it under the Crown Land Management Act. We need to tease it through and understand their status going forward.

Ms CATE FAEHRMANN: With three hundred and something million dollars of government assets—public assets.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, we didn't get a clear answer from you last time regarding this, so I will ask you again. Can you advise whether last year you attended the Antiochian Easter service at Punchbowl or at the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah, or did you attend both of the services?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I attended the Antiochian Friday night service, I think, when they walk the streets with the cross.

The Hon. WES FANG: Did you attend one or both?

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I believe, on the Saturday night—yes, the Saturday night Easter service—the Greek.

The Hon. WES FANG: Last year you stated that you've attended there in the past for weddings and funerals. Can you inform the Committee how many of your family or relatives may be parishioners at the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I think that's really personal. My family members are—I know my mum's always active in the church, but the status of my children or brothers or sisters in relation to their activity in and around—

The Hon. WES FANG: You're refusing to provide that information?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I can't give you information on whether they're active parishioners. What constitutes an active parishioner? Someone that visits a church or someone that's part of a church committee?

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, since the last budget estimates session, did you look further into your family's connection with the church and diocese and any connection to Multicultural NSW or the relevant agencies that may be coordinating the funding agreements for the next election commitment?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Write it as a supplementary question.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Can you pitch that question again to me in a way which is—

The Hon. WES FANG: Since the last budget estimates session, did you look into your connections or your family's connections with that church and disclose any of this to Multicultural NSW or the relevant agencies that may be coordinating the funding agreements for the next election commitment?

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: What's the definition of family?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What's the definition of family first?

The Hon. WES FANG: It's probably less difficult to answer than what is the definition of affordable housing.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What connection are you referring to? I don't understand where there is a conflict. I don't know what you're trying to get at. Are you having a shot at me because I'm Greek Orthodox or something? What's this all about?

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you serious?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Where are you going with this? I don't understand it.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you recall the questions that we asked you last session, Minister?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes. I thought they were out of order then and they're out of order now. Suggesting that I've got some type of exclusive interest or—

The Hon. WES FANG: Undeclared interest.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: What, that I got married at the Kogarah parish 40 years ago?

The Hon. WES FANG: I'll move on.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm trying to establish what you're asking me.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm asking if you or your—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: All you've got to do is ask a question. Give us a straight-out question.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm asking if you or your family have any undeclared connection to the religious organisations that received funding under your last round?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Give me the definition of connection.

The Hon. WES FANG: I think it's in the ministerial code, Minister.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, just give us a connection. Am I on the board of the parish? No.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, I'll move on.

CORRECTED

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No. I'd like to answer the question, but I want the question to be asked in a way where I can answer it. I'm trying to get some definition out of you.

The Hon. WES FANG: I asked you whether you have made any additional disclosures to Multicultural NSW.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Not that I'm aware of.

The Hon. WES FANG: Okay. In relation to the election commitment, has the funding agreement been finalised and signed off on?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can help there.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, I'll ask Joe to give us—

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, we will ask you—

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: No, I'll ask Joe. You asked a question. How about we get the answer from the people—

The Hon. WES FANG: We will ask him later on. I've got one more question and I've got one minute.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Which church, Mr Fang?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: You can't ask a question and leave it hanging.

The Hon. WES FANG: I will find the details and come to you afterwards.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: You can't get away with that.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: You can't do that. No, no, no. You can't just jam it in. You already jam enough questions in every time you ask questions.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm redirecting now.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: No, you're putting—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Point of order—

The CHAIR: Order!

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Which church, Mr Fang?

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, when was the last time you went to the St George Motorboat Club at Sans Souci?

The CHAIR: Order!

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: You're a grub, mate.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Point of order—

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm asking the question.

The CHAIR: Order! This is just the epitome of ridiculousness.

The Hon. WES FANG: I've got 30 seconds left.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm just thinking about it. It was a couple of weeks ago at a funeral service—there was a wake there.

The Hon. WES FANG: All right, thank you.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: Chair, the question appears to be making an adverse reflection on someone.

The Hon. WES FANG: I want to put the question to the Minister again.

The Hon. PETER PRIMROSE: I believe, under paragraph 13 of the procedural fairness resolution, if that is asked, surely the Minister must be given the right to respond, rather than simply saying, "I'm redirecting" and letting it hang.

The Hon. WES FANG: Minister, confirming the question that I asked: When was the last time you went to the St George Motorboat Club at Sans Souci?

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: Order!

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: The last time I went to the St George Motorboat Club at Sans Souci was for the wake of Chris Minns' father-in-law.

The CHAIR: That concludes our time with the Minister. When a point of order is taken, don't just assume that you can continue asking questions or continue making comments after the person who has taken the point of order has finished speaking. The Chair still has to rule on that point of order. You may find that I rule in favour of you or against you, but you have to let me rule on that point of order, even if it means we run over time or we are out of time. If I am treated with fairness, I will treat you with fairness and give you back that time, if possible, but don't just talk over the top of a point of order being decided upon. I'll go back to the Government, if members have any questions, for the remaining 10 minutes.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: I have a question on behalf of the Government. Minister, I think quite unfairly, earlier the Opposition tried to make out that the only things that you attend are those events recorded in the periodic diary disclosures that are published by the New South Wales Government. Those diary disclosures only include scheduled meetings that are required to be included in them. Is that correct?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's correct. They don't include all the events that I attend, and I attend many events.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Would it be fair to say that, in any given week, most nights you would be out in the community meeting with people across your portfolio areas, talking about things with local business chambers, with advocacy groups, with multicultural groups and at sporting activities.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I visit business chambers—absolutely, every night. There are nights when there are three or four events and they're not included within the diary entries that they're referring to. It's a little bit cheeky to try to present it as that.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: It would be completely wrong to create the impression that that's the only thing you've done.

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: Yes, that's correct.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: Because none of those are included in the disclosure summary at all, are they?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: That's correct, Mr Murphy.

The Hon. WES FANG: I wouldn't say it's completely wrong. I don't think he does half the things that are in his diary.

The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY: That's all I have, Chair.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Through you, Chair, if I could direct a question?

The CHAIR: Yes, sure.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Thank you. Minister, there was a line of questioning earlier today about defibrillators and the provision of them. Are you aware of any reduction in funding to the local defibrillator grants program prior to the Government taking office last year?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I'm advised that the program was reduced to 500k a year in 2022, so I think I was correct in the first instance when I said that the \$500,000 was not a reduction from the previous year.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Given the exchange at the end of the last line of questioning from Mr Fang—you may wish to reserve and read the transcript to inform yourself—were there any matters that you wanted to place on the record before you leave today regarding that last line of questioning, or would you like to review the transcript and respond once you have had a chance to do that?

Mr STEPHEN KAMPER: I would like to review the transcript in relation to my religious connection, yes, thank you.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Minister, for your time and for dealing with a very boisterous audience and panel. You have taken some questions on notice. The Committee secretariat will be in touch regarding those, but I imagine that some of those questions taken on notice will come back in the afternoon session and that will reduce the workload of the secretariat. We will now break for lunch and return at 2.00 p.m.

(The Minister withdrew.)

CORRECTED

(Luncheon adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back to this afternoon's session. We will continue with questions from the Opposition.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much. I must say, the CEO of Multicultural NSW put me off my preparation, to begin with.

The Hon. WES FANG: He did better than Kamper.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We'll come back to it now. We'll start with Mr La Posta. The questions we asked previously were with respect to multicultural media. Independent multicultural media are worried any increases to the spend won't actually flow down and instead will continue to be allocated to intermediary agencies that translate material or put together in-language resources and creatives that are then requested to be published on their channels for free. The Government's election commitment media release stated that "it does not appear that the review even touched on this, at least not according to multicultural media outlets that have contacted us". Will you undertake a further, more detailed review that actually addresses the election commitments the Government outlined?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: So, as the Minister said before, this is a responsibility of the customer service Minister and the Department of Customer Service, but because of the nature of the stakeholder and our established relationships with them, we've been involved as an intermediary and an advocate and those sorts of things as well. It's a tricky time, Mr Farlow, because the overarching government spend is being increased in media overall and then there are conversations about increasing the percentage—and, again, it's an announcement for Minister Dib, so I can't talk to the specifics, but there is a conversation in line with the election commitment to increase the spend to multicultural media. So we're trying to make sure that it is a holistic increase in spend.

And then the second thing is, I share a number of the frustrations of our multicultural media small businesses that are out there, because there are a number of buying agents and intermediaries that do operate in this space. One of the things that we've been doing with them this year is a pilot to help them in, I guess, educating all the different parts of government of their unique value. There is a SafeWork campaign, for example. We're doing a pilot with them to tell them if we're looking to engage a middle-aged Arabic men demographic around a safe work campaign or looking to engage older women that might be their mothers around what their awareness should be for their sons or daughters before they're walking out the door to work. They're the sorts of target groups that we're looking to do and we're trying to take as many findings as we possibly can to best help inform how to position this group and their unique value right across government. It's also happening in a regional and a rural sphere, as well, through—and I'm sure Mr Fang's across this—the advocacy of a number of the regional newspapers. All of that being said, it's an announcement for Minister Dib and I understand that Cabinet's made a decision and the announcement is imminent.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to that imminent announcement, during the process, Independent Multicultural Media Australia was to assist with the sustainability of the member organisations until the review was completed and the policies implemented. What's happened to this? Has that occurred?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, they're ongoing. We don't see the fulfilment of the election commitment as the end of working with the Independent Multicultural Media Association—or Australia or whatever the IMMA acronym is specifically standing for. And also, not all of our multicultural media partners are a member of IMMA as well, so it's really incumbent that we continue to engage right across the board. Publications such as *Indian Link* and others that I know you're familiar with, don't necessarily formally sit as a part of that group, but have a loose affiliation and have a common interest.

Our obligation overall is we're not in in the game of seeing multicultural media agencies vanish. We think they play an important role and we want to work with them to make sure that they can tell their unique story—that if the Office of Sport is doing an Active Kids voucher or a specific initiative, that Karen knows what the value of that publication or that publication is in disseminating that messaging on the ground, to help those young families understand what support is available to them from the Government. That is one of the hundreds of examples that I know the Department for Customer Service is looking at, at the moment, to try to help improve the Government's communication to different subsets of society.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr La Posta. Is there any grant funding available at present for multicultural media agencies?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Only the standard grant funding that we have through our programs and projects grants, which is an annual grant program where recipients are available, up to 40,000. I think we just need to check their business status to make sure that they're eligible. But, if they were compliant with the business status,

CORRECTED

they would be able to apply for some of those grants. But, Mr Farlow, to your point, there was a specific grant during COVID to help sustain their operations because all of their advertising spend had dried up, and it was very difficult to print during the pandemic, and we specifically needed those publications to keep printing during the pandemic to disseminate critical health information. There's no such example of that at the moment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, while we're on grants—in the last budget estimates, we found out that the Safe Places for Faith Communities Program only had \$3 million allocated to it in this financial year. Following that hearing and when the funding round went live, it was increased to \$5 million. On the record and on behalf of the shadow Minister, I'd like to express our appreciation to you and Multicultural NSW—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That was a decision of the Minister, Mr Farlow, and the Government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —and, indeed, to the Minister, for listening to the Committee's calls for greater funding in this financial year. Are you able to advise what will now be available in the following financial years, noting they were previously \$4 million per year?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The election commitment was 15 in totality—and we cleared that up at last budget estimates—of which we have made five available this year. Those applications have now closed. We've received over 266 applications in the safety and security round of funding.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You've answered my next question—266.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. Estimation in terms of over \$18 million of applications. It's a part of that. Our team needs to do a thorough and independent grant assessment of those entire 266 applications, work with colleagues right across the Government, and I'm very pleased and acknowledge the work of Michael Shaw from our community engagement team in working with the Premier's Department, New South Wales police, Public Works and a number of others to make sure it's a holistic decision that's made by government, to administer that grant program. We'll go through that process in the coming weeks, get a recommendation up to the Minister and probably have some reasonably honest conversations about whether there's any sort of flexibility in terms of that \$5 million to accommodate what has been a very, very popular grant program in these current difficult times.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of those 266 that have applied, how many are to be successful under that \$5 million window?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: There's not a limit. My understanding is—again I'm happy to take the exact specifics on notice. It's between \$50,000 and \$250,000. Some applications have, no doubt, asked for a quarter of a million. Others have probably asked for \$50,000 for safety and security cameras and additional fencing and some of those things.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To continue on the grants message, are you able to advise how many organisations were supported through community grants programs?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can take the specifics of that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You can take it on notice. That's fine.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: There was a small underspend, in the agency, that the Minister was very supportive of going straight directly back out to community. I estimate in the latest round of grants, I think in the vicinity of about 112 or 120 community organisations were supported with the latest round of festival and events, and that's only this current round, that will kick off from June to December.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I will hand over to Mr Fang.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Be nice.

The Hon. WES FANG: I don't know what that interjection was, but I'm sure it's not helpful.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Be nice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, last year, you'll recall, I asked some questions around the details of disclosure made by the Minister, and you'd be aware that it was in relation to the projects that we discussed briefly with the Minister in the last round of questioning before lunch. Part of the response that we were given in the previous hearing was:

A commitment to fund these projects was made by the then opposition prior to forming government.

Multicultural NSW has a funding agreement in place with the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah.

Multicultural is yet to finalise a funding agreement with the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia.

CORRECTED

One would assume from this that the Minister did know about the project, given the announcement was made prior to forming government. Mr La Posta, therefore, were you provided with a disclosure from Mr Kamper in relation to his association with that parish?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Mr Fang, the question created a fair bit of by-product and discussion before. The Minister hasn't disclosed any pecuniary interests to me around either of those election commitments, but I also am not sure he's obliged to, for the reasons that he outlined before, where he clearly stated that he didn't have any interest in any of those facilities. I'm only going off what the Minister said before. I can't provide any more advice than that. We have finalised the agreement with the Greek Orthodox Parish and Community of Kogarah. That project's paid and completed, and the Greek Archdiocese of Australia, their funding agreement is ongoing. We're just trying to make sure that our terms and conditions are adhered to by that community and that the objective of what the then Opposition leader and then shadow multicultural Minister, who are now the Premier and the multicultural Minister, asked for in the lead-up to the election is adhered to.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, were you provided with any disclosures, or notified of any conflicts of interest between any member of Parliament regarding any of the projects under the multicultural capital partnerships fund?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I was not, but I don't know if that's necessarily unusual or unreasonable in the circumstances, if the Minister's already clearly stated that he didn't have any conflict.

The Hon. WES FANG: Not just that Minister, any member of Parliament.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: No, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: If you did not have this information, will Multicultural NSW seek to request this from the Minister or any related colleagues around any associations with any of the grants?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm happy to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: While we're still on the multicultural capital partnerships fund, this was a fund that was outlined by the Government when it was in opposition, as you've rightly indicated. Have you got any information provided to you as part of the incoming briefs or the directives from the incoming Government with respect to the criteria that was used or the ranking system to determine these grants?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Can I take the specifics of that on notice? I only say that because all election commitments that were made, that are now new Government priorities, were tracked through a central system and were effectively allocated to each of the responsible different departments. Ours is no different to, I'm sure, the Office of Sport and many other different departments right across government. Effectively, Mr Farlow, we're given our riding instructions that these are commitments that the new Government has made. It's our responsibility to ensure that the intention of those commitments is fulfilled. With regards to the specifics on what direction was provided or so forth, I'm happy to take those on notice but, effectively, if the Government's made an election commitment to a community and that is clearly tracked through the election commitment processes and then allocated to our agency to deliver, it's our responsibility to make sure that that is delivered and that it demonstrates good value for the taxpayer and so forth.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: you. Mr La Posta, following the election of the Minns Government and your receipt of these priorities, did Multicultural NSW conduct any assessments to ensure that these projects could be completed with the funding allocated from that window?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Excellent question, Mr Farlow. Yes. That's why it's probably taken some of our community organisations a little bit longer than they would like for us to finalise every funding agreement. Every single election commitment that was made has a funding deed and funding agreement, which is a government-issued legal contract and understanding that makes sure that the intention of what the New South Wales Government sought and associated funding parties and respective milestones and so forth are adhered to make sure that we are delivering value for the taxpayer in terms of all of those different election commitments. Our team has been satisfied in terms of all of the election commitments that what was said is what's going to be built and, if it's not built, then there is recourse for us to follow up with each of the respective parties.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, are there any changes to the cost of these projects? If so, will the Government provide additional funding under the fund or will the organisations be left to cover the costs?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's a very good question, Mr Farlow. There's a couple of different ways that each of the programs were administered. The capital projects and the smaller grant projects went through a closed application round in terms of how they were assessed against the criteria and the standard criteria. The capital partnerships are a little bit different because they were commitments made no differently to the 2019 election—

CORRECTED

I know you're familiar with a number of them—like independent aged-care facilities or associated church foundations, or these sorts of things, not-for-profit organisations, to help them deliver really important aged-care services or deliver important refurbishment works to educational assets or community halls, or these sorts of things as well.

With respect to the process that we've run on each of them, at this stage all of them are on budget. But that's not to say, as was the case in 2019, that there may be extenuating circumstances, such as COVID, natural disasters, escalating building costs or capacity to be able to engage contractors—all of those things—that don't have an impact on the election commitments that we're here to fulfil. We'll just continue to work with them, because each of the capital works has milestone payments. I tip my lid to our director of corporate services, Ms Catherine Davies, and her team. Each of them have milestones so, if they start to fall off track, we report that up to the Government and to the Minister and say, "That project's lagging," or, "They're seeking additional funding."

One such project that's a significant one is the Sydney Jewish Museum. I'm really proud of the work of the New South Wales Government in partnering the Holocaust and the Sydney Jewish Museum. They've got a significant quantum of independent funding that they need to generate through the community, and they're going through that work at the moment. How we can help them with that is really important but, equally, that's their independent responsibility to be able to generate that funding. We're finalising those legal agreements. Once they're all in place, we can get on with supporting them and, hopefully, those projects are realised—well, they need to be realised before the end of the 2027 financial year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr La Posta, you talked about independent aged-care facilities. One of those under the program was \$2.5 million provided to the Antiochian church for the completion of an 80-bed facility. Is this facility the same project that the former Government committed \$6 million towards as part of its election commitment?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It is, Mr Farlow.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In the Opposition's PBO costings, it was referenced that organisations receiving funding would be required to sign an MOU with the Government in the delivery of public outreach programs upon completion of these capital works projects. Has that been completed?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We're still working through those at the moment. That's a good example where some of the assets—and we've had this conversation with a number of groups, including, for example, the Melkite Catholic Eparchy in Guildford, where they're looking to—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I know it well.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: You do. I think we've been out there together.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We may have.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The reality is that they're building an educational aspect, a community facility. Part of that community facility isn't exclusive to the Melkite community; it's about supporting a lot of the neighbouring communities that are there. I tip my lid to those established faith communities for doing that work. I draw reference to my own heritage. The Italian community, which were the newcomers in the '50s and '60s, are now incredibly established. I think it's incumbent upon those established communities to help support our new and emerging communities as well, particularly those that are facing disadvantage or finding it harder to get there. That Melkite project is a great example of that. We're still working through a lot of the MOUs for those use agreements, and our intention will be that all of the programs that we partner with do have community and public access as a part of what they're doing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How long will those agreements last for?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I will take the specifics of that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will the Government provide any financial support in order to assist organisations in the delivery of the public outreach programs?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can't speak on behalf of the Government in terms of what it intends to do going forward, but our instructions are pretty clear: deliver on what the commitments are to date.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will these programs be designed by the organisations themselves or by Multicultural NSW?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It'll probably be a co-designed process. We can't put obligations on them that aren't realistic or aren't receptive of what the primary use of those assets will be. But, at the same time, we also

CORRECTED

don't want them to be assets that aren't available on an as-needed basis. Everyone around the table knows that getting access to community facilities and community halls, regardless of whether it's sporting or the local Afghan women's employment group, and maintaining those assets is really important. The more multipurpose assets that we can create, or the more communities that are being supported by current and former governments to then allow those facilities to become available on a three-, six- or eight-hours-a-week basis, is really important.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Multicultural NSW has got a big funding boost in the 2022-23 budget and the 2023-24 budget. If this funding is not continued and renewed by the Government, what will be the impacts on Multicultural NSW and any of the programs that you support?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Significant. That's why it's the Minister's and my number one priority.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has there been an additional financial drain on Multicultural NSW and the agency due to recent tensions in the community and the work of Multicultural NSW in terms of managing that and increasing community cohesion?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: That's a very loaded question. As I always look to my colleagues to the left and the right, we would love more staff at Multicultural NSW but we're very mindful of the current fiscal climate that we're in. So, like everyone, we're trying to do more with the same. As I said to you before, the Minister's and my number one priority in this portfolio, as well as being open and available to all community groups, is to try to shore up our funding—not just to be fixed term funding, as has been the case for my agency for a long period of time, but hopefully ongoing funding.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr La Posta, in terms of COMPLAN, how many times have the members met since October 2023?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Good question. Give me a moment. I'm happy to take that on notice and come back to you in a little bit.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Sure. Resilience NSW was a member of COMPLAN. Has any other agency or representative filled this position?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The membership of COMPLAN at the moment, and I've been in my role now about five years, is probably as impactful and as—it's probably the most serious, I reckon, the Government's ever taken that forum, which is, I think, testament to the recognition and weighting that the Minister and partners such as the Premier's Department and others have put on that forum. As an example, the Secretary of the Premier's Department actually attended one of our recent COMPLAN forums and really set a strong tone for why he thought this forum was very valuable, and we've continued to run those forums on a regular basis. In terms of the exact number, I'm happy to take that on notice, and I am reliably informed that the Reconstruction Authority are now active members, replacing Resilience NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thanks very much for that.

The CHAIR: I might start with some questions before passing to one of my colleagues. Mr La Posta, I want to go to the commitment around the Prevention Panel on Racism and Extremism. Do you have any more detail as to who will be on that panel, what they'll be tasked with and any details in terms of how the estimated cost is going to be spread across that initiative? There are two parts to it. There is the Prevention Panel on Racism and Extremism and then there is a youth network platform as part of that, and the Parliamentary Budget Office said it was going to be around \$43 million for two panels over the cost of the forward estimates.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I wasn't aware of that.

The CHAIR: Any detail of where that \$43 million is going to be spent would be great.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Can we approach this question—I know you ask me lots of these sorts of questions and I say they're not directly under my remit, like the community languages schools. I intersect with it, I provide advocacy for it, but it's not directly under my remit and the good news is the person who is responsible for it is the Premier, and it's led by the Premier's Department and he's in estimates tomorrow. So, around the Premier's panel on hate and extremism, it is an initiative led and chaired by the Premier's Department. Multicultural NSW is a member of that panel. A number of different government departments sit as part of that as well.

The group has met now, I believe, twice to date. Obviously, a considerable focus of that group has been on community tensions in light of the 7 October attacks and the subsequent tensions between Israel and Gaza, and in that region of the world. In terms of how that group is funded and so forth, again, it's not a question for us; it's a question for the Premier. In terms of the Multicultural Youth Network, that is under our remit. I wasn't aware of any costings from the Parliamentary Budget Office and none have been provided by my agency. But we did—

CORRECTED

The CHAIR: It seems the combined cost of the prevention panel and the youth network is \$43 million—is how I'm reading it. It is combined between those two.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'd love a bit of that \$43 million, but that's not—

The CHAIR: I'm sure you would.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: At the moment, the Multicultural Youth Network, which is our responsibility, is focused on how to create—this will be no surprise to anyone—how to get better at engaging young voices to help us co-design better community engagement policies, solutions, responses as a government. We have just closed our expression of interest process. I believe there were over 25 young people who sought to apply to be a part of that Multicultural Youth Network and we'll go through the process in the coming weeks of vetting those people, assessing those people and then trying to help embed them into our regional community networks. And, Mr Fang, before you jump in, yes, there is one in the Riverina area and Wagga and that part of the world—

The Hon. WES FANG: Hear, hear!

JOSEPH LA POSTA: —and we'll have them right throughout regional New South Wales, where we're trying, Chair, through you, to bring in the voice of the young people in each of the different regions to make sure that we're not missing that perspective as a government and as an agency.

The CHAIR: Sure. Can I go to another announcement that the Minister made in conjunction with the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs and Treaty regarding the Aboriginal Business Advisory Initiative? Does Multicultural NSW provide any similar or like support for businesses that are being potentially owned or started up by people of a different cultural background?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: With respect to engaging small business, we have some very capable colleagues here. That is their DNA. As you and I and others in the room know, the percentage of new businesses that are started up by migrants is disproportionately higher than those that aren't migrants. And that's even higher again when you look at our refugee cohorts in terms of setting up small business.

The CHAIR: To pick up on what you said about your own heritage and how the Italians and maybe the Greeks—when they came in the 1940s and '50s—did a lot of heavy lifting in terms of setting up those businesses, working in industry and they did a lot of that without support. But obviously there is still that need for multicultural business support. I'm just wondering where that's coming from.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Ms Gibbens will probably be able to help, because we do lots of work together.

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The Service NSW Business Bureau was established in October by the Government. It is an organisation that builds on the work that Service for Business was doing. It provides a number of different services for small businesses across New South Wales, including those for multicultural businesses. We know that one in four small business owners speak in a language other than English at home, so we know this is a really important cohort for us to invest in and look after. The bureau itself has a number of different supports. It's got free online language translations and, with over 50 different languages on our website, it's got a number of different newsletters are translated in multiple languages. It has Business Connect, which is a program of work offering specialised advice with advisers speaking many different languages and being able to help give tailored advice on specific topics such as marketing, inventory, bookkeeping and lots of different services and specialised areas that small businesses need support in. They may not be able to afford that, and the Business Connect program will provide that free of charge for them.

The CHAIR: How do you track engagement with those support services? Do you have a mechanism that you are—

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: These are contracted providers, so they have KPIs they have to meet. Overall, we've got a customer satisfaction for this service of 96 per cent. So these customers would recommend the service and have followed up and utilised the services and advice provided.

The CHAIR: Just back to you, Mr La Posta, about Harmony Dinner.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The CHAIR: Full disclosure, I have paid for a ticket. I'm not one of those free-loading politicians that get a freebie. I have just had concerns represented to me from community members about the costs and how it is out of reach for some of these smaller community organisations. I note there are corporate packages and other sponsorships. Is any thought being given to how we involve some of those smaller groups in this event?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Love it. Two things: One, there was a moment on our website when we communicated—and this is just for complete transparency, if anyone's made representations to anyone around the

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table—corporate packages of tables are still available. The minute that I was made aware of that by one of our community organisations, we took that down and made more community tables available. It is the largest multicultural dinner in the country, which is something that New South Wales should be incredibly proud of, that we and the Premier and the Minister play host to that.

In terms of the event itself, for those that are involved in any events, you'll know that event running and management costs have escalated considerably in the last four to five years. It costs us roughly—and, again, this is just being completely transparent with you—\$400 a seat to sit each of the community members on there through the sponsorship of people like Cassandra, the Business Bureau, DCJ, the Commonwealth Bank, and Settlement Services International. I could go on and on. We have received over \$205,000 of commercial support for that event. Every single dollar that is put in by those commercial partners goes to offsetting the cost of that dinner. The cheapest ticket around the table is about \$100 that we sell to our community language schools. Our community tables are \$125 a seat, and our corporate tables offset those community things. Would I love to make them free? Absolutely. Would I love there to be less comps for some of our politicians right across the board so that we can have more community people? Yes, absolutely. But it's also a balance in terms of having the right level of political leadership and others sitting around the table with our community groups.

The Hon. WES FANG: Tell Kamper to buy his own ticket.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It costs us roughly \$400, and we offset that by charging somewhere between \$100 and \$125 a ticket to community groups.

The CHAIR: Not that it's always about making a profit, but are we at least breaking even or are we running at a loss?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: This is part of, as Mr Farlow asked before, around our budget position going forward. There is a small investment that the Government needs to make. My aspiration is that we continue to deliver commercial support so that it's cost neutral, but it's a very modest cost after ticket sales, corporate sponsorship and those sorts of things.

The CHAIR: On notice, could you give perhaps an indication as to what that cost is approximately?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes, and my team will be very proud because—I love telling everyone it's cost neutral, and I've owned the fact that, this year, it's slightly below, and that's again, if you look at venue hire costs and food-and-beverage costs—

The CHAIR: Everything's gone up.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. We're doing our best. But, yes, I'll take it on notice.

The CHAIR: Thank you, Mr La Posta. I might pass over to a crossbencher. We'll start with Dr Cohn.

Dr AMANDA COHN: I'll come back to Ms Jones, given you were answering all the questions I put to the Minister this morning anyway. Coming back to the Level the Playing Field program, which, on the one hand, I'm pleased to hear was oversubscribed, because there's obviously plenty of organisations doing equity and inclusion work, what are the plans for that program moving forward? Is there going to be further funding?

KAREN JONES: That's actually a decision for the Government. It is definitely something that, as an agency, we will be looking for, particularly as our new women's sports strategy is developed.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thanks. I'm also interested to know if there's a pathway for community organisations to access facility upgrades for universal design, noting that gender-diverse athletes are most commonly getting changed in their car because they can't access gender-neutral or universal facilities.

KAREN JONES: The Office of Sport has a number of grant programs, which I would encourage those organisations to have a look at, and details of those grant programs are available on our website. The most relevant would be the Level the Playing Field grant program, but there are others that do allow for perhaps smaller levels of investment but not specifically targeting universal design.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Is it correct, for the Level the Playing Field, that a government authority such as a council is required to make a co-contribution?

KAREN JONES: Correct. Under the Level the Playing Field grant guidelines, if you're a council, then, yes, you are required to make a co-contribution. But, if you're a sporting club, that requirement for a co-contribution was not there.

Dr AMANDA COHN: My other questions are coming back to the Organisation Support Program, which we also touched on briefly this morning. You talked about some of the milestones that organisations are

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now being measured against. What are the consequences for failing to meet those the milestones? How are they tracking?

KAREN JONES: Recourse will go to their funding. They have a funding allocation every year. And, if they are unable to achieve the requirements and to fully acquit the funds in accordance with their funding agreement, then the recourse is their funding is at risk. Important to note, though, the Organisation Support Program, like I mentioned in this morning's section, is \$5 million for this year, and then it increases to \$10 million next year. With that will come a program redesign around some of those accountability measures and also allowing for sports to go up or down the scale in terms of how much they actually receive, which doesn't exist at the moment, but we're doing that redesign in consultation with the sports sector. I just want to put that on the record, as well.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thank you. Since the last estimates session, how have those organisations been doing? How are they tracking?

KAREN JONES: The program only opened just after our last budget estimates session and has only just closed. Those organisations now that are entering into those funding agreements—we look forward to their deliverables over the course of the next few months.

Dr AMANDA COHN: Thank you. I will look forward to asking about it next time. In terms of those plans for equity, do you take into account any public-facing inclusion statements as well as the internal work that the organisations are doing?

KAREN JONES: Absolutely. Anything that they've done, public facing, will also contribute to, and I encourage organisations that are prepared to make commitments around equality, that they also make those commitments public and be held accountable to those statements. Absolutely agree with you there. The importance of those plans, though, is to make sure that they are quite workable and achievable, and so again we will work with sporting organisations to make sure that whatever they're putting in terms of equal access is something that they can deliver and does actually achieve the broader government objective, which is to ensure that women and girls have fair access to play their sport.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Can we just go back to the land audit work that's happening. Actually, Mr Walker, can I just ask you something that you said, if you could elaborate on, that you answered earlier, about the department's understanding or view on the difference between social and public housing?

You expressed that there is no difference.

LEON WALKER: It would be interesting to get the secretary's view as well. From my perspective, social housing and public housing are one and the same thing, but it's not my particular field of expertise so I'm happy to be corrected.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We generally define housing under three categories. There is market housing, there is affordable housing, which is basically the 30 per cent discounted rate, and then there is social housing, which is public housing.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So it matters not then, from that perspective, who is managing or dealing with that public housing?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: The Land and Housing Corporation, now Homes NSW, are responsible for social housing. The affordable housing piece is the slightly more complex one. That's delivered by community housing providers, yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I see. It is interesting because I don't necessarily think the sector sees it quite like that—the idea that public housing is public housing managed by the public housing providers as opposed to private social housing providers.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Managed by the State, yes. That doesn't mean that the community housing providers may not be providing a residence or dwelling for somebody who could be in the social housing environment. Without getting into the depths of something that really is a Minister Scully or Minister Jackson question, there is the tenant mix and then there is the provider mix, and there can be some overlap between the two. So a CHP may have properties that they manage through community housing that are made available to social housing tenants. Does that help to explain the complexity?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes. I just wonder, though, from this department, this agency and Lands, whether culturally those definitions mean—clearly they don't mean anything, or there is a merging of those meanings of public housing administered by the State and housing that is administered for the purpose of social

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housing by private social housing providers. In terms of the land audit and making land available, I'm just curious that there is no difference.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: The distinction at the moment—sorry, Leon, I'm stealing your thunder.

LEON WALKER: You're doing a good job.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: The Government's commitment is 30 per cent social and affordable housing on government-owned land. There is a whole raft of other housing affordability measures through the planning system, but we can take those up with Minister Scully. In relation to that 30 per cent, ultimately government will decide what that tenure mix is. I would say, without pre-empting a decision that would be made by a range of different Ministers, the tenant mix would be different depending on the location and the need. You would look to probably increase the number of social housing places in an area where there was a significant waitlist.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm curious, though, about how this is feeding into the land audit—or it doesn't.

LEON WALKER: No, it does. There is a very tight link. The governance framework that we discussed last estimates and touched on today, the land audit working group that's been discussed, has representatives of Landcom, LAHC—now Homes NSW—and Aboriginal Housing Office on it. They really have first dibs on the properties that come through the land audit, so if they express an interest in the property, they've got first right of refusal.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: To simplify it, there will be parcels of land that are much more suitable for AHO development because there are particular community relationships there. There will be parcels of land that, for instance, are better suited to Landcom because they're already in a development phase in that particular area. As Leon said, part of that land audit working group is to work with those particular government-owned property developers to determine which parcels of land. Ultimately, it's a decision that is outside of our hands; it's a decision made by government—which goes where. But part of the information that LAWG—a terrible acronym—provides is advice on what the agencies are saying. Homes NSW might say, "This one is terrific for us. We've got a really big waiting list." AHO might say, "This is a regional community, a significant Aboriginal community. It would be really beneficial." We will provide that information as part of the dataset the Government will consider.

LEON WALKER: I can't disclose the location, but we've actually had examples where Landcom, and now Homes NSW, are looking to have sites beside one another because—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That works for tenants.

LEON WALKER: —it's a different tenant mix that's set aside.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: How many sites have now been identified and recommended for housing?

LEON WALKER: I can't go into too much detail because it's Cabinet in confidence. I can say that we've reviewed 4,300 lots to date.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Are you at liberty to say how many have actually been identified and recommended to that group?

LEON WALKER: We have got over 300 that are going through to that further detail, due diligence— as I said earlier, there's a lot of sites that, because of their zoning or particular attributes, are just not suitable for residential use.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: At the moment, out of those 4,300, 300 have gone to that next step. Thank you.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'm going to continue on the land audit as well, so we'll have a little bit of flow, at least, on this one.

LEON WALKER: Sorry, can I just correct something I said this morning because it wasn't clear? There are eight to 10 regional locations that are being focused on in the land audit. Apparently it wasn't clear in what I said this morning.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Mr Walker. For clarification, I had taken down in my notes this morning, in terms of the sites that have been assessed, that there were 3,500. I'm just checking the figures. It's 4,300?

LEON WALKER: I think I misstated. You gave a specific point in time. That amount was for the point in time.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That's as of Valentine's Day. You know, Mr Farlow, I always like to get something interesting on the record for you.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Eight hundred since Valentine's Day. Love was obviously in the air when it came to the land audit.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Love was in the air at DPHI.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of that part of the audit, in the last estimates it was said—and I think we've had it restated today—that the audit is ongoing and no decisions have been made about individual government-owned sites. When is it envisaged that the audit will progress to the next stage of finalisation? I know there's no final finalisation, but for that tranche of 300 that have proceeded to due diligence, when do we expect that to progress?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Ultimately, that would be a question for the Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I don't think he would've been able to answer it this morning. From the due diligence, what is the next stage of the land audit? Those 300 properties, they go through due diligence. Is it—

LEON WALKER: We get an approval from the Government and then, subject to the recommendation, the land is transferred to the relevant entity to develop, or whatever other action is determined.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the audit and the ongoing nature of it, is it viewed that it will always be ongoing and that the audit will continue?

LEON WALKER: It's subject to funding. The program is currently funded through to the end of this financial year, and there's a funding bid in for next financial year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the assessment of the land as part of the land use audit, and now there's 4,300 that have been assessed, are all of those assessed as suitable for the use of housing?

LEON WALKER: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What other uses are they assessed as being suitable for?

LEON WALKER: It's everything. If a lot is assessed and it's heavily forested, we wouldn't propose to knock down all the trees and develop it for housing. Some are suitable for open space; some are suitable for commercial uses. It's a wide range.

MELANIE HAWYES: Can I add as well that there's also a temporal aspect here. There might be a parcel of land that could be, in the future, suitable for residential development, but one of the criteria we look at is what is the current zoning and is there, for example, contamination? Just because something doesn't make it through this first flush—we're looking for things that can be brought into the housing mix sooner rather than later.

LEON WALKER: It's a really extensive process. If a site is bushfire affected or flood affected, there's a whole range of factors. We're deliberately not wasting taxpayer money by putting forward sites that realistically are never going to be suitable for housing development or safe to live on if they were developed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Of those 4,300, how many have been determined as suitable for housing at this stage?

LEON WALKER: That was the comment earlier.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Three hundred.

LEON WALKER: It's over 300 at the moment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So that's the—

LEON WALKER: I should clarify that comment. Over 300 have gone through the next stage of more detailed due diligence, which includes looking at issues like contamination, more detailed—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Biodiversity, residual zoning.

LEON WALKER: Planning assessments and a whole range of things.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Effectively, from that assessment, 4,300 have been assessed; 300 have been deemed to be suitable for that next stage of due diligence.

LEON WALKER: Yes.

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The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The other 4,000 are no longer to be considered as part of the audit; is that correct?

LEON WALKER: Well, no. What this is assisting to do is identify sites that are also under-utilised or unused or surplus to requirements. A process that had been established under the former Government as well is, I guess you could call it, within government it's sort of like a classifieds process where we make it known to other government agencies that land is available or suitable for other uses.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: For instance, a school could go on the site or, as you indicated before, Ms Fishburn, a park?

LEON WALKER: Correct. Exactly right.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Yes.

LEON WALKER: You've touched on another important element here. It's not just about putting more housing out there. For housing you need parks, you need open space, you need hospitals, schools, so it's a great opportunity to look at land that can be made available for those uses as well.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of that next stage and past due diligence and the like and a Cabinet determination, is it intended that there'll be community consultation that will take part on that site?

LEON WALKER: If a property goes through to the next phase, it would be the usual approvals process from a statutory—I can't say the word—perspective.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We all stumble, especially with defibrillators.

LEON WALKER: If it was an as-of-rights use and it just needed council approval for a single dwelling, that would be a relatively straightforward process. If it was a site that has medium- or high-density use and needs to go through a more involved process, yes, there would definitely be community consultation.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: As per the EP&A Act.

LEON WALKER: That's right.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of this and the development of the land, we had the question to the Minister before in terms of the potential. A decision hasn't been made in terms of the potential private sale of that land for development. Is there any investigation which has been undertaken in terms of alternative uses—for instance, that the Government would hold the land on a 99-year lease or the like and have a private developer? Has there been any assessment on that?

LEON WALKER: No. That would be unique to the specific site, but there hasn't been any determinations at this time.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the land audit as well and making use of the land, what government delivery agencies for housing and other infrastructure are consulted as part of this process?

LEON WALKER: It's absolutely subject to the site. It depends who the government landowner is. This is not done independent of them, obviously. Then there's two whole-of-government committees that assist us with this process. There's the LAWG that's been referred to that has the housing delivery agencies.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So that's Landcom, now Homes NSW.

LEON WALKER: Yes, for the Land and Housing Corporation and Aboriginal Housing Office. I think it has the Cabinet Office and Treasury on there as well, but let me take that on notice and I'll confirm. There's also a group called—and it needs a better name—Property, Strategy, Collaboration Committee.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: It does, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: PSCC?

LEON WALKER: That's what it gets called.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I don't think Minister Jackson was happy with the LAWG either, if I remember from the last estimates.

LEON WALKER: That committee has much broader representation. That includes Health, Education, Communities and Justice. So there's a very wide oversight of properties generally that are passing through this process and the ability for them to—particularly if a site is identified as not being suitable for residential but might be available for another use, that gives them full transparency of those sites.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When it comes to the engagement with government agencies, you've got the big beasts, so to speak, when it comes to Health, Education and the like. Are there any recalcitrant agencies, so to speak? Have you had good cooperation from all agencies with respect to the audit?

LEON WALKER: I guess what has been—I don't know the right way to put it but, previously, government policies in this general space have only been relevant to general government agencies and so State-owned corporations have been excluded from government policies in regard to land use. Under the Premier's directive last year, SOCs and PTEs are required to participate in this process.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And they've all been cooperative in that participation?

LEON WALKER: I'd say we've gone through a learning process, but they've been generally cooperative.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's very diplomatic of you, Mr Walker. In terms of that 300 that you've identified for due diligence, are there any that come from a SOC at present?

LEON WALKER: I'd have to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You can take that on notice; that's fine. In terms of the 30 per cent affordable housing requirement, is that envisaged to be on every site or across the whole program?

LEON WALKER: That's a question for Minister Jackson.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have you assessed lots just for the provision of housing on the site or have you assessed them to support housing in neighbouring areas as well? For instance, back to that park example or the like, have you assessed that maybe you couldn't put housing on that site, but you could put a park and that would then open other areas for housing, or potentially that that site could provide an access road for a development or the like? Have you made those assessments too?

LEON WALKER: Yes. It's not the primary consideration, but what this process has been very effective at doing is—it's enlightening in terms of identifying government sites and what they could potentially be used for in case of need.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of the engagement so far, has there been engagement with local councils around the land audit as well?

LEON WALKER: We're not at that stage yet, no.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I stress, though, Mr Walker, because I obviously speak to the local councils all the time, local councils have indicated a willingness to put their own land through a similar process and it's some of the work that Office of Local Government are doing, and we'll obviously make available our metrics that we use and our information that goes into our Land iQ to any council that wishes to do it. We're very keen to see local government be provided with the same type of intel.

LEON WALKER: Yes, it's a very good point that you raise. Part of what has been developed was actually being done just in advance of this process being initiated, but it was well timed because it's been incredibly important in terms of the volume of properties that we have to assess quite quickly. The Land iQ tool, which really just draws on information on land from a wide range of government databases, that's being made available progressively to councils so that they can run their own land through that tool and assist them with their land use decisions as well.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: They've been very appreciative of that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I'll go on to a few questions on Land iQ. What uses does Land iQ have in the department to help ease the housing crisis?

LEON WALKER: As I say, it's a land use tool, so if we have a site that is surplus to Education, that's the tool we use to undertake an assessment of the lot to determine whether it's flood prone, bushfire prone, what the planning controls are relevant to the site—a whole range of things. It really accelerates the process. Something that might have taken us six or eight weeks to do quite manually, previously, we can—I don't know the exact time frame, but we can do in a day or so for a lot now.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When was Land iQ first used by the department?

LEON WALKER: I think we launched it—it wouldn't have been last financial year but the year before. I can confirm that.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, if you can take that on notice. When did the department first investigate using Land iQ for this process?

LEON WALKER: It was just—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: A given from the beginning?

LEON WALKER: Yes, just a given.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to "for the first time, this takes full advantage of the Government's own data", what data does Land iQ use and what's the amalgamation of data that you are feeding into the program?

LEON WALKER: I'll take it on notice. I can describe the types of things but let me provide you a list on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the land audit data, where is that information being held and what sort of program are you using to compile that data and the results?

LEON WALKER: That's another technical question, but I'll take it on notice. It is being drawn from other government databases, so Planning. There is a whole range of government—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Obviously it uses the cadastre as a starting point.

LEON WALKER: Yes, it's a spatially enabled tool. It starts from there and then draws on information from Environment, Heritage, Planning. It's a whole range of sources.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the LAWG, following the changes to the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure—congratulations—and the establishment of Homes NSW—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Thank you. We're very proud of our new child.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: —has that changed the composition of the grouping at all?

LEON WALKER: Yes. Let me confirm for the record. The LAWG has members from Treasury, Cabinet Office, Property and Development NSW, Land and Housing Corporation—which is now Homes NSW—Landcom and Department of Planning.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have any recommendations been submitted to the governance committees of the LAWG for funding approval to transfer land to delivery agencies?

LEON WALKER: To be clear, the governance committees are just dealing with the recommendation to transfer and the proposed use. The decision about funding is a matter for the Government.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The 2023 year in review report stated Property and Development NSW is leading the government property framework policy reform to increase the adaptive re-use of surplus government property. That is the land audit, I take it.

LEON WALKER: That and other projects. I'm happy to elaborate on other things we're working on. Another good example is Property and Development NSW, Department of Communities and Justice, and others own a number of heritage-listed assets across the Sydney CBD and the State more generally. The City of Sydney has a scheme called the heritage floor space scheme. If we haven't finalised, we're just about to finalise a business case to take advantage of that scheme to do capital works to those buildings so that they're brought back to a standard that enables us to apply for those heritage floor space rights.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is that a transferable FSR scheme?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you, effectively, transfer the FSR rights and get a payment for it.

LEON WALKER: Yes. They're precious State assets. There's no reasonable prospect that we're going to build a glass tower over the top of them, but they're being under-utilised because of their condition. This scheme provides a basis to secure future revenue so that we can maintain them in the condition that they should be.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: In terms of this surplus government property and the adaptive re-use, have any of these properties been considered as part of the land audit, for housing in particular?

LEON WALKER: Those wouldn't be suitable. If I was to draw on another example, we also have a number of sites subject to contamination. A good one to draw on an example is Waratah, the former gasworks in a suburb of Newcastle. As was done in the past, they've built residential houses over the top of a former gasworks.

CORRECTED

Someone put a shovel in the ground one day and it disappeared down a former gas well, I understand. We've gone in there, effectively, in the last-resort capacity. We're remediating the site and then making that site available again for housing in the future.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. Going to the Hunter, actually, in this regard—and I think this is more for Ms Hawyes than it is for you, Mr Walker—Crown Lands is the owner of historical Walka Water Works, which has been largely fenced off over the last 18 months due to asbestos contamination, including the southern lawn, which is a play area for families. How much money has the New South Wales Government allocated towards the decontamination of the south lawn of Walka Water Works?

MELANIE HAWYES: Thank you. Just bear with me. We have collectively committed several hundred thousand. It's being done in stages, and I'll probably take on notice each stage to give you the full projection. Crown Lands has provided a letter of support confirming \$1.5 million in funding and co-contribution for these works, and that includes \$835,000 in the last financial year, with \$665,000 provided this financial year. But there are further projections out to completely remediate the site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When do you expect that to be completed?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't have a date for now because, as we go along, it can become more complex in terms of the remediation and the works that are required. But I can take on notice the current sort of thinking as to the tranches of work we're contemplating.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: There have been concerns from the community that this has taken longer in a regional area such as Maitland than it would if it was a metropolitan area. Does the department have any view in terms of why it's taken so long to undertake these works?

MELANIE HAWYES: I would be interested in knowing the source of that concern because when this was raised with us, from my perspective, we moved quite quickly to be able to contribute to the clean-up. So it would be helpful to understand the source of that concern. I do reject the notion that it makes a difference what your location is. We do our best to respond to contamination where there is a serious risk. I will probably leave it at that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to Old Maitland Hospital, what's the progress in terms of the preparations of that site?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'd probably need to take that on notice. I think that's actually not in the Walka remit.

LEON WALKER: That property continues to sit with the local health district and the Ministry of Health, so that question would actually have to be directed to the health Minister.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That doesn't fall under Crown Lands with the Old Maitland Hospital?

LEON WALKER: No, the actual—I think there was an incorrect comment made in the public domain up there. I think what they're referring to is the former hospital itself. It's obviously quite a substantial health campus, and that sits with Health.

MELANIE HAWYES: I should add, for completeness, that the council is undertaking a plan of management and conservation plan for the whole site.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The Walka Water Works site?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, so we are working with them in that regard and, as I say, we have contributed funding for the first stage of the clean-up.

The CHAIR: I'll throw to Ms Hurst.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might start with a few questions to Mr La Posta, if that's okay. I have a couple of questions about the \$15 million safe places for faith community grants. There's been some concern and confusion from certain groups as to why only \$5 million of the funding has been made available in this first funding round as opposed to the whole \$15 million. I am just wondering if you can explain why that decision was made?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The \$15 million was a commitment over four years, not \$15 million a year. There was a little bit of confusion around that, but I think we cleared that up in the press release by the now Government. When they made the announcement it was pretty clear that it was \$15 million for the length of their term. With respect—I think Mr Farlow asked before—we were able to increase the amount in the first year from \$3 million to \$5 million, so that is the amount of money that we have available. But, as I said to Mr Farlow before,

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we have received overwhelming interest—266 applications made and over \$18 million. So we will be looking—at least open dialogue with the Minister to see if there's any further funding from that \$15 million that we can bring forward to this year.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: How will you prioritise those applications? Has that been thought through yet?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes. Because it's a new grant and it's sort of the first of its kind in how it's currently being administered, we're relying heavily on the expertise and advice of the Public Works department, the New South Wales police, Premier's department and we're inviting the Cabinet Office to be involved as well. So it's a holistic decision-making process that we—as well-meaning public servants in Multicultural NSW, we've got no idea about the level of intensity the structure of the bollard needs to be to ensure that a public space is safe in front of a church or a mosque or whatever. Hence why we're involving that subject-matter expertise from across government to make a holistic decision-making process. We've set up the grant guidelines. It's now—expressions of interest have closed and we'll start the assessment process herein.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I note that the Anti-Discrimination Amendment (Religious Vilification) Act came into effect in November 2023, which prohibits vilification on the grounds of religious belief, affiliation or activity. Has the department received any complaints about religious vilification that have been referred to the New South Wales police since the law commenced?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: One of the challenges that we have is—and I think someone was asking this question in a roundabout way—how do different cultures appreciate the nuances of the language of government. One of the challenges we have is trying to educate and inform community around what different mechanisms exist to be able to report racism, discrimination, hate—any of these different sort of forms, of which I condemn all of them. We have no place for any of those abhorrent behaviours or conducts in such a thriving multicultural society. But, with regards to the Anti-Discrimination Act, it's limited to where it can be applied, whereas what we are looking at, at the moment—and I commend the work of the Premier and the Government around reviewing section 93Z, which is our race hate laws, to look at how we can make sure that the intention of that law enables more successful prosecutions against that at the moment.

One of the challenges with 93Z has been the threshold to ensure a successful charge against 93Z under the DPP, but then also to ensure that those charges are upheld. There have been reforms to the Anti-Discrimination Act that we think are good and that a number of our faith leaders have commended. There is the ongoing review from former Justice Bathurst and the Law Reform Commission about 93Z. I guess it's our role to make sure that the education that goes out to community about which is the right lever to pull at the right time and who to contact is effective. One of the things that our agency isn't, which your question touches on a little bit—we are not a reporting agency. Anecdotally we will hear feedback from the community of tensions that exist or instances where they feel they've been discriminated against or been a target of hate, and it's then our obligation to connect them to the right part of government to be able to report that. Does that answer your question?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes, I think so. Multicultural NSW will have an educational role in the implementation of that new law. That's your involvement in that?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: And working really closely with the anti-discrimination commission on exactly that as well. I tip my hat to that team. They're getting better and better at working with us, and vice versa. Our team is getting better at working with them around the engagements in terms of any changes to legislation or reform and the best people to have sitting around the table from a community leadership point of view to help inform government, but then, equally, once the new legislation or policies or whatever are implemented, how we can empower the community with that information to disseminate that. Someone asked me before about the membership of our COMPLAN committee. That includes the Premier's Department, the Department of Education, Health, Anti-Discrimination NSW, the New South Wales police, the Reconstruction Authority, Local Government NSW—and Kiersten touched earlier on the important role that they play—the Department of Communities and Justice and, obviously, MNSW. So if there are any changes to the Anti-Discrimination Act or section 93Z, we'd be empowering all of those different players to make sure that they're aware and can work with the community.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I also have some questions about the GROW part. Is that also to you, Mr La Posta?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: What kind of work have people been able to secure in the Murray and Riverina regions as part of this program?

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JOSEPH LA POSTA: I've had to check my bias a little bit. I thought this would have been more people leaving Western Sydney. The essence of GROW, for those who aren't aware—it's Growing Regions of Welcome, the acronym being GROW. It's a bit better than the acronym I heard earlier. That's all right; it's not competitive. But it's effectively about getting these regional communities to be welcoming towns, welcoming cities and welcoming regions for these new refugees that are experiencing what we call resettlement. They will settle in Fairfield, Liverpool, Cumberland or wherever, and then they'll find that, yes, it's great to have their network, their community, their language and the shops, but employment is really tricky.

What we've been doing is working with Wagga, Leeton, Griffith, Walla Walla and Albury to help them be as best prepared as they can for supporting these new refugees to help them settle into these regional areas. Obviously housing is a key consideration, and education. I thought you would see a larger influx of primary manufacturing and agriculture, but we have actually seen, really pleasingly, doctors and lawyers—those sorts of really professional practitioners. I think we're now up to 25 individuals and their families that have moved from the city into that regional area. Again, it's not about the total number of people; it's more around setting up a pilot to take some learnings to then inform the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Commonwealth Government and the millions of dollars that the State Government invests in trying to support our refugee communities settle.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Given that this was originally a three-year pilot, I assume it's coming to an end in June 2024?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: What are the plans in terms of the future of this program? Will there be an evaluation? Will it be extended?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: We are evaluating the program. It coincides with the completion of the contract of our coordinator general of settlement, Professor Peter Shergold. He is away at the moment. My intention is to have discussions with him about continuing in that role—fingers crossed—and also what we will be looking at once the evaluation is completed, and then working with other parts of government to inform them of what the findings of that pilot have been to either shift their existing funding models, or it will be a part of our NSW Settlement Strategy that the Minister has endorsed to help get the New South Wales Government more focused on doing more in this space.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: How much funding has the pilot program received since June 2021?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It was \$3 million, very kindly, from Training Services NSW. There would be a significant amount of in-kind labour from our team as well that would sit on top of that. I can take the exact specifics, but roughly about a \$3 million pilot.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Will there be consideration around expanding the program to new regional locations, given any kind of evaluation and what comes out of that?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Ms Hurst, I feel like you've been in the room with me. My hope was that we would go hand in glove with the Commonwealth Government on this. It is a great opportunity for State and Commonwealth to partner. The former Commonwealth Government had some pretty ambitious targets—around 50 per cent in regional areas and 50 per cent in metro areas. There were some challenges around how strategically they were going to do that. By just moving people to regional areas doesn't mean it's successful. Our hope was to do four pilot locations: two in northern and north-western New South Wales and two in southern and south-western New South Wales.

Once we have the pilot and we have done the evaluation, that will hopefully inform that. If we're moving people to regional areas and we're focusing on refugees, they are probably the hardest people to settle. So it will inevitably help any migrant that is looking to settle into a regional area because those townships will be hopefully more welcoming, and more supportive and understanding of the needs—the social and physical infrastructure—to make that settlement journey as successful as possible.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might try to squeeze one question in to Mr McLachlan, which will be very simple and we'll talk more later. But at the last estimates hearing in October you indicated that new contracts would be put in place with enhanced privacy provisions and that they would be in place in early January. I am wondering if those contracts have been put in place.

STEWART McLACHLAN: You can definitely squeeze that in, Ms Hurst. Yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you.

CORRECTED

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Heading back to the land audit stuff, you've got Land iQ and all these tools, but how are you storing the data? Is it per property in terms of its suitability and having run it through the matrix, or is it stored across various platforms?

LEON WALKER: The source information resides in the home platforms, the Land iQ tool just pulls it from that source. I will take it on notice and give you a more fulsome answer if you would like. But when they do the analysis of property, that obviously generates its own report.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Literally per property, all those things will be compiled there?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And that builds as more information comes about that particular lot within the DP or wherever it is?

LEON WALKER: Yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Just going back to the eTendering portal, does anybody here have any oversight of the eTendering portal?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Obviously, I have full oversight in my own department, but I could not answer a single question on it, I'm afraid. I would have to take it on notice.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Okay, if you could. My understanding is that there are no current or active tenders at the moment—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: For what?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Tenders for any particular projects through the eTendering portal. I am looking to know whether there are any plans, tenders or expressions of interest through that eTender portal, and whether there is any process or any ambition for any greater transparency around that, or is it a defunct function?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We follow all our reporting requirements for tenders, which I believe is over 50,000. I am just looking at my other colleagues. Greg has it. We publish all of those, as we are required to do so.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: In terms of any acquisitions that the agency might have—

LEON WALKER: Are you saying property acquisitions?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes.

LEON WALKER: Again, we will take it on notice, but if it meets the requirements under New South Wales Government procurement guidelines it would have to be disclosed. But that might not be us. If it is Health, for example, buying properties for new ambulance stations, they would be the ones reporting, not Property and Development NSW.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: As far as I could see just looking, I can't see any current or active acquisitions. Is that your understanding?

LEON WALKER: Yes. We don't acquire a lot of property. We deal with the property that we've got because, as I've said, we are a fairly substantial landowner already.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I take that one on notice? We might want to return to that in Mr Scully's session as the Minister responsible for the Office of Strategic Lands, which is the main land purchaser for the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We'll take that on notice and return at that particular session, if that's useful.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes. Thank you. Other than the threatened ecological communities, what other assessment criteria in the environment group has been activated for the purpose of the audit?

LEON WALKER: Can I take that on notice?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Sure. Out of the 4,300 properties, how many of the assessed lots failed to get to the 300 due to concerns about the environment? Is that something—

LEON WALKER: I'd have to take that on notice as well.

CORRECTED

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: All right. Thank you. On that, I've got a few questions in that stream looking for specific answers. One is: How many sites had greater than 50 per cent of those threatened ecological communities by area? Is that something you could take on notice too?

LEON WALKER: We'll take it on notice.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We'd have to take that on notice. It's a multi-criteria assessment process.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Hence why I was asking about the data and how all of this is being stored.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I understand. Obviously, you would be looking—the residual zoning would have a material impact, particularly in relationship to biodiversity and conservation. We can take that on notice. I just suspect the answer is not as simple as 50 of them were knocked out.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So the difficulty I see with that—and I understand what you're saying, and I appreciate that—we've got areas all over the place that have chosen not to zone lands as a bit counterintuitive, as one would have thought. You'd sort of go, "Oh, that's threatened ecological communities. Therefore, they would be zoned conservation." But they're not because there's been a decision.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: No. There is a significant portion of unzoned land. Correct.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes. Okay. I have just got a bunch of those questions. Perhaps I can submit those as supplementaries.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I think we'd need to mine into the data a bit to answer them, so we'd just have to take them on notice for the purposes of today. If you wish to submit them, we're happy to come back as supplementary questions.

LEON WALKER: Yes, because—at the risk of boring you with too much detail—essentially the process comes up with a scoring system and if something had the particular issue that you're talking to, which came as a score that knocked it out, we might have to actually go back to each individual property to determine if the reason it got knocked out was because of that issue. The primary way we just determine if it goes through to the next phase is because of the overall score.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes. So it gets to a threshold point and then it jumps out of your system.

LEON WALKER: Yes. If it's below five out of 10, you go, "Well, that's not—"

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is your understanding then—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Sorry, can I answer? We've just got the exact environmental criteria for the audit.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: It included flood, bushfire, biodiversity, exclusionary zoning—so I suspect that would have knocked out a lot of the ones you're talking about, as Leon said already—national parks, then also environmental conservation, land and forestry land excluded, acid sulphate soils, contamination— asbestos obviously being the primary one that we've been talking about today—and then threatened ecological communities. So they were all the considerations that came into play.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you. On that, are we using—is it fair to say we're using—existing mapping, some of which could be very, very old, or existing datasets?

LEON WALKER: That's correct. We rely on information that's available in the government databases.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: If I could add as well, obviously we're talking about the initial stage of a process. Any parcel of land, if it was deemed appropriate to go to the next stage or even the next stage again, still would be required to go through all the assessment that any other land development would have, and that includes looking at any potential biodiversity issues. There is always that safeguard in the system that is the assessment through the EP&A Act.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Has the PSCC given any feedback on sites that have conservation value that they have recommended should be set aside for conservation purposes?

LEON WALKER: No. It would be more the land working group. I'd have to take that on notice. It's probably more likely the recommendation would go to them suggesting that it's not appropriate because of the reason, rather than it working the other way round.

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Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is there an opportunity there? I mean, the land audit process is an incredibly good, valuable and expensive operation and we're looking for more funding to carry it on past this year. Is there work that we should be doing, do you think, in terms of the administration of this or is there anything in the current settings or instructions around the audit to be looking at that broader scope? Have any lands been identified that would be really appropriate to go in the protected area network? Is this work that we're considering doing or is it just outside the scope?

LEON WALKER: It would probably be a good conversation for you to have with the Minister. I mean, it certainly identifies those sites. The focus of the audit is for residential purposes, so it—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: That's what I mean. So in terms of your instruction, would you consider it outside the scope?

LEON WALKER: It's definitely possible, coming out of this process. It's not being done at the moment.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: What's the engagement with First Nations communities and organisations about the cultural heritage values? Is that one of the criteria?

LEON WALKER: That would come through in the second stage of assessment. So, as I say, we then do quite involved due diligence. If a site is identified from desktop research as being suitable for residential, and it's passed through the land audit working group, then the next stage of quite detailed due diligence would throw up if there was any sort of heritage considerations in respect of the site.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So in terms of cultural heritage, you're saying that those matters wouldn't just be left to an environmental planning and assessment process, as Ms Fishburn identified. They're things that you would—how would you do that? How would you identify whether somewhere is culturally significant? Is it just reference to the Aboriginal Heritage Information Management System register?

LEON WALKER: Let me take it on notice to give you an accurate answer. Quite specific due diligence is done in respect of the site and, as I said, it covers off multiple areas. Let me come back to you.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I stress, though—because I think it's important to stress—even having done the land audit work, that doesn't void out the need to consider these things as part of a property development assessment as well. That doesn't take away any of the requirements that you would do for a normal DA or planning proposal.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: No, I realise that. For the purpose of those 300, though, are we suggesting that there could still be significant cultural heritage sites or areas of significance that would need further assessment?

LEON WALKER: I believe not because it would come up through the due diligence, but let's take it on notice and I'll confirm.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you very much.

The CHAIR: I will pass over to the Opposition until 3.30 and then you will get the remainder of your time after the afternoon break.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you very much, Chair. I have some questions in relation to small business. I wanted to foreshadow that so that if we need to make any adjustments we can do so. I'm interested in finding out what the Government is doing to help small businesses with rising input costs. Who do I best direct that to?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: I'm happy to answer that question. The Government has announced the Small Business Bureau back in October and Service NSW is leading that piece of work. There are a number of different services that we provide, including our Business Concierge service that will help businesses navigate through regulations and different offerings that might be across government at any one time. They will also help small businesses in their recovery phase after a disaster, so we've done a lot of work with flood-affected businesses, helping them navigate those supports and grants that were available through that process as well.

There is the Business Connect program that I've spoken to already today, which offers up to eight hours of free specialist advice. We know that small businesses are often experts in the area in which they operate their business but they may need some support in navigating through business or understanding how to pivot their business to an online or cybersecurity threats that are coming up, so we offer that service free of charge as well. There are also a number of different rebates or grants available at any one time. The SafeWork rebate is an example of that. So our Business Concierge service will help small businesses apply and navigate through that process.

The Hon. WES FANG: In relation to construction businesses, are you aware of how many construction companies collapsed at the start of 2012, say in the first two weeks?

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CASSANDRA GIBBENS: I don't have the number to hand.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You mean 2024?

The Hon. WES FANG: Sorry, 2024, yes. Has the Minister done any work around ensuring that construction businesses are supported through what is a very difficult time for them?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: There's no specific offering, through the Business Bureau, on construction, although we are looking at different industry groups to target offerings to, and we're able to do that through our communications channel. We have an electronic newsletter channel that reaches over a million subscribers, and we're able to tailor that to specific answer codes to give pertinent information to those industry groups. In addition to that, the Small Business charter has been launched, and that also offers different referral pathways for pain points and considerations around regulation and areas that small business and industry peak bodies would like consideration for.

The Hon. WES FANG: Excellent. Are you able to provide an update in relation to the department's goal of boosting small business procurement targets from 12 per cent to 30 per cent?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: That is Minister Houssos's portfolio, so it would be best to discuss that one through that.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has the Minister asked your department to do any work in relation to that?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: That's part of the charter, and we're working across in our whole-of-government response.

The Hon. WES FANG: Just in relation to that, has Minister Kamper sought any input into that procurement increase?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: Minister Kamper's been heavily involved in the development of the charter and been working with Minister Houssos's office, but I can't comment to what discussions they've had.

The Hon. WES FANG: Just turning now to the issue of engineered stone, and I know that this Government's been particularly vocal about their position on it. How many small businesses produce engineered stone in New South Wales? Are you aware?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: No. I'm not a specialist in that area. We support all small businesses across New South Wales.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has the Minister asked you to do any work in relation to consultation to support businesses that might be affected by any ban on engineered stone?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: Not at this time.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you know if there's any industry support being made available to small businesses who might be affected by any ban on engineered stone?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has there been any discussion around the cost and method of disposal of any stock around engineered stone? Has the Minister sought to minimise the input costs and output costs for small businesses that are impacted by any work that is done in the engineered stone space?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: I'm not aware, but I can take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. You talked about the small business charter. Will this charter be legislated, introduced by regulation? Or is it a Government statement of intent?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The charter will be supported by a whole-of-government circular supported by DCS.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Does the Government plan to have an annual review of the charter to monitor its success?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: Yes. There's periodic reporting attached to the charter. Initially it's got an action plan that will support it for the first two years.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will the charter have any key performance indicators?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: Yes, it will.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What are they? Would you be able to take those on notice?

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CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The charter is just being developed, and we're now working with agencies to develop that reporting matrix. And they will be available once they've been developed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Small Business Strategy implementation, is there a time line to have it up and running?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: The Small Business Strategy was an initiative of the previous Government. The small business charter will supersede that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What sort of communication has there been to small businesses about the charter and its role and what they're able to access?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: There was a media release today, on the small business charter, and there is a planned EDM—electronic communication—going out to 1.3 registered business customers in March, to support the release of the charter.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Before the election, the Government—or then Opposition—stated that they will prioritise small businesses with financial support. Many small businesses have raised concerns with us that most New South Wales small businesses are not eligible for the Government's energy bill relief program. Is this something that has been expressed as a concern to Customer Service?

CASSANDRA GIBBENS: I haven't heard that expressed as a concern. We support all small businesses across New South Wales. There are over 840,000 small businesses that are eligible for support through the Service NSW Business Bureau, and we help them with the navigation, compliance, regulation and connecting them to different referral pathways across government for specialist support or the Business Connect program.

The CHAIR: I think that takes us out for Small Business.

GRAEME HEAD: Just through the Chair, if I could add to what Ms Gibbens said about engineered stone. I think that SafeWork NSW is playing the leadership role at an agency level in respect of that matter. Of course it's part of DCS, but those issues could probably be explored better in estimates with Minister Cotsis next week.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you—and will be.

The CHAIR: That takes us to 3.30 p.m. We will now break for 15 minutes and come back. During the break I will have discussions with my colleagues about whether we can release anyone early on good behaviour. We will see you back in 15 minutes.

(Short adjournment)

The CHAIR: Welcome back to the remainder of this session. Before we begin, I indicate that we are able to dismiss some witnesses. We will be dismissing Mr Thompson and Mr Gellibrand. I tried my best, Mr La Posta, but the Government needs you for the mop-up, apparently.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: We're all happy to let you go.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I've got a question.

(Kevin Thompson and Tom Gellibrand withdrew.)

The CHAIR: We may be able to dismiss other people as we progress. I will throw to the Opposition for the remainder of their 20 minutes.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Chair, would it be possible if we could answer a few questions and make a few corrections, just to get them out of the way?

The CHAIR: I'm happy to do that.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I'll start. I just wanted to correct that 150,000 is the reporting requirement for tenders.

LEON WALKER: From me, there were various questions on the land audit and Land iQ. Eight sites owned by State-owned corporations are subject to the process so far.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That's of the 300, is it?

LEON WALKER: Yes. In respect to cultural assessments, they're assessed as part of the due diligence process, with data incorporating Aboriginal heritage where data is available. Cultural heritage assessments are undertaken as per the National Parks and Wildlife Act and managed by Heritage New South Wales. In respect to Land iQ, the pilot was launched in June 2021. The tool was first officially used in March 2022 in response to the

CORRECTED

Northern Rivers flood event. What data does Land iQ use? We can elaborate on this, but it pulls from a range of sources, including cadastral and topographical data from DCS Spatial Services, transport data from Transport for NSW, the Government Property Register and a range of other data sources. And what happens with that data, when a property is assessed, it's captured in a secure database so that it can be tracked through the review process and retained on file thereafter for reference.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Chair, can I just clear up Mr Farlow's question about the COMPLAN meetings, if that's okay? There was a COMPLAN meeting—this is following the attack on 7 October—on 9 October; an out-of-session, response phase meeting on 13 October; a regular meeting on 2 November; and we're scheduled to have another COMPLAN meeting on 7 March to reconnect. And it's probably timely with so many schools going back and the University of Sydney and other universities going back as well to be all on the same page.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Ms Hawyees?

MELANIE HAWYES: Ms Mihailuk asked a question about land councils being exempt from rates and charges. I wanted to complete that response, which is that the land rights Act regulation does provide for exemptions, and the type of land that's exempt from those sorts of charges is land that's not being used for a commercial or residential purpose—generally vacant land—or land that's been declared by the land council to be of cultural or spiritual significance. Ms Mihailuk also asked how many of the land claim assessment team identify as Aboriginal. The answer to that is two. You asked me a question about our engagement with Fisheries on Coopers Road. Regional teams are engaging at the local level. I just wanted to confirm that for the Committee, so thank you.

KAREN JONES: I've just got one very quick one. Some questioning this morning was around Wollongong karts, and it was stated that the licence for Wollongong Kart Raceway was cancelled. In fact, it actually expired.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Ms Jones. I might call up Ms Mather and Ms Jones for this section. Some questions might determine who is appropriate to answer them. While Ms Mather is getting herself seated, I'll ask have any briefs been written by either the Office of Sport or Venues NSW with respect to the South Sydney Rabbitohs wanting to leave Accor Stadium and move to the new Allianz Stadium?

KERRIE MATHER: I think not for some time. But, I think, when there was media speculation around the time that the stadium opened—I think something like 18 months ago—it was in response to that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs had any engagement or conversations with Venues NSW about leaving Accor?

KERRIE MATHER: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has the NRL made any representations to Venues NSW about clubs exiting Accor and going to other stadiums in the Venues NSW network?

KERRIE MATHER: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Do you know what percentage of Souths' attendance is made up by Accor Stadium members?

KERRIE MATHER: I'd have to get back to you. It varies depending on the rivalries that are playing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So you will take that on notice. Similarly, are you aware of what percentage of Bulldogs' attendance is made up by Accor Stadium members?

KERRIE MATHER: I will have to get back to you on that one too.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Now that the venue management contract has changed to Venues NSW, is there any impediment for Souths to leave Accor and move to Allianz?

KERRIE MATHER: They have a contract with Accor Stadium until 2030.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That is specifically with Accor and not with Venues NSW?

KERRIE MATHER: It's with the stadium, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What is the status of the agreement with the Canterbury-Bankstown Bulldogs?

KERRIE MATHER: It's the same—until 2030.

CORRECTED

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. That's it on those questions. While you're here, Ms Mather, I will ask these questions as well. Of course, the SCG is now one of the oldest pieces of major sporting infrastructure in Australia and, with a new stadium in Perth, billion-dollar upgrades to Adelaide Oval and upgrades to the Gabba, is there any investigation being done in investing in the SCG?

KERRIE MATHER: A small grant has just come through which will allow us to commence some preliminary work to re-look at the master plan. So it will be some way off.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the SCG, it's got many similar issues with fire safety and accessibility as were experienced at the former Sydney Football Stadium. What is being done to address these issues?

KERRIE MATHER: Any fire compliance issues have been addressed. We regularly update our occupancy certificates to make sure that they're actually current so that the venue is fire safe. And, to the extent that operational overlay is required to supplement that as part of the occupancy certificates, that's what we do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Latham had some questions before, about car parking in the Moore Park precinct. Is it correct that the investment decision for the new car park occurred in 2021?

KERRIE MATHER: Probably thereabouts—2021-22, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Now we're three years later from that position. When do you expect to have the car park built?

KERRIE MATHER: Depending on how it's actually delivered—we're in discussions at the moment with Centennial Park, with some transition arrangements that would allow us to accelerate the build. If that's possible, then it would be around two years, subject to events.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. As a result of the delay, have there been any cost increases to the project?

KERRIE MATHER: No. We actually went to tender only very recently. So we know the price.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Have the new funding obligations been met by the Government, in terms of the budget envelope?

KERRIE MATHER: We're actually taking out a borrowing to actually fund the development of the car park.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. I think that is all I have for Ms Mather, but I will hold until the Chair returns and see if any other members have any other questions for you. Now back to the Office of Sport, Ms Jones, just turning to the speedway again. Is the Office of Sport aware of the arrangements put in place by the Western Australian Government concerning the Perth Motorplex in June of 2016, where VenuesWest managed the facility until a new operator was put in place?

KAREN JONES: At a very high level, probably just to the extent that you've just mentioned, I was aware of that. But, if you've got any specific questions around the comparison between that operating model and this operating model, I would suggest that we'll take those questions on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you, Ms Jones. Ms Jones, I understand that Minister Kamper's chief of staff met with representatives of Speedway Australia, funnily enough, on Valentine's Day—to continue with our references—on 14 February. Have any requests been put to you, following that meeting, with respect to a governance model similar to Western Australia and the Motorplex there?

KAREN JONES: Not to the Office of Sport, but can I just be really clear here about the Office of Sport's role in terms of the speedway. We are the regulator of the speedway. We don't have any role in terms of the leasing arrangements or operating model, and I would suggest that that is a question for—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: It's Minister Scully's portfolio.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I understand that. Has the Office of Sport had any requests from the speedway community for the Office of Sport to administer the speedway on an interim basis with a management committee?

KAREN JONES: Not to my knowledge.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As we discussed before, as the regulator of motorsport, the Office of Sport has the role of approving the venue operator by issuing a motor vehicle racing ground licence. Is that correct?

CORRECTED

KAREN JONES: We operate a licence, and it's in relation to safety requirements. And, as I said before, in this morning's session, we've got that application. It's currently under assessment.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to those licences, you need to have that licence in order to be able to run a speedway event. Is that correct?

KAREN JONES: Correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We've already established that Sydney International Speedway has not been issued with this licence yet. You stated earlier that Mr Boldy was not the applicant for that licence. Can you tell us who the applicant was?

KAREN JONES: It was Mrs Boldy.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is the application incomplete? Or is there any other problem with the application?

KAREN JONES: It's still under assessment at this stage.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: When was it submitted?

KAREN JONES: I can get you that date if you just bear with me. I can come back to you on that one. I think you'll find it was in mid-January sometime.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Does it usually take over a month to assess one of those licence applications?

KAREN JONES: It can do.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Did Western Sydney International Dragway attempt to apply for permits for the speedway as well?

KAREN JONES: I'll come back to you on that.

The Hon. WES FANG: Taking it on notice?

KAREN JONES: I'll try and come back to you in the session.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you. Would the Office of Sport stipulate any permit requirements for any individual in applying for that licence?

KAREN JONES: The Office of Sport has the ability to impose conditions on a licence, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What's the extent of those conditions that you can impose?

KAREN JONES: Conditions, obviously, have to be within reasonable grounds and, obviously, relate to either compliance with the legislation and/or with additional safety requirements imposed.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Could those conditions exclude a certain person from being involved in the operation of an event?

KAREN JONES: The legislation actually stipulates the requirements in terms of who's actually required to be the licensee.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Are you aware whether the speedway has public liability insurance?

KAREN JONES: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: As part of that licence being granted, would a permit from the Office of Sport be required in order to gain such insurance? Do you know that?

KAREN JONES: I'll see if I can get back to you in the session as well on that one.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The Government, of course, outlined that it would progress a motorsport strategy, which was an election commitment. What's the status of that strategy at this stage?

KAREN JONES: The intention is to commence work on that strategy in the next year or so.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The next year or so?

KAREN JONES: Yes, that's right.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: To commence work on that strategy?

CORRECTED

KAREN JONES: Correct.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So when it is anticipated to be complete?

KAREN JONES: There is no time frame yet in terms of completion. In terms of preparing a motorsport strategy, which would be a statewide strategy, there's an extensive consultation process that would need to be undertaken to obviously determine the parameters and the needs of that strategy. So we would start at that point, and then, from there, identify the issues that would then determine how extensive that strategy would need to be and obviously the completion date.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You indicated before with respect to the Wollongong Kart Raceway that that licence ended. Were there any concerns with respect to that licence before it came to its natural expiry?

KAREN JONES: We were aware of some concerns in terms of the operation of that facility—in particular, some race meetings at that facility—but it did not result in the licence being cancelled.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What was the time period when those concerns were expressed?

KAREN JONES: Again, I'll get back to you in terms of those dates.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With the two minutes remaining, we might move to cemeteries and crematoria. Ms Hawyes, you advised earlier that you'd sought advice from Parliamentary Counsel regarding extending the CMCT's transitional arrangements. Can you elaborate on these discussions—for instance, how long those transitional requirements will be required for?

MELANIE HAWYES: I said that we had liaised with them as to the need to potentially extend the current arrangement pending the outcome of the judicial review, and that is the point that we're at now. The judgement came in on Friday so we will now talk with Parliamentary Counsel about the need, potentially, to extend so that we can work through the implications of the judgement. It's quite a complex judgement that goes to the presence of a charitable trust over the CMCT operations over 200-plus years. We have some work to do and it would be prudent to extend the current arrangement to allow us to work through that.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Was this advice only sought on Friday following the judicial review, or was it in train prior to that?

MELANIE HAWYES: No. Obviously we'd been talking to them about the fact that we'd been trying to resolve a future operating model for the CMCT as well as solidify the arrangements for the MMP. So they're aware that we would potentially need an extension for quite some time.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the transitional arrangements we're referring to, are they only until the CMCT is moved under the provisions of the current Crown Land Management Act?

MELANIE HAWYES: No. They have a set date. From memory, it's the end of February.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: It's the 29th.

MELANIE HAWYES: Lucky 29th—so, yes, there is a set date in the regulation.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: You also mentioned previously that you'd received advice that put some doubt on the status of the CMCT as a State-owned entity. Can you elaborate on what the basis for that might be?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, absolutely. The judicial advice goes to the heart of that. The position that we have been following is the advice from Treasury and the Audit Office that CMCT is a State-controlled entity. This judgement creates a more confusing sort of landscape in the sense that there's a charitable trust present over some, if not all, of the CMCT functions. We need the time to work through the implications of that advice. We're not at that point yet where I can give you a definitive answer—it came in on Friday—but it goes to the heart of State-controlled versus the presence of a charitable trust, or the interplay of the two.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might come back to Mr McLachlan. At your last appearance at estimates, you suggested that the continued provision of personal information was critical to the mortgage industry and that the non-provision of that information might skew the property market. I understand that a concerned citizen has raised the issues regarding the misuse of personal information and wrote to you after that appearance on 27 October and put forward a case that that was incorrect. Are you aware of the letter that I'm referring to?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I've received many pieces of correspondence from that person, so I'm not specifically aware of that date. But, obviously, many pieces of correspondence, yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Did you want to receive a copy of the one that I'm referring to specifically, just in case?

CORRECTED

STEWART McLACHLAN: Sure, if you've got a copy, that'd be great.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I'm wondering if you've considered the issues that have been raised in that letter and whether you've responded to the individual that's written to you?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes, we definitely have responded, and the issues are considered. I think I responded last time around the importance of the data, sure, and at a worse case the related party transactions aren't picked up, the securities—the effect that that can have from the mortgagee sector. It can also underpin valuations for ASX listed companies et cetera and if you have related party transactions that aren't picked up in those valuations you can skew the overarching valuation of a company. So there are really important things that this provision of data goes to. I think to say that it doesn't underpin those things is incorrect, and I would say the Valuer General shares that view. I think it's important to reiterate that the provision of the data and the way that we provide it does align at scale to similar jurisdictions—being Queensland, Western Australia and Victoria, who do provide it in albeit a partially modified form but still very similar in nature.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: My office has been informed that the Queensland Department of Resources, as well as Landgate in Western Australia, have commenced further investigations this year following provisions of information about the continued misuse of personal information. Have you had discussions with the departments doing work in other States and any changes that they are potentially looking at?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Not in the five weeks since the provisions have come into enactment. Obviously, we have commenced the enhanced privacy protections or the enhanced agreements and licence agreements that I detailed at last estimates on 8 January, so it is quite early in the three-year trial period that we have commenced those agreements. The other thing I would say is, as part of that, we are in the process—and it's almost complete—of standing up a privacy auditing compliance team that will monitor and enforce conditions of those agreements. So, in short, no, we haven't had any further discussions with those jurisdictions. But I would say it's probably somewhat premature in nature, given that it's been five weeks since the agreements have been in place.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Will there be meetings or discussions with those departments later on down the track to take lessons from their work?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes. As part of the Valuer General's remit, the various valuer generals from all Australian jurisdictions meet on a routine basis and discuss various issues, and I'm sure that this will be one of those pieces that is discussed, yes.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: In relation to the related party transactions between family members, which may not be for market value and could therefore skew the market, the letter that I have provided for you points out that many family members do not have the same last name or may have a similar last name to someone completely unrelated to them, so I'm not quite sure that making this data available helps identify related party transactions. I'm wondering if you can elaborate on your position on this.

STEWART McLACHLAN: I can certainly take it on notice for a detailed position, but I think that in the large proportion of transactions the surnames are similar in nature and certainly are—obviously, there are different surnames if you take your wife's, husband's or partner's surname in a marriage. I'm aware of that. But I would need to take it on notice to provide you a fulsome answer.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: If you could, that would be great, thank you. I'm wondering why there doesn't seem to be the same concern about the skewing of the market or problems in the mortgage market in the States and Territories that don't provide personal information as part of bulk datasets in the way that New South Wales does?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I certainly can't speak to what, as I said, jurisdictions that aren't at the same scale as New South Wales, Queensland and Western Australia do. I can't comment on how they operate in those spaces.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Is it something that will be looked into further—that is, how other States are managing to avoid any market issues despite not supplying this bulk data?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes. As I said in the previous estimates and following discussions with the Valuer General, the approach that we have taken is after weighing up all the considerations and that's both the need of industry and the need of the privacy protections afforded to individuals. We believe that we've achieved a very balanced approach. Certainly, the concerns raised by the New South Wales privacy commissioner have been satisfied or addressed in correspondence received from that office. And, obviously, we received advice in the development of those agreements that not only meet the test of the relevant Acts but, in our view, are very much enhanced from the position that was previously in place.

CORRECTED

The Hon. EMMA HURST: If the investigations from Queensland and Western Australia lead to some change within those States, will that influence where New South Wales sits on this issue?

STEWART McLACHLAN: That would be something I would need to have discussions with the Valuer General on. Obviously, it's really important to recognise that this is a function that's afforded to the Valuer General as an independent statutory officer; it's not a function of government per se. It's something that I would need to take on notice to discuss with her, but it's probably also, with respect, Ms Hurst, something that should be raised through the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General. These concerns were first raised through that committee in 2022. That committee wrote to the privacy commissioner, who then wrote and has corresponded on many occasions with the Valuer General and has, most recently in the last three months, written in relation to the steps that Valuation NSW and the Valuer General have taken and expressed that they satisfy those concerns.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I have some questions for the Small Business Commissioner. You recently issued a media release saying that you welcomed the recent crackdown on illegal tobacco sales in New South Wales. You also said that this illegal trade is having a detrimental impact on the sustainability of regional communities and small businesses that comply with the law. Can you talk a little bit more about that and explain how the illegal sale of vapes is having a negative impact on other small businesses?

CHRIS LAMONT: Firstly, a point of clarification: We do new stories regularly, so this has been a new story that I think we've covered for the last 18 months. We've had numerous reports from retailers expressing really strong concerns about the impact of illicit tobacco sales on their legitimate tobacco sales—one product being taxed and the other not being taxed. These businesses have said, in some instances, that they've observed repeat offences from people who are selling illicit tobacco and that it has had a material impact on the profitability and the sustainability of their store itself.

If that store decides to go out of business, or is left with little choice but to go out of business, our concern for regional communities—and all communities—is that they won't have a reliable supplier of goods and services in areas that they desperately need. We're talking about the retail stores that sell your food and your bread, which, rightly or wrongly, are sometimes undermined by illegal activity and the sale of tobacco. Regardless of what we think of the product, it provides an important source of revenue for them.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You also said that you often get complaints from law-abiding small businesses about the sale of illegal vapes. Can I just ask what the Small Business Commissioner's role is in responding to those complaints? Do they get passed on to the police or is there an investigative process within your own role?

CHRIS LAMONT: We've invited businesses and their industry associations to send us details of where they believe the sale of illicit tobacco is occurring. We collect those addresses and, in the past, we have passed them on. I believe the Department of Health is the appropriate authority for regulating the illicit sale of tobacco. We have done that in the past.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: So if a member of the public is concerned that a small business is selling illegal tobacco vapes, what's the best thing for them to do?

CHRIS LAMONT: I believe the Department of Health has information on their website. But if, for whatever reason, they find it difficult to access that information, they can contact my office and we will pass that information on.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Fantastic. I have some questions around sport, but I think I'm running out of time, so I might come back to that. My questions for Mr Lamont and Mr McLachlan have expired.

The CHAIR: I'm just looking around. Do you have more for Mr McLachlan or Mr Lamont? Otherwise, we'll look to dismiss them early.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We have none for them. We also have no more questions for Ms Mather.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I have none for Ms Mather.

The CHAIR: While Ms Higginson is checking, I might start with some questions, and then we'll make a decision on the rest in a minute. Ms Hawyees, I have a question regarding some property that has been reportedly transferred from Crown Lands to Maritime. During last estimates I asked questions of Maritime around the Waterways Fund, which is drawn from boat registration fees for your benefit. They said that the fund was due to go into deficit. One of the reasons they said it was to go into deficit, or one of the pressures on that fund, they said, was that there was a significant transfer of property from Crown Lands recently—I am predicting it might have been last year—and that transfer didn't come with any additional funding to manage those properties. I am

CORRECTED

just wondering whether you can provide any insight as to the value or number of properties that have recently been transferred—say, in the last 12 to 18 months—from Crown Lands to Maritime, just so I get a scale of how much has been transferred over to Maritime, if possible.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, I am absolutely happy to, but I will need to take that on notice.

The CHAIR: Sure. Going back to one of the questions you came back on regarding Cooper Island, the second part of the question was more broadly about a project that was being funded by the trust fund for a broad research project into Crown Lands and Aboriginal land claims. I am wondering whether you have any information about your engagement with Fisheries on that trust-funded project?

MELANIE HAWYES: I checked in with my operational staff and they have not had an outreach from Fisheries. Now that you have raised it here, we will proactively reach out to find out the status of that project. My understanding is that it's a funded officer looking at access issues for fishing. What I can add is that when we are working on road closures, for example, or road sales, we would liaise with Fisheries around that. In fact, partly in response to Ms Hurst's question as to why there are a number of sales applications open, if we don't have consensus we can't simply make a call and decide. If someone is dependent on that site for access or if there is a dispute, the sale can't proceed. Part of the work we want to do to remedy some of the processes around road sales is through the statutory review this year—to clean some of that up so that there is a conflict resolution method available to us.

The CHAIR: My understanding, particularly if a road leads to a waterway, is that you are less inclined to take that out of public hands. Is that a fair statement?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, it's a balance with Lands where there are different interests, but we can't simply proceed with a road sale if there is a contest and people don't agree, so that is a part of the reason why there are applications on foot. In answer to your question about your project, we do work with Fisheries where we have specific sales being considered. I do note these are paper roads often—they are not formed roads in the sense of a road you imagine—and they can be quite small, very local parcels of land. They're sort of bits and bobs in paddocks quite often.

The CHAIR: Just to clarify, you're now reaching out to Fisheries to ask about the project, but they never reached out to you before they put that project up for approval to the Recreational Fishing Trust committee?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't know the remit that they are in or whether they would be obliged to, and I don't know whether the research project has finished. It may be the case that they will bring it to us when it is finished—I can't really comment on another portfolio—but we will go and talk to them about it now.

The CHAIR: This is clearly a project that has already been approved. One would have hoped that they would have spoken to you before they took money from another fund to do your job.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I have one really short question for Mr McLachlan about valuations, and that is all.

The CHAIR: And the other—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: The ones you mentioned, no.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I don't have anything for the Department of Customer Service.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Neither do I.

(Greg Wells, Cassandra Gibbens, Chris Lamont, Graeme Head and Kerrie Mather withdrew.)

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: All I want to ask is whether there is any work being undertaken to look at the methods that we use in terms of valuing public lands—the financial value of public lands—at this point in time.

STEWART McLACHLAN: In terms of asset valuations of public lands?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes. Given we're doing the audit of lands available, and we're going through the whole audit for appropriateness, I'm just curious as to whether there's any indication that we might be looking at different methodologies for valuations.

STEWART McLACHLAN: In reference to the audit, I would say that the valuations that may or may not be undertaken would be subject to Cabinet in confidence and that process there.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Of course.

STEWART McLACHLAN: In terms of how we're undertaking asset valuations, there's a very specific standard from Treasury that requires how they are valued.

CORRECTED

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: The only question I'm asking is, is there any indication that there might be any changes to the methods that we are currently using to value lands?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I'm not aware of any changes, but I'm happy to take a question on notice and talk to the team and the Valuer General—whether they've had any—

LEON WALKER: I'm happy to jump in there and say no.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: No? That's a firm, clear no?

LEON WALKER: We adhere to valuation industry standards in terms of valuation of assets.

STEWART McLACHLAN: And the Treasury Circular.

LEON WALKER: Yes, and then that's detailed in Treasury policies.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Just on that, from where you're sitting and doing this work, is there any indication that there should be any feedback up the chain, so to speak, or in the other direction rather than just applying those formulas and the methods? Are there any indications that we should be looking at how we're doing this or improving on how we're doing the valuations?

STEWART McLACHLAN: I'm not sure in that specific sense. What I would say is with the Valuer General we're constantly looking at how the valuation policies and standards for New South Wales should apply. I'm aware of a lot of work that we're doing on her behalf at the moment to refresh those guidelines and policies for industry and also valuers across New South Wales. I would say that the sort of time frame or update will probably be given in greater detail at the upcoming Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Just to Crown Lands, have there been any adopted plans of management for any Crown land since 2021?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. In total, plans of management—I believe we've done a couple of hundred. Two hundred and fifty-two to date. If you want the specifics for 2021, I'd have to take that on notice.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes, just since that period, if you could.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Are there regular or periodic reviews or is it plan management specific—so it will say, "This plan is reviewed in this many years"? How are you undertaking that?

MELANIE HAWYES: I might take that on notice because a large body of work has gone on to work with councils around how we do the plans of management and whether we can do them in bulk in some councils. I might take on notice your questions about exactly the process we follow around that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Why are they not available on Lands' website? Or, are they?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to take that on notice. My understanding is that they would be available, but I'll just confirm that they are.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I would think they would be available on the relevant council website.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: You would think so.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, or the council website. But we could create a link, so let me find out and I can get back to you.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm just interested in what sort of things would trigger the plan of management review? For example, if you're looking at a coastal reserve and you're looking at coastal erosion that's so significant, or areas that are subject to significant climate impacts, are they the sort of things that could feed into review triggers, or are they already?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think there's probably two streams of work there. One is our work in terms of coastal management planning, and we actually quite recently published guidelines on our role in that, which are all publicly available—I can send you through that link—and then there's any interface with plans of management where that intersects with the coast. But our real core role and effort there is on ensuring that coastal management planning is done appropriately, and we're involved in that with others. That's all publicly available. You can find that on our website.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: This is more fun than anything, but it's an error: I spent hours this morning really scratching my head because in your report it says that you manage 880 hectares of coastline. The word "thousand" is missing in that document.

CORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: That's a good pick-up.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I was literally thinking the rest is managed by whom?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We're a modest department.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Very modest; shrinking every day, we say. It was literally my team and I—

MELANIE HAWYES: Thank you for picking that up.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: That's okay. There is "thousand" missing there.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I might just quickly put a question on notice to Mr McLachlan before you leave. Did you have something to add?

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes, I was hoping to close the other question out if I could.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Yes, definitely.

STEWART McLACHLAN: As I said earlier, it is a significantly important tool. Whilst it may not identify all related party transactions where parties have different names, it does identify the bulk of them and that's certainly the industry opinion, noting that we have more than a hundred valuers internally and that is certainly the practice that's used. Where it may differ, there are obviously informal tools that can be picked up such as talking to real estate agents or undertaking company searches or alike.

But it's really important to note, Ms Hurst, that this is a first for New South Wales. Previously, valuer generals have not enacted these policies. It's been the work of the former Valuer General, Mr Josh Etherington, and the current Valuer General, Ms Sally Dale. It truly is a really important protection. We've got a really passionate team in VNSW and I'm assuming the team we're currently recruiting will be just as passionate. If there are issues—and there obviously will be; there always are issues to address—and if there are improvements that can be made, we'll look at those.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I handed up the letter to you and asked you if you'd respond to the letter before I'd given you the actual letter that I was referring to. I think you said you had responded to it. Can I just get you to take on notice when you had responded to that particular letter that I gave to you.

STEWART McLACHLAN: Yes, happy to. We've responded to many letters so if it turns out that this one has not been responded to—I'm not sure, but happy to take it on notice.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: You're more than welcome to leave now.

(Stewart McLachlan withdrew.)

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: We'll continue back on with Cemeteries and Crematoria. With respect, CMCT now is responsible for around \$370 million worth of State-owned land, is that correct?

MELANIE HAWYES: My understanding is that those are the assets they hold. It's not the same as the land value. That's their trust amount.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Would this level of holding normally require a level of oversight that involves the Auditor-General?

MELANIE HAWYES: We've sort of talked around this and I think I said it in my previous answer. We have been working under the direction of Treasury and the Audit Office that they were a State-controlled entity. Hence that is why the Auditor-General was interested in conducting that audit. The recent appeal to the Court of Appeal—and their findings are that there is the presence of a charitable trust governing the burial of Catholic dead. We now need to work through that advice to understand the implications for the position going forward.

The Hon. WES FANG: I've got some questions around the land audit, specifically regional land audits. I know we touched on this a little bit earlier. In what regional centres have sites been identified as being available for housing development through the Government's land audit?

LEON WALKER: I'll take that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you also take on notice the number of sites in each centre if that's possible at all.

LEON WALKER: I'll take it on notice.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We just want to seek some advice, noting that we've already detailed that this will go to a Cabinet—

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you explain the process from here related to the transition from—moving from the land audit into planning?

LEON WALKER: Sorry, just restate the question so I'm clear on—

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you identify and outline the process now that you've got the land audit list? You've said it's got to go to Cabinet et cetera. What's the process in turning the list of identified landholdings into planning?

LEON WALKER: We'll answer it in partnership because I can tell you the transactional part and then Ms Fishburn can talk to the planning process. Subject to a government decision, the piece of land will be transferred to the appropriate landowning entity, be it Landcom, Aboriginal Housing Office, Homes NSW or another government agency. They then, like any other landowner, would have to go through a process to get the future use of that land approved. Over to you.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: That's correct, Mr Walker. They would then become a proponent. If, for example, I take Landcom. If Landcom was the proponent, if the land needed to be rezoned, they would be submitting a planning proposal either through the department or through the relevant council, depending on the scale. Once that planning proposal was approved, it would go into DA, which again would be, yes, Landcom has some self-determination powers, but would be determined either through that, through the council or through an SSD process.

LEON WALKER: I think it's important that this is like an up-front process. It doesn't circumvent any planning process. It would go through normal planning process.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I think we've stressed that a number of times.

The Hon. WES FANG: I guess, when we boil it down, what we're really asking is whether you can identify a time frame that we might be looking at to realistically see land being released so that New South Wales families can start building homes.

LEON WALKER: I think it is important to recognise that this is one lever in terms of a wide range of things that the Government is doing to try and address housing affordability and supply. Working—

The Hon. WES FANG: Must be a really tough lever. They can get some WD40 on there because, honestly, they're not pulling it. It's been a year.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We'll take that as a comment.

The Hon. WES FANG: It is.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I think what you may be asking is—Government will make a decision. Land will be transferred, as Mr Walker detailed, and there's obviously a reasonable amount of time in terms of due diligence to do that, and then, ideally, you're hoping that the land is properly zoned already, and that's been one of the considerations, what is already zoned, in which case you go through your DA process. That's variable, depending on the complexity of the site, the complexity of the project and who the consent authority is.

The Hon. WES FANG: So, conceivably, we could get to another election before this process is even completed.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We've said it's an ongoing, iterative process. There may be some things that happen faster than others because the planning is simpler and the build is simpler. There'll be others that are complex matters. We don't just need a housing pipeline for nought to five years or up to the election. We need a housing pipeline into the foreseeable future, and part of having an iterative land audit is being able to provide that for the New South Wales people.

The Hon. WES FANG: At this moment, this has been now, I guess, ongoing for almost a year, and there's still a number of questions as to when we're going to see any tangible release of land. I think it's been this process that's out on the never-never. People in New South Wales—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Is there a question?

The Hon. WES FANG: I was making an observation leading into a question. Where's Murphy's law, by the way? Where's he disappeared to?

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Order!

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: The people of New South Wales want to know when they're going to start seeing land being released so they can start building houses. The promise has been made, but so far there's been nothing delivered.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: As we've detailed, that's a question that should've been put to the Minister because it's a government decision.

The Hon. WES FANG: We did, but he didn't provide an answer. He waffled on and made some sort of statement.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: I can't speak for that. We've explained the process to you. I feel very confident that my department is working very hard in the land audit. As Mr Walker has detailed, it is a very fruitful exercise, not just for understanding residential land release but also for understanding future opportunities for land in New South Wales. I stand behind the work we're doing. I'm very proud of it.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'm not questioning the work. I'm just questioning the speed and the Minister's resilience in actually seeing something tangible produced. I'm going to move now to the topic of metropolitan memorial parks. Can you provide an update on the board composition for the Metropolitan Memorial Parks, including the chair and the other members?

MELANIE HAWYES: Absolutely. Recently the board was appointed. Just bear with me while I find that. The chair is Ken Morrison. We also recently recruited the CEO, who is Denise Ora, who is leaving the portfolio of running the botanic gardens to go and work on cemeteries over there and is a very fine appointment. Are you interested in knowing exactly who is on the board?

The Hon. WES FANG: Yes.

MELANIE HAWYES: We have Ken Morrison as chair. The other members are Kathy Jones, Alice Spizzo, Professor Roberta Ryan, Arthur Diakos and Mark Bloom.

The Hon. WES FANG: Thank you. Is the composition fully complete or have you got vacancies?

MELANIE HAWYES: There's one vacancy.

The Hon. WES FANG: How will you determine how that vacancy's filled?

MELANIE HAWYES: That's really a matter for the Minister, as to the point at which he may wish or not to recruit for a further board member.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has he given you any direction as to his views on that?

MELANIE HAWYES: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has he given you a time frame?

MELANIE HAWYES: No.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has he had a conversation with you at all about the vacancy?

MELANIE HAWYES: From exactly what I just said. When we appointed the board, these were the appointments that were approved by Cabinet, and the general gist of the conversation was, "Off you go. Crack on."

The Hon. WES FANG: Have they been appointed for three years initially?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think it's five. Hang on. It is three. Sometimes we vary, three to five.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you able to outline the cost of the board over those three years?

MELANIE HAWYES: The remuneration is set by the Public Service Commission, and that's all publicly available. I can't do the sums in my head quickly; I'll get it wrong for the record.

The Hon. WES FANG: That's okay. I'm happy for you take it on notice if you like.

MELANIE HAWYES: There's set remuneration for the Chair and then for board members. My understanding is the Chair is \$70,000 per annum and members, I believe, is 40, but don't get me to do the maths because I won't be able to.

The Hon. WES FANG: I'd back you in. Probably more so than Minister Kamper, but that's a whole other story. Can you also provide any details in relation to the costs of the board meeting: where they meet, any travel et cetera?

CORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: No, because they are a semi-commercial operation. Well, they are a commercial operation, so that's really a matter for them as to the frequency, the cadence of their meetings, where they meet and some of those costs. The remuneration of the members of the board is set by the Public Service Commission and we follow those requirements.

The Hon. WES FANG: Can you please provide an update on the expected cost to the New South Wales taxpayer to deliver the new 136,000-plot Crown land cemetery in Varroville?

MELANIE HAWYES: The CMCT is developing Varroville. I don't have those figures with me, and all of the discussions we have had to date about the state of the CMCT go to whether that is taxpayer funds or not.

The Hon. WES FANG: Are you able to provide some detail as to when it might open? Is it still on track for 2025, in February?

MELANIE HAWYES: My understanding is—I was on the site a few months ago and they had already done a fair bit of the groundwork to establish that cemetery. It will be quite a new style of cemetery for New South Wales. It's being designed in the form of parklands. I don't know when exactly they'll complete but I can certainly talk to them and try and provide that on notice.

The Hon. WES FANG: Could you provide perhaps an update on how many more plots the New South Wales Government is expected to make available in metropolitan areas?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. Obviously Varroville is coming on line, and that's 136,000 plots. There's also quite a lot of work going on in the MMP. Now that we have the board, their remit and their direction is to accelerate work to look at new supply. Some of that may be available from their existing sites. I can't give you an exact date or number at this point, but I can say there's work underway in MMP and the Varroville cemetery brings online 136,000 plots.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has the Minister indicated to the board any preference, targets, requirements that he would like the board to look at?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. Sorry, I'm happy for Jen to complement this. I think the direction is to seek to bring new supply on line as quickly as possible, but particularly for the faith groups that are facing exhaustion in the near to mid term. Jen, did you want to elaborate on that?

The Hon. WES FANG: Murphy's law's back. There you go.

JENNIFER HICKEY: I was going to say the same. There was a document released last year based on an audit that had been done, and it identified certain faiths that were going to run out soon, so that's the focus for the moment.

The Hon. WES FANG: Has the Minister—obviously sharing two roles here as Minister for Multiculturalism and the Minister responsible—provided guidance around the requirement to ensure that those faiths are prioritised so that they've got the space that they require to honour their dead?

JENNIFER HICKEY: I'm not aware of that but I know that the MMP are aware of it and have spoken to the Minister about it, I am sure. But you would have to ask him.

The Hon. WES FANG: The Minister has been made aware of those upcoming risks?

JENNIFER HICKEY: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: And has acknowledged that they are an issue?

JENNIFER HICKEY: Yes. It's a public document.

MELANIE HAWYES: It's a public document.

The Hon. WES FANG: But hasn't provided any guidance or requirements to have that addressed?

JENNIFER HICKEY: Yes. I'm not sure if he's talked to the department directly, but I'm not aware.

The Hon. WES FANG: Mr La Posta, has he asked your views on that matter?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I'm aware of the issue and representations have been made to us from various different faith communities, but the Minister hasn't issued any instruction to me, Mr Fang.

The Hon. WES FANG: Do you think the Minister should?

JOSEPH LA POSTA: It's not my portfolio.

CORRECTED

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that, but you would obviously be aware that many of the faith-based communities in New South Wales would be becoming concerned.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Yes.

The Hon. WES FANG: And I'm sure you've made representations to the Minister and encouraged him to ensure that that's a priority for those faiths in New South Wales.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I don't think I'm speaking out of school here by saying I think that's the whole very essence of the work that they're trying to do in terms of exploring new sites to come on line. I think Ms Hawyees just said she was out there looking at the new site. That's the two-Crown model. That's the work they're doing.

MELANIE HAWYES: To be clear, the Minister has given those instructions to both camps or both operators. I know that the CMCT is aware of exhaustion issues and is seeking to bring sites online for people of different faiths. MMP has had very clear instructions that their core activity needs to be around new supply and making sure that particular faiths don't run out of space.

The Hon. WES FANG: Just to be clear, I'm not questioning the work that you've done as departments. I'm questioning the Minister's commitment to actually finding a solution to this. But I'll pass over to my colleague.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: On Crown lands still, were there any rent increases to Crown lands property on 1 January 2024?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, and I think we talked about this in the last session. We are obliged to charge statutory rents and market rents. We have set re-determination requirements in our statute and regulations. We were working through a historic backlog of that having not been kept up to date and we have brought that up to date now. We have brought those in, and for some of the tenure holders where there were significant increases we are doing a phased-in payment so they have a bit more time to adjust.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What was the total quantum of the rent increase?

MELANIE HAWYES: It varies for different—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I understand, for different properties. But across the portfolio what was the total quantum?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll need to take that on notice because the concessions have been applied. People are still applying for concessions. We're still working that through.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many rent increases are forecast to occur in the next financial year? Are you doing that in phases, in terms of when they're adjusting and the like?

MELANIE HAWYES: We have thousands of tenures on foot and their re-determination periods come up at different times. I'll have to take that on notice as to how many are due this year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What's the average rent increase?

MELANIE HAWYES: There isn't really an average increase. Again, I'll take that on notice if you've got a particular category of user.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Sure.

MELANIE HAWYES: But the tenures are all different. They're for commercial through to—there are different tenures so there's no real set average.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Another one I suspect you might need to take on notice: In dollar amount, what was the single largest rent increase and what was this for?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What consultation occurred prior to the decisions being made?

MELANIE HAWYES: We do these re-determinations that are a part of our BAU for the tenure holders that we realised would have a significant increase because, in some instances, their rent had not been re-determined for many years. We proactively called them to talk them through to the change to their rent and to offer things like hardship provisions, phased-in payments and whether or not they would like to apply for a concession.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is there any support that's being made available to any of those organisations or community groups to be able to help in being able to pay for the increased rents?

CORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. It's a balance here in terms of fair return because we are obliged to charge market rents. Those funds are used to fund the care and maintenance of the portfolio—the things like fire trails and contaminated site remediation. We use that revenue to offset those costs. But we're also aware that people are in different circumstances so we offer hardship provisions. There are concessions for the more commercial operators. Those concessions relate to how much revenue they make. We have a mix of tenures across the portfolio, recognising a lot of people who use Crown lands might be small community groups or sporting groups. They're very different from a major, significant commercial operator, so we have a full landscape. We have a concessions policy that's publicly available, plus we're available, if people are in financial hardship, to talk to us.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Last year we were advised that 4,613 of the 7,044 planned rent re-determinations had been completed in the 2023-24 financial year at that stage. Of the remaining 2,431 re-determinations, have they all been completed now since 31 October?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll need to take it on notice. As I say, some people have lodged objections and/or sought relief or hardship provisions. I'll need to take it on notice to be completely accurate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Thank you very much. How many of these assessed tenures applied for the concession policy?

MELANIE HAWYES: I'll need to take it on notice. I do know there were about 50 objections, but I'd prefer to take it on notice so it's completely accurate.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: While you're taking that on notice, would you also be able to tell us how many were actually granted as well? That would be helpful.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, absolutely.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The estimated total gross increase of rents on 31 October 2023 for these 4,613 tenures was \$8 million, with \$2.9 million in concessions, resulting in a gross gain of \$5.1 million. Is that correct?

MELANIE HAWYES: I believe those are the figures that we provided, yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: So what is the value of the rent re-determinations and concessions undertaken since 31 October 2023?

MELANIE HAWYES: I will need to take that on notice because we're still working through the application of concessions, which affects the gross figure, obviously.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Mr Farlow, noting that it would be useful to have a cut-off date that you would like the information for.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Let's say from 14 February.

MELANIE HAWYES: From Valentine's Day.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: It's a special day.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: It's our date for this hearing.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We will check what planning approvals we did on that day for you for next week.

JENNIFER HICKEY: Could I just correct the record about something I said to Mr Fang. The Minister did release a media release last year that said that he would provide direction and support, including commissioning that audit. He did actually commission that audit.

The Hon. WES FANG: I appreciate that, but I guess it comes back to the question whether he's actually provided that direction. He says he will, but did he actually do it?

JENNIFER HICKEY: No, he did.

MELANIE HAWYES: No, he has. He's provided it to me, the chair of the MMP and to the CMCT.

The Hon. WES FANG: Good. He finally did something.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I've got a few questions for Ms Jones before I throw to Ms Sue Higginson for the rest of the crossbench time. I want to ask about the Her Sport Her Way strategy, which was a four-year program commencing in 2019. Has that concluded now at the end of 2023?

CORRECTED

KAREN JONES: Technically speaking, the Her Sport Her Way strategy ended on 30 June 2023. I do want to emphasise that our work in women in sport has not stopped. You just have to look at this Government's commitment, particularly in terms of the \$30 million Level the Playing Field grant. Also the work that we're doing with State sporting organisations to assist in their uplift of female representation in sports and through coaching. Then also, on top of that, the Office of Sport is also running a number of forums. We've actually got a forum coming up in the next few weeks called InnovateHer, where we will actually get a series of stakeholders together to talk about innovations for women in sport.

Also, the Office of Sport is working on what the next iteration of a women in sport strategy looks like. It's really important to note that while we made some really significant progress under Her Sport Her Way—and, in fact, it had a really good brand and sport has actually picked up on that brand and carried with our objectives under that strategy—the FIFA Women's World Cup just accelerated the progress and the momentum behind women's sport. So it's actually really timely for us to review our women in sport strategy to make the most of that momentum and actually look at what the new direction for women in sport is and, again, what levers Government can actually pull to help make sure that momentum continues.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I have a couple of questions about some of those other new programs as well, but just on the Her Sport Her Way strategy, has there been an evaluation that's been started and do you have any sort of early indications around the effectiveness of that program that you can share?

KAREN JONES: The Her Sport Her Way strategy has undergone an evaluation. Any questions that you have around that evaluation I am happy to take on notice for yourself. In terms of the actual insights, perhaps I can provide you that on notice as well.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. Just some of the highlights would be fantastic.

KAREN JONES: Yes, sure.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I know that the four-year strategic plan for the Office of Sport was due to expire at the end of 2024. You've been talking about this new plan as well for 2025, and I know the Minister was talking about it earlier as well. I was just wondering if you could fill in a bit more about what those new strategies that are being considered would look like?

KAREN JONES: Yes, absolutely. The Office of Sport strategic plan does actually come to an end this year. I've been very clear with the team at the Office of Sport that this is the year for us to now set our new strategic direction and to develop our new strategic plan. I'm happy to say that the draft version of that plan is being considered at our core executive meeting tomorrow with a view to it going out for staff consultation in the next few weeks. The focus of that strategic plan is currently in draft form. I don't see it really differing that much to the current strategic plan of the Office of Sport. If you have a look at issues like women in sport, for instance, each one of our focus areas is highly relevant to women in sport. Our focus areas at the moment include things like participation; places and spaces; how you might have sector sustainability, making sure that the sector can actually support growth in sport; and then the last focus area currently is partnerships and investment. All of those are highly relevant for women in sport and they all play a different role in how we can promote women's and girls' participation.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: I also want to ask about the \$30 million Level the Playing Field Program, which you mentioned before. I know that my colleagues asked a lot of questions about this already. I know that the applications for the program closed in November last year. I'm just wondering if you can give us a bit of an idea around the time line for successful grants applicants being announced and when organisations might be able to start to see some of that funding?

KAREN JONES: You're correct. The program has closed and, I think I mentioned before, it was highly subscribed or actually oversubscribed. We are actually going through the assessment process of those grants now with a view to making a recommendation through to the Minister shortly and then, of course, it will be up to the Minister to determine when the announcements around successful applications will be made. I would anticipate that would be sooner rather than later. Both the Office of Sport and also the Minister are very keen to get money out to these organisations so that we can see female participation and also facilities being built to encourage women and girls playing sport.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Given the large number of applicants, are you expecting that the full \$30 million will be allocated?

KAREN JONES: Absolutely.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Just to clarify, does this grant program require recipients to offer equal prize money to both genders? Is that an actual condition of the grant?

CORRECTED

KAREN JONES: No, not this grant. This grant is more about providing the right types of facilities and environments that are welcoming for women and girls to actually participate. It doesn't go to prize money, and it doesn't go to—I know the questions earlier on today were around pay. We are looking more at—facilities that would likely receive money through this program will be more of the grassroots-style participation and participation for the masses, in which case prize money and pay are not really an issue.

The Hon. EMMA HURST: Thank you. I'm happy to give the rest of my time to Ms Higginson.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Just a couple of further things. Can I move to First Nations land claims? How many outstanding land claims are there now over Crown Lands?

MELANIE HAWYES: There are 38,532.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And how many have been determined so far in 2023-24?

MELANIE HAWYES: This year?

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I forgot what year it was, sorry!

MELANIE HAWYES: We have resolved 236 so far, with 70 per cent of those—or 165—resulting in a grant or a partial grant.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: All right. Is that from 2023?

MELANIE HAWYES: From 1 July to 22 January. And, I should say, there is always a bit of a quiet period over Christmas because people are away.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: It's not a great period to reflect—

MELANIE HAWYES: So it's not a perfect line, and it will pick back up on.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Okay. Of the 70 per cent that were granted or part granted in 2022-23, what was the part-granted proportion of those?

MELANIE HAWYES: Often, because it is quite a complex landscape where, spatially and temporally, claims can overlap, I quite routinely sign off where a claim is granted and therefore another is refused because it was over the same parcel or in part. So it's not a neat—there's not 38,000 parcels under claim, if that makes sense.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I see. Yes. That does make sense. Of the ones that were granted in part or granted, of that 70 per cent, what proportion are granted, are you saying that "in part" means the other part dropped off because it might be overlapping?

MELANIE HAWYES: Not always. For example, there's a land claim over the entire South Coast at the same time as there are numerous land claims over parts of the South Coast. So we might part grant some of that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: And what proportion of the 70 per cent was in that category?

MELANIE HAWYES: I don't know. So when we say that "positive", we mean it was either granted in full or in part. If you wanted a finer-grained account for that, I would need to take that on notice.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: All right. Are there any common themes amongst the 30 per cent that were not granted—which I think is getting at the same point?

MELANIE HAWYES: I think, with this legislation, we have a statutory process to follow, and it's non-discretionary. It's really about was this land lawfully used and occupied on the date of the claim. The legislation was set up to compensate Aboriginal people for the impacts of colonisation and dispossession of land. Land able to be claimed is Crown land that is not being lawfully used and occupied. It's inherently dynamic. There may be a tenure over a piece of land today, and in five years it's not any more. That would then be available to claim. It's a dynamic system.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I understand that. With the 30 per cent that were not granted, is there a common theme? Is it that there is a proven—

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, it would be that the land was tenured, or lawfully used or occupied, or freehold and not able to be claimed.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I see.

MELANIE HAWYES: There wouldn't be—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So freehold would be the common theme?

CORRECTED

MELANIE HAWYES: We try to knock freehold out because it's not claimable land.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I would have thought that that would have been early on.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, so we try to knock that out but there are still claims from many years ago where we have to knock that out.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I think that's my point. Of that 30 per cent that were not granted, is the theme because it is freehold?

MELANIE HAWYES: No, not at all. The theme is it's being lawfully used and occupied.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Okay.

MELANIE HAWYES: It's tenured or it's being used for a specific purpose. For example, it may be land that's being managed by a local council for a particular purpose.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I see.

MELANIE HAWYES: So the theme is it's being lawfully used and occupied on the date of the claim.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: On the date of the claim.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: All right, and the criteria is that, if that's the case, then the claim can't survive, it can't succeed?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. So when we get a claim, we reference people who may have an interest in that land to understand whether there is a tenure and a lawful authority over that land.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Clearly, given the time it takes, there must be some—I don't want to say murky but is it possible that ascertaining that in real terms can sometimes not be simple or straightforward? Is that the case?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, especially—I mean, it's a process of finding documents and facts from the past. So, for a particular claim, we might talk to the telco. If we can see that it's been used, legitimately leased or licensed for a particular use, we will find the evidence of that or we will talk to the council if they have an interest in that land. So we have to reference different people depending on the piece of land, but the process itself is really a process of finding evidence as to lawful use and occupation of the land over time, hinging on the date of the claim.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you. In relation to the new revelation but the longstanding issue of contamination and asbestos et cetera, I can't recall what the Minister was suggesting this morning but are you undertaking a particular and specific audit of your own properties in relation to mulch but also, I would add, not just the mulch but the recovered fines as well?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, and we are. I might refer to the secretary to answer that because the secretary is overseeing it for the whole department. In my portfolio, Crown Lands and Public Spaces are a part of that and a part of that is reviewing our procurement practice as to who we have contracted or subcontracted to supply mulch. A number of the public space portfolios do their own, so we know about that. But our assessment of have we used contractors where there is a risk of this is underway, along with every other portfolio in the secretary's department.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Yes, if I can add a little bit further. We have already done our due diligence across the department as to whether we got mulch from the primary supplier. We've done site testing when there were any concerns. You probably were aware of the Sydney Olympic Park testing. We are now looking at the secondary list of suppliers. At the moment, we're feeling pretty confident. Predominantly—we've got a lot of land, we can create our own mulch a lot of the time, so we've got the capacity to do that out of the botanic gardens and out of the parklands.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Sorry, can I just interrupt you there? Is that your first check, in terms of you're literally going to where mulch has been used? In what period are you looking at?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: We're looking at the—so I'm going to try to break this up into the current issue we've got about the mulch in New South Wales to legacy asbestos. So if I talk about the current issue, we're taking direction from the EPA on the timing of contamination, as far as they understand it, noting this is a live issue at the moment. We've looked at where we have placed mulch over that period of time and who our supplier has been. Mostly we do it ourselves, so that's pretty easy to knock it out. If we've had any concerns, we've gone and tested our sites, and that's Sydney Olympic Park. That's come up negative—thank goodness, because a thousand Taylor Swift fans would be on us otherwise. And we're now looking at, as more information becomes

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available from the EPA, the secondary order of suppliers that has come through. We've done a search for our own procurement. We've been doing that over the past couple of days. Nothing has arisen yet. That's not to say something might. It is a live situation where more information comes at hand.

I want to also talk about legacy asbestos because I think they need to be understood as two distinct issues. As Mel said, Crown lands is about 30 per cent of the New South Wales estate. If you add in the other bits of my portfolio, I'd probably hit up to about 40 per cent. Unfortunately, legacy is part of that. Thank you; we got that percentage right. Asbestos is part of the legacy of New South Wales and part of the legacy of Sydney. When I ran a council, every time it rained it would pop out of your park and you'd have to emu pick it. Undoubtedly, we do have legacy asbestos on our sites. We do become aware of that. Sometimes it comes out of the ground. That's often when you see it. Sometimes members of the public will make us aware, or our own site diligence will make us aware as well.

We will deal with those legacy asbestos issues as and when they arise and we have rolling programs, as do local governments, to deal with legacy asbestos. So there are two quite distinct issues at hand at the moment. Do I feel as confident as I could today, noting that things change all the time; that the department is not affected by the current mulch issue? Yes, I do, with all the information we currently have at hand. That could change tomorrow with new information, but I would be misleading the Committee if I tried to pretend that legacy asbestos was not an issue on some of our estates.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: At this stage, based on that, you're not recommending that your department changes any of your current procurement policies, or are you considering that at this point?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Not at the moment. I feel confident with our procurement policies but I'm really stressing that the EPA is the lead in this, and I will take my guidance from them. If the EPA say we need to change our procurement policies, I will obviously do that. But when I look at where we procure from, predominantly on our larger public spaces where we use mulch, we create our own mulch and we feel confident in our supply chain at present.

MELANIE HAWYES: Ms Higginson, if there's a moment, I wouldn't mind clarifying your question about land claims.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Yes. Can I just finish one thing and then we'll come back to that.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you for the mulch asbestos. Are you aware that it's become known that the issue of contaminated reused products is not just isolated to mulch and not just this particular mulch, but this idea of recovered fines and that the issue has actually been going on for some time and it's not just asbestos, it's lead. Is that something on your radar with your lands, because this turns up in soil products and other reused products?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Without a doubt, contamination generally is something which we're very conscious of. Indeed, Mr Walker's team works on decontaminating a range of sites for the New South Wales Government, so we actually have expertise in that area. Again I know, and I'm certainly not trying to shirk responsibility; I'm trying to assure you that we take it very seriously and we will go to the EPA for advice when and if we have any concerns. But we do have a lot of experience in this area and we're very conscious that when you have a land portfolio as large as ours there are going to be issues on occasion. But in terms of how you monitor your supply chain, where they come from, we take guidance from the EPA, and we also change when we need to change.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: It's fair to say, then, that this issue of asbestos and lead-contaminated recovered fines is on your radar as a potential risk issue now going forward in terms of purchasing those products for our land?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Yes, I think that's fair to say. I would say that contamination generally is on our radar. It's not something that we just turned our mind to as a consequence of the current situation. It is something that the department has a proactive role in managing contaminated lands as well as managing instances of contamination on lands which we manage.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Can I just ask one more question and then we'll go back to the land claims. The Coffs Harbour foreshore development, could you just explain to me where that's up to and what you understand as the Government's refusal of the council's offer to purchase the land for \$6.7 million and provide two parcels of land that would have been very suitable for social, public and affordable housing?

The Hon. WES FANG: The Minister addressed this this morning.

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Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Thank you. I'm just wondering if you could give me your understanding of it.

LEON WALKER: There are two clear parts to that. The first part is the Government is continuing to work on a planning proposal that can be put through a State-led process to assess the future land use in the jetty foreshore precinct proposing a mix of land uses that's consistent with the master plan that was the subject of extensive community consultation over a number of years but leading up to 2022. I think that's when it concluded, from memory. With respect to the council offer, it was considered by my agency. When we looked at what was proposed, I think there were a few things. Key aspects were, there was a lack of detail in terms of the council proposal as to what would be delivered and when it would be delivered. It was probably what tipped it over the edge in terms of being declined.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: How do you weight that kind of thing where you've got a local council acting on behalf of its local community saying, "We want to purchase this land. This is good value for money and we're going to give you other land to deliver the priorities in terms of housing"? What is the decision-making matrix that that went through?

LEON WALKER: It's obviously case by—and this is very specific. I don't know that I've been involved in another process like this in the eight or nine years I've been in government, so I think it's a unique situation. Yes, we assessed it on the merits of the specific proposal that council provided. I think it would be fair to say that the premise or the basis of your question assumes that 100 per cent of the Coffs Harbour community thinks that what the council has offered, they support. If you look at—

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Not really. That wasn't really the premise. The premise is it's—

LEON WALKER: Sorry if I misunderstood that.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: It's fine.

LEON WALKER: If you look at the master plan that has been proposed by the New South Wales Government versus the concept that has been put forward by the mayor—and it hasn't been, I understand, formally considered by council, so there was also a lack of confidence that council actually endorsed that specific proposal.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Are there opportunities—

LEON WALKER: They're actually quite similar. The only real point of difference is the inclusion of residential, which the State Government proposes and which council doesn't.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Is it a static thing or are there still opportunities to—where it's up to now, are there still opportunities to feed into it? Because there are a lot of concerns—

LEON WALKER: The council has proposed that they're going to lodge—

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: A compulsory acquisition notice.

LEON WALKER: —a compulsory acquisition notice. That sits with the Minister for Local Government, not with Minister Kamper.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I just add a few further things there. Firstly, the proposition from council was put forward as an unsolicited proposal; it didn't meet the unsolicited proposal guidelines. The valuation was not considered appropriate for the land value, nor was the uses materially different from what the State was intending to do, anyway. Secondly, I think it's important to stress that this is intended to be a project to develop the foreshore; it's not a revenue-generating project. Similar to work that we've done in Newcastle, moneys generated will be brought back into the precinct itself, so it is about revitalisation for Coffs Harbour. Thirdly—and I think this probably gets to your question about is this a static thing—I will be meeting directly with the Coffs Harbour chief executive officer on 29 February to further discuss Coffs city council's aspirations for the area.

The CHAIR: I will just now pass to the Opposition to bring this home for the last seven minutes.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: Chair, there was one thing that Ms Hawyes wanted to—

MELANIE HAWYES: There was a follow-up, if it's okay.

The CHAIR: We might pick that up at the end. I'm just trying to give the Opposition the last seven minutes.

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, 100 per cent. That's fine. It would be helpful.

The CHAIR: We will clear the decks at the end.

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The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Mr Walker, we will stick with the Coffs jetty revitalisation. What's the total projected cost over the next four financial years for that project?

LEON WALKER: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has the rezoning proposal been lodged?

LEON WALKER: Sorry, I should say that the work that is being done at the moment is about future land use. It's obviously subject to what gets approved as to what the ultimate development within the precinct is, which includes public open space. So there would be a projection in terms of the cost—the New South Wales Government is projecting in terms of completing that process not in terms of the actual development outcomes, if that makes sense.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Can I clarify as well, from a planning perspective, a master plan has been publicly exhibited, but the rezoning proposal has not yet been.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to that rezoning proposal, when is it expected to be lodged or what is the time frame for that?

LEON WALKER: Yes, we're targeting the first quarter of this year.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Will the precinct include new housing?

LEON WALKER: The current intention, as was detailed in the master plan, is that it would include an element of residential dwellings along with short-stay accommodation.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: How many new residential dwellings and how many short-stay dwellings?

LEON WALKER: Can I take that on notice?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Okay. Which precincts and revitalisations are Property and Development NSW responsible for at present?

LEON WALKER: If you're talking precincts, there's Coffs Harbour Jetty, there's Parramatta North—the heritage precinct between Parramatta CBD and Westmead—and there's the Herbert Street precinct, which is the eastern edge of the Royal North Shore Hospital campus. I feel like I'm missing one. There is Macquarie Street East precinct.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: And through HCCDC there is the finalisation of Honeysuckle. But that is Minister Scully.

LEON WALKER: Sorry, you asked for Property and Development NSW.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: That falls under the Hunter and Central Coast Development Corporation.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Minister Scully is HCCDC.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Parramatta North precinct, what is the expected completion date for that program?

LEON WALKER: That's a very long-term program of work. You are probably aware from that work that started during your term of government. It's ongoing. There's still work being done through the heritage precinct at the moment to activate buildings and heritage core, and that would also support the UNESCO World Heritage listing application. And then there's also planning work similar to what has been done for the Jetty Foreshore precinct for the balance of the land there to activate that land for a wide range of uses.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Would that range of uses include new housing on that site?

LEON WALKER: Yes, definitely.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Back to the UNESCO World Heritage listing, what progress has been made on the UNESCO World Heritage listing for the female factory?

LEON WALKER: We are really just providing support. That's a question for Minister Sharpe's portfolio.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: It was added to the tentative list in September 2023.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Good work, then. Can you please provide a list of all sites where contaminated land is being rehabilitated and the status of each parcel of land?

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LEON WALKER: I can't talk for the Government as a whole, but I can take it on notice and provide it for the work that we are doing.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Is Property and Development NSW involved in rehabilitating land at Camellia?

LEON WALKER: No.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: No.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Has there been any consultation from Planning with Property and Development NSW with respect to rehabilitation needs around Rosehill?

LEON WALKER: No, not at this point.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to the Macquarie Street East precinct, how is that program progressing at present?

LEON WALKER: If you walk out of this building and look down at the hall building, as it's affectionately known, the records annex has been demolished. The initial funding for that project is then to restore the facade of that building and to create a public space at the back of the building, which really reinstates the original vision that Francis Greenway, the architect, had for that precinct. The Government will need to make a call on the future use of that building. It had previously been proposed that that might be for a cultural or arts use. Again, that probably needs to be directed to another Minister. My understanding is that the Government—

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: Which Minister would that be? Would that be Minister Graham or Minister Sharpe?

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Minister Graham.

LEON WALKER: Minister Graham. I don't believe that is supported, but that should be confirmed with that Minister. We have completed a business case that considers all potential future uses for that building.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: What's the expected completion date for the Macquarie Street East precinct?

LEON WALKER: The precinct as a whole, again, is a rolling piece of work that includes the library and the future uses for land within the hospital. It could be years. The real focus of our work at the moment is on the Registrar General's building.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: With respect to—

KAREN JONES: Mr Farlow, I've got information on the speedway, if you would like.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: I love speedway information. I have one more question for Property and Development and then I will come back to the speedway. *Property and Development NSW Year in Review 2022/2023* stated there would be \$231 million in savings and benefits in 2022-23. How much progress was made in savings and benefits in the financial year?

LEON WALKER: Sorry, this financial year?

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: The 2022-23 financial year.

LEON WALKER: You might have to recast the question.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: *Property and Development NSW's Year in Review 2022-2023* stated that there would be \$231 million in savings and benefits in that financial year. Was that realised?

LEON WALKER: Yes. That was an actual figure based on the work that we do on behalf of the Government in terms of leasing government property and deals negotiated. That included things like reductions in rent paid and elimination of make good. What else would there have been? A range of costs that are usually associated with accommodation.

The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW: And Ms Jones, on the speedway?

KAREN JONES: In relation to the speedway, just for further information and for clarification, the Office of Sport received an application for a licence, under the Act, to hold meetings for motor racing from the Sydney International Speedway, noting that Mrs Boldy is the director of the Sydney International Speedway. However, the applicant for the application was their track manager, Garry Willmington. The application itself was actually received on 19 January 2024. As part of the application, we had evidence of public liability insurance. However, the final attachments and final information to accompany the licence application were only received

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yesterday. In terms of concerns about Wollongong karts, those concerns arose after their licence had actually expired in 2021, not before.

The CHAIR: We will do the segment that I've called "turn in your homework early" now, and then we'll go to the questions from the Government.

MELANIE HAWYES: I think it's important because there can be some confusion about the way land claims work. Freehold is not claimable land. It's unhelpful to have that kind of commentary and it's quite distressing for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. Freehold is not claimable. What is claimable is parts of Crown land that are not lawfully used and occupied. To answer your question about examples where we part-grant, we might find that a parcel of land can be transferred, provided there's easements and access allowed on that land. We might grant some of the land and retain an easement or access for telco infrastructure, sewerage infrastructure or powerlines. That kind of scenario is very common.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: So easement is a common thing?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, very common. Those are the sorts of typical examples where we might part-grant, because other things are on the land and they can co-exist provided we part-grant and allow for those continuing uses and structures. The other last-minute one, which I must do because it would be remiss to my staff, you have an old version of our plan. Your error was picked up, and the person who picked it up is really keen to let you know that they have picked it up and that the website has the correct figure on it.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: The website absolutely does. That's what stopped my head spinning. But it's replicated in the year in review that was printed in December. So the website is up to date, but the document downloaded is not. We only printed that this morning and, honestly, that 880 hectares is still causing panic in my head.

MELANIE HAWYES: That is incorrect.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I honestly thought you had done the largest land sell-off in secret, which nobody had ever picked up, and I was onto something.

MELANIE HAWYES: Thank you, Nick, for picking that up.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Always go to accident, rather than—

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes, 100 per cent.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: —conspiracy.

Ms SUE HIGGINSON: I'm a lawyer. Trust me, I know.

KIERSTEN FISHBURN: Thank you for that. We'll make sure that our document control is a little better.

The CHAIR: If there's nothing further, I will throw to the Government for questions.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: I have two questions. My first is to Mr La Posta. The actual exchange was many hours ago, so it might be difficult to recall. It may be a case of taking it on notice, but there were some questions much earlier in the day by Mr Farlow, directed at you. There was a back and forth about funding agreements. It was some time ago; I don't expect you to remember the specificity. There were some questions around grants, which were, effectively, non-competitive grants to be delivered by the new government under its election commitments versus competitively secured grants. I don't think there was any ill intention, but there might have been a bit of overlap in understanding about which grants were being spoken about. Could I just invite you to take on notice—

JOSEPH LA POSTA: I can clarify that for you now, Mr Donnelly, if that helps?

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Yes, thank you.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: The two grants that I think were being discussed—and it is a bit of a tricky one because you're right, that is what I was alluding to around a fair bit of by-play and the conversation about the Minister's heritage and so forth—

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Yes.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: There are two Greek capital grants programs that, you're quite right, are part of our \$30 million non-competitive grant program to deliver on election commitments. That is the first thing. The second thing is that \$3 million was allocated to support multicultural communities to deliver nine festivals and events to promote cross-cultural connections. This funding included nine facility upgrades and enhancements to

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improve accessibility and capacity, and the Brighton Greek festival is one of those considerations. The funding for the festivals and the events was administered through a closed and designated grant program as well. It had the merits in the assessment of what would be a standard grant procedure; it was just closed because they were part of the election commitment process, so that's why.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Thank you for that clarification.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Sorry, Mr Banasiak, when we all got excited about \$43 million—including you and me—I suspect that may have been the total of the financial election commitments for Multicultural NSW to deliver. It may not have been apportioned to the Premier's panel on hate and extremism; it might have been the total at the bottom. But if I'm wrong and you're right, that is music to my ears and I am happy to go and ask Treasury.

The CHAIR: I would be happy if I could deliver that for you, Mr La Posta.

JOSEPH LA POSTA: Thank you, Mr Chair.

The CHAIR: But I am not confident.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Ms Hawyes, there was questioning of you earlier today from Mr Farlow in regard to the Walka Water Works. In the exchange, I think it is fair to say that there was a suggestion by Mr Farlow that contamination at the Walka Water Works was not dealt with in a timely fashion because it was in a regional area. Was the department responsible for remediating this site during the entire period from March 2021 to March 2023?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. Maitland City Council is the Crown land manager and has been since 2007, but as part of a deed for the transfer of that land, the State retained responsibility for any contamination at that site.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Thank you for clarifying that part of my question. The next part of the question is, further to that, what remediation works were undertaken over those 12 months to March 2023?

MELANIE HAWYES: To date, in the last two years, we have spent \$2.2 million, which is a combination of investigation, assessment and then actual contaminated remediation works. That has been in the last two years.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Since March 2023 has the Government committed new funding towards the remediation of the Walka Water Works?

MELANIE HAWYES: Yes. I should say a part of the activity of the department was in response to the discovery of friable asbestos at the site, which is obviously a high risk, so there was some activity taken around that, as you would expect, and we did receive funding in the last budget round for contaminated site remediation from the Government. We received just over \$10 million because, as the secretary mentioned, we do have legacy sites in the portfolio that require remediation.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Thank you for those clarifications.

The CHAIR: That concludes today's hearing. You have taken substantial questions on notice. The secretariat will be in touch in terms of what they are and when you need to get them back to us. Thank you for your time today. We look forward to seeing you next time.

(The witnesses withdrew.)

The Committee proceeded to deliberate.