

# PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE NO. 4 - REGIONAL NSW

Wednesday 28 August 2024

Examination of proposed expenditure for the portfolio areas

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

UNCORRECTED

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. Stephen Lawrence  
The Hon. Jacqui Munro  
The Hon. Cameron Murphy  
The Hon. John Ruddick

### 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**

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**The CHAIR:** Welcome to the second hearing of the Portfolio Committee No. 4 – Regional NSW inquiry into Budget Estimates 2024-2025. I acknowledge the Gadigal people of the Eora nation, the traditional custodians of the lands 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 respect to any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining us today. My name is Mark Banasiak. I am the Chair of the Committee. I welcome Minister Kamper and the 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. 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. I encourage Committee members and witnesses to be mindful of these procedures. I welcome and thank everyone for making the time to give evidence. All witnesses will be sworn prior to giving evidence. Minister, 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.

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

**Ms MELANIE HAWYES**, Deputy Secretary, Crown Lands and Public Spaces, Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, 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, affirmed and examined

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

**Mr TOM GELLIBRAND**, Chief Executive, Infrastructure NSW, sworn and examined

**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, sworn and examined

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

**Mr GREG WELLS**, Chief Executive Officer, Service NSW, Department of Customer Service, sworn and examined

**Ms CASSANDRA GIBBENS**, Executive Director, Department of Customer Service, affirmed and examined

**Mr CHRIS LAMONT**, Small Business Commissioner, Small Business Commission, sworn 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 the Opposition and crossbench members only, and then 15 minutes allocated for Government questions at 10.45 a.m., 12.45 p.m. and 5.15 p.m. Before we begin with questions from the crossbench, I would like to acknowledge that it is the Minister's sixtieth birthday today. I wish him a happy birthday. I'm glad that you can join us here for such an occasion.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I couldn't have thought of a better thing to be doing on my birthday, Chair. I can assure you. I've got so many friends around me.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Good morning, Minister. Happy birthday. At the last budget estimates you told me that the Government was considering extending the licence for Wentworth Park Greyhounds racing track beyond 2027, despite the decision made by the Coalition Government to return that to green space and housing for the community. Can you tell me where your decision-making on Wentworth Park is up to?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not sure if I said I was considering it. I said there was nothing on the table and we were looking at a variety of options. We have been very clear, as a government, that we want to see greater utilisation of this facility. I said that on the last occasion, and we need the facility to be working for the entire community, not just for dog racing once or twice a week. We have the metro coming, the new Sydney Fish Market, the Blackwattle Bay revitalisation and the light rail is already in place, so we really need to consider deeply what we want there in the future. There is a lease in place there at the moment, but we'll make that decision. As a whole government, we'll look at that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** What's your timeline on making that decision?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't have a timeline at this stage.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you have any next steps planned in regard to making that decision?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We'll be reviewing it in due course. That's about all I can contribute.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** What does that review involve?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We'll make that decision. I won't be committed to making a decision this morning. We'll make that time.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** No, I'm asking you what's the timeline. What are the next steps?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There is no next step at this moment.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** There are no plans.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There will be discussions and there will be decisions made moving forward but, at this stage, there is still a lease until 2027, so it's still about three years away.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Have you spoken with the Premier or the planning Minister about the possible extension?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I have had many conversations with many Ministers and with the Premier on a variety of things.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** No, I'm only asking about this, not a variety of things.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I can't give you a definitive—there have been brief conversations, but we haven't sat down at this stage to really nut it out.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So you haven't spoken to the planning Minister about the potential lost homes if that was to be extended for the greyhound racing track?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Potential lost homes—what do you mean by that?

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** My understanding is that when the Coalition was in government the agreement was not to renew the lease in 2027 and that that space would be used for housing and green space for the community. My understanding was that it would be around 200 homes that were going to be built—apartment blocks built into that site—which is now under threat if the lease is renewed to allow it to remain as a greyhound racing track.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I haven't specifically had that conversation. I can't recall having a conversation like that with the Minister.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So you aren't aware of the potential loss of homes if this is renewed as a greyhound racing track?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I'm saying that we haven't made a decision at this stage. I don't know how much more I can tell you than that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I understand you haven't made a decision, but you're aware of the threat of the loss of potentially 200 homes that would be built on that site if the lease is renewed. But you haven't actually had a conversation with the Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Potentially there could be more homes. We haven't had a discussion, so we haven't gone into that detail yet. Obviously, it's something that we need to start looking at now and start working towards coming up with a position, and we'll do that in due course.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Obviously, we've got a housing crisis. I'm assuming that will weigh heavily on the decision as to whether to renew that lease or not.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's quite obvious we've got a housing crisis. That's at the forefront of the Government's mind at the moment—trying to solve the housing issue. As you're aware, we're looking to do whatever we can to provide the housing needs for our community.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So that will weigh heavily on your decision.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It could be part of it. I know how heavy it is. I'm not going to pass comment on it; I'm saying we will look at that site closer in the near future. Given the fact that the lease is expiring in 2027, we need to start working towards that and we will.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** In correspondence that you sent to the Lord Mayor of Sydney on 8 August, you said that you'd consider options for the site, subject to a more detailed proposal and a business case. Have you ever received a business case, at this point, from the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There was a preliminary proposal there, but they were going to come back with more. It really hasn't gone too much further than that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you know when they're planning to come back with more? Is there a deadline?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I don't have any. I can't provide you with that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So there's no time frame?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There's no time frame but, as I said, that's one in many concepts that might be available for consideration. But we'll make that decision.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You can understand why people would want some sort of certainty going forward or an idea of when a decision might be made, given that 2027 is actually not too far away when you're talking about building developments and housing.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Absolutely, but the precinct there—there's a lot of activity going on there, and it's going to be a real vibrant spot. We want to look at a variety of options and we want to think about it. We don't want to be rushed into it.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Have you met with anyone from the Greyhound Breeders Owners and Trainers Association about the decision and their unsolicited proposal?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I had one meeting with them, and they were going to provide their concept or their proposal. I haven't had anything—a second meeting about it.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You haven't had anything further?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Will you be taking into account animal welfare issues—you know, the safety of that particular track in regard to the number of animals killed or injured on that track? Will that be a consideration?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** A very important consideration, absolutely.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is that something you'll speak with the racing Minister about when the time is right?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** As I said earlier, there are a number of us that will be looking at it. It will be a whole-of-government type of approach. It's an important site; we've got to get it right. What it will look like and whether we work with the local government representation there—that's something we'll do in due course.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** A couple of weeks ago I was at an event and some children approached me. They'd had quite a few people sign some "get well" cards for some of the greyhounds from Wentworth greyhound racing track. I know it's somewhat unprecedented, but I'm hoping that I can give those to you today from these children that have passed them on to me.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Excellent.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I'll ask the secretariat to hand those to you.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Thank you.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** These are for the greyhounds that have been injured over the last couple of months at Wentworth Park, and I believe that there are some sympathy cards for the deaths as well. I believe that there have been three recent deaths at Wentworth Park greyhound racing track. You can understand why there's a lot of nervousness around the community that this particular track might remain open and that there are going to be further dogs injured and killed.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Absolutely. As you're well aware, Deputy Chair, I have enormous affection for dogs. I've got two of my own, so that's definitely something that plays on my mind.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Talking about dogs, according to your ministerial diary disclosure, on 28 May 2024 you met with DOGS NSW and the Royal NSW Canine Council about the Companion Animals Amendment Bill (Puppy Farms) 2024. I asked Minister Moriarty about this yesterday, who had no idea that this meeting had taken place. She's planning legislation around puppy farming. Why didn't you speak to her about that meeting that you had?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I met them in the capacity of the Minister for Small Business, and what we talked about were small microbusinesses that were concerned about, I think, a bill that you're bringing to the House. Pretty much as soon as I explained that it's not a Government bill and wasn't our position, that was pretty much the end of it.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** How did the meeting come about? Did they reach out to you?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, they did reach out. They went through the process and came to see me. I met with them in the past, when I was a shadow Minister, in relation to matters of their business activity in the past.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** What was that in relation to?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Back then it was in relation to similar types of worries that they were looking to be cancelled out. My experience with the smaller breeders is that they do an exceptional job in terms of delivering really good quality puppies to people that want a pet. That's been my personal experience as well.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I know that DOGS NSW, specifically, has been really publicly opposed to any legislation to outlaw puppy farming. Is that the position that they brought and hoped that you would advocate for?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, that's not the impression I got.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** That's not what they brought to you.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It was more about the boutique, smaller operators, who do a fantastic job. I speak from personal experience, too, there. I've got nine grandkids but, if you look at the picture on my phone, it's my little flat-faced dog. It more comes from that. Essentially, I understood what they were concerned about. I let them know that that wasn't the Government's bill at that time, and that was pretty much the end of the meeting. I had a nice cup of tea.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** Minister, I have a few questions about the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex. I understand it was only completed about four years ago but, because of COVID, it's only been operational for about two years. But the Government recently announced it's planning to divest it. What would you say is the main reason that that decision has been made?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The Office of Sport has been investigating the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex through a targeted EOI process focused on the sports shooting sector. The Office of Sport has engaged Property and Development NSW to manage the EOI process. A due diligence process is now underway and that will inform the next steps. But I can assure you that the New South Wales Government does not intend to take steps as part of the divestment process to ensure that a future owner or lessor of the facility does continue to operate it as a shooting complex into the future. The Office of Sport briefed stakeholders on the planned EOI process during a monthly venue stakeholder meeting, which was held on Wednesday 12 June 2024, and is committed to a further briefing just prior to the opening of the EOI process. I expect to be able to provide an update on this matter before the end. I don't know, Karen, if you've got anything further to say in relation to that.

**KAREN JONES:** Through the Minister, yes, the Office of Sport is actually investigating options to divest the Southern Highlands Regional Shooting Complex. What I will say and just correct your information there is that the actual regional shooting complex has been in operation now for a number of years. There were some construction works that were undertaken pre-COVID. That was primarily focused on the 50-metre and the 500-metre range, and the upgrade works have been completed in that facility. The 50-metre, the 500-metre and also the 800-metre range have been operational for some time now. We are looking at divesting the shooting complex, but what I will say—and just to reiterate what the Minister has said—is that we are looking at going through an expression of interest, or an EOI, process. That EOI process will be specifically targeting members of the shooting community with a view to ensuring the long-term use of that facility as a shooting centre.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** Okay, I'm pleased to hear that. Have the financial accounts been independently audited?

**KAREN JONES:** Again, through the Minister, the Office of Sport undertakes regular audits as required for the auditing process of government. Details around our financials are published in our annual report.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** Very good. So they are publicly available.

**KAREN JONES:** Details around the Office of Sport's financials are in our annual report.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** I understand that the centre is not running at a profit and it has recently been significantly improved. I understand it is very popular. Have there been efforts to try and make it profitable under its current arrangements by reducing costs?

**KAREN JONES:** Through you, Minister, it is a centre operated by the Office of Sport. In terms of its popularity, the popularity is obviously targeted at the shooting community. The actual demand for that facility is such that it is only opened on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. It's not open seven days a week simply because there is not the demand there for it to open for seven days.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** Prior to the public announcement that the centre was to be divested, did the department approach any shooting organisations or was there any lobbying from shooting organisations attempting to procure the site?

**KAREN JONES:** Through you, Minister, no, not to the Office of Sport.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** But we can have certainty that however this process ends up it will remain a shooting complex.

**KAREN JONES:** Through you, Minister. That is the absolute intention through the expression of interest process. What I will add, just to temper everybody's expectations, is that we're still doing a due diligence around the expression of interest process. Once that due diligence is complete, then we will be liaising with the stakeholders to let them know that the EOI process is about to commence. We will continue to consult with our stakeholders.

**The Hon. JOHN RUDDICK:** What type of organisations do you expect will be interested in bidding for this?

**KAREN JONES:** As I mentioned before, we are looking at a targeted expression of interest, specifically looking at the shooting community.

**The CHAIR:** Obviously we've already touched on the issue about the desperate need for housing, but more particularly in regional areas. Minister, what is your department doing to make land available for residential activation in our regions? Particularly I'm looking at land that's under Aboriginal land claim processes. I'm aware that many of these land councils want to activate that land and use it for a good purpose. What are we doing to help them activate that land under that land claim process?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think it's important that we—it's probably relevant to the housing Minister as well, this question. It's probably more relevant there. Maximising the use of government land for critical housing supply is a key priority of this Government. I think that's pretty well known with the land audit and everything that we've been working on the last year. Crown land has a role to play in improving housing outcomes in regional New South Wales. This is balanced against the other important benefits Crown land provides to New South Wales communities and takes into account the rights and interests of native title holders and Aboriginal land councils.

While Crown land makes up a substantial proportion of New South Wales, only a small fraction of this land is suitable for housing and it is important to be clear about when and how Crown land is best used to address housing supply gaps. In late 2021 Crown Lands and the Land and Housing Corporation—now Homes NSW—signed a historic memorandum of understanding to support the identification of suitable Crown land in regional areas that could be used for housing development. To date Crown land parcels in Cooma and Forbes have been activated for housing development. Work is also underway to explore the suitability of Crown land sites in the Albury region through a partnership between Crown Lands, Homes NSW and the local council. A partnership to explore housing opportunities in Tamworth has also been established between Crown Lands, Homes NSW, Landcom and the land council.

**The CHAIR:** In those locations that you've just listed—and you might have to take this on notice—how many homes are we looking at potentially creating.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I might throw that to Mel to give you detail on that.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Thanks, Minister. Thanks, Chair. In terms of the Crown Lands' role in this, obviously we've provided input into the audit conducted by colleagues about land that may be suitable for housing but, as the Minister said, we do have a partnership arrangement with Homes. That has involved, generally, negotiating outcomes with local Aboriginal land councils on land that may be suitable but is currently under claim. We have a number of those projects underway at the moment. As an example, you spoke about the number of homes they may be able to bring online. In Cooma, the partnership approach there is likely to bring online up to 300 homes. We have other partnerships.

In Cooma those are mixed-tenure dwellings, which also include a component of social, affordable and private homes. That's being progressed through this partnership with Homes and with the local Aboriginal land council. Similarly, we have a project in Forbes that we are hoping will be able to deliver up to 101 housing lots, again with a mix of social, affordable, private and key-worker housing. So they're two examples of regional projects that are more progressed, and we have number of others that are undergoing due diligence work and assessment as to the feasibility and the number of lots that may be able to be yielded.

**The CHAIR:** The ones that are obviously more progressed—Cooma and Forbes—is the aim to build those 300 homes or 100 homes in reasonably quick secession?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes.

**The CHAIR:** So they'll be delivered close to being simultaneous in terms of—



**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes, that's really a matter best addressed to my colleagues in Homes, but our role has been bringing in the land, the relationships and the ability to broker and negotiate an outcome across the land council, the local council, Crown Lands and Homes. The actual speed and process of the DA through to building is a question best put to my colleagues in Homes.

**The CHAIR:** So if I was to summarise, you're really trying to fast-track those land claims that might be suitable for housing activation, so we can also fast-track those claims but also allow them to be actually utilised and activated quicker. Is that a good summary?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes, absolutely. I think in the past there was a view that land under claim wasn't able to be developed; it was going to take too long and be too slow. Actually what shifts that is the ability to sit down and broker outcomes. Quite often we find that the land councils are looking for development partners to assist them to activate some of that land. It's just a different environment now. The relationships are different, there's more trust and we have land councils actively coming to us looking for partners to build homes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Happy birthday, Minister. Minister, what's the definition of a small business?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's a pretty good question. Generally, the problem we've had is there's a whole heap of different definitions depending on what type of funding arrangements or grants have been historically around, but a small business is up to 20 employees, \$2 million in turnover—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Two million?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Two million. It can be \$5 million; it depends on which jurisdiction.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So not \$10 million, which is the Treasury definition?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It could be \$10 million, but you can have travel agencies with a \$20 million turnover—it's a small business.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But the threshold effectively—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The threshold is about \$10 million.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Okay. Minister, how many businesses were insolvent in the last financial year in New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think I've got some numbers on that—4,634 companies entered external administration last year.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, how many of those were small businesses?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll take that on notice. I haven't got the exact number or percentile in my head. I don't carry that in my head.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, have you made any inquiries before as to how many of those businesses are small businesses?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, we have, but I don't hold numbers like that in my head so I'll take it on notice, if you like.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, with respect to those figures, what do those figures look like compared to the previous financial year?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There was an increase of 41 per cent from the 2023 year. But a lot of that had to do with a lot of businesses that were held together during the COVID period with government funding, or whatever. It's gotten to the point where I think, in many respects, the Australian Taxation Office really stepped up its debt recovery processes, and that sent a lot of them to the wall.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So that's the advice that you've received as to why businesses have gone under at record rates last year?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That is one of the major reasons why there was a lot of insolvencies in that period.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Does it concern you, this increase?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Of course it concerns me. We're going through difficult times. The business community is going through difficult times. It's a tough gig at the moment. That's why we're focusing on servicing the business community in the best way possible. It's important, as a government, that we offer services where we

can help them through difficult situations. The Small Business Commission is doing a fantastic job, but we need to be doing even more, especially for startup businesses, or businesses going through a growth phase or going through particular difficulties. That's why we've set up the Business Bureau. We're operating the Business Bureau through the Service NSW platform.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With this 41 per cent increase in business insolvencies, of which I would assume many would be small businesses, what are you doing to help small business in New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I just said to you we're providing service delivery. We're delivering services to them. We're there to support them through the Business Bureau.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Like what? What service delivery?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There is an enormous amount of services that are delivered through the Business Bureau. The notion that, when there are difficult economic times, we're going to sit there and throw funding towards the general business community—that's not what government should be doing. What we should be doing is providing the support to help them through the difficult times.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But it seems that, with a 41 per cent increase, the support is not there, is it?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** When you've got a situation where you've got high interest rates, and you've got—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What's the cash rate, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Hold on, is this a quiz show?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No, you're talking about high interest rates.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Are you Tony Barber or something?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Tony Barber is a little bit dated, Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Ask the Treasurer what the cash rate is.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You're the small business Minister, and you don't know what the cash rate is?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, I do.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Well, tell us.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not going to answer. This isn't a quiz show. If you want to talk about the cash rate, ask the Treasurer.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You're the small business Minister, and you don't know what the cash rate is?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, don't try and talk over me. Ask sensible questions.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It is a sensible question.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's not necessary for me to have percentiles or numbers on insolvency issues.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You're the small business Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That stuff is outside of my control. As the small business Minister, what we've done is that we've been at the forefront, working very hard for our small business community while the previous Government did nothing for 12 years.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That is completely—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Other than during the COVID period when they needed support. They were sitting there every single day—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So why are small businesses going to the wall at a record rate, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Let me finish.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Order!

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I just told you why.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** And what are you doing about it? A business concierge service.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There was a backlog of businesses that were struggling for a long period of time. I ask you, what do you think we should be doing: pumping cash into their balance sheets?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, in a couple of years time you can come into the upper House and ask some questions.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, you're asking a stupid question.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What the cash rate is is a stupid question according to you, Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm telling you what we're doing, and you don't want to listen to that. You want me to answer—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You won't tell us what you're doing.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm telling you what we're doing. I've told you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Well, tell me. Come on, Minister—you don't know the cash rate. What's the inflation rate then, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's 3.7—something around there.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It's 3.8, Minister, but you're close.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's close enough.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You're in the ballpark. What about the unemployment rate in New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Sorry, Tony Barber, but I'm not going to continue with this. Ask me a specific question about my portfolio. It's not about the economic rate.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It's a specific question. What is the unemployment rate in New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Ask the Treasurer. Talk about that stuff with the Treasurer.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Okay, so the small business Minister doesn't need to know what the unemployment rate is in New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I really don't understand what you're trying to say. Because I can't quote a percentile off my head, that's going to make a difference in terms of how we manage small business. Is that really—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Small businesses across the State want to know that you actually understand what's going on in small business.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm across it, but I'm not going to give you an exact percentile and be off by 0.1, 0.2 or 0.3, just so you can have a little gotcha moment for your camera. Ask sensible questions. Ask questions about small business. I have represented small business for 30 years at a high level, for many years. I know how to look after small business.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, I know you've worked in small business.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The last thing that I'm going to take is advice from you on how to look after small business.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The question is about what you're doing as the small business Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The small business community knows what I'm about, and knows what I'm doing for them.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What are you doing, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** They know that we are looking to service them—that's what they know—and remove red tape.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What red tape have you removed, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We've never had a delivery—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, what red tape have you removed?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We've never, ever had—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, what red tape have you removed?

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Point of order: I think it's important that there be the exchange in a respectful way with the question followed by the answer and back and forth. I think that's how we understand the proceedings.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I would also remind both the Minister and the members here to be respectful of Hansard as well when people are talking over the top of each other. It's not possible for them to be able to transcribe two voices at the same time. Please keep that in mind as well.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Deputy Chair, as I've said on a number of occasions, this is not a quiz show. If you want to ask me specific things we do with business—but trying to get me to quote percentages—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** The Hon. Scott Farlow has the call.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, I have a specific question: What red tape have you removed? You cited that you are removing red tape.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Let's have a look at what we're doing here. I can give you some numbers too, if you'd like.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Good.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Overall, what we've been doing for small business—we've hit the ground running when it comes to delivering for small business. We want to make doing business easier, and we want to make help more accessible to the small business community. That's something that's been very important from day dot. It's a commitment that we made before the election. What is to be clear is that we are delivering for the business community for New South Wales, which is why we've developed the Charter for Small Business to track our progress. The charter focuses on six key points. Firstly, a clear and strong focal point to support small businesses to start, grow and thrive.

The delivery of the Business Bureau has provided one front door for the business community. Since its inception in October 2023, it has dealt with 160,000 business inquiries and delivered more than 24,000 hours in personalised advice. The bureau will deliver key programs and services, including supporting businesses to navigate regulations, tackle unproductive red tape, provide businesses with personalised support to grow their business and greater access to government contracts and overseas markets. The second key point was stronger engagement on new policy and regulation. One example is the ban on the manufacture, supply, processing or installation of engineered stone to benchtops, panels and slabs, which safeguards workers from harmful silica dust. It came into effect from 1 July 2024.

The bureau supported SafeWork NSW to raise awareness of these regulatory changes by issuing social media posts that included summaries of SafeWork education materials and referred businesses to SafeWork's resources for more information. The third point was to listen and respond to red tape and other pain points. The key pain point for small business was the requirement to obtain insurance prior to landing a government contract. This made the process expensive and onerous for small businesses. In response to this, we changed the requirement for small businesses to have insurance only once they have been deemed successful. This has removed barriers for small business to access government contracts.

The fourth point was to boost government procurement for small business. In addition to simplifying the insurance process for small business, we've also increased the small business direct procurement threshold from 150,000 to 250,000. This means more government money can flow directly into small businesses. We're also adding a local supplier element to tender weighting to ensure that we're supporting our local businesses. The fifth point was to introduce and report on metrics, and identify opportunities for supporting small business policy in regulatory and economic settings. The New South Wales Government now requires government agencies to develop and apply metrics on how they will support small businesses. The sixth, and last, point was to deliver key actions and commitments to timelines. We are ensuring that our promises to the small business community are being delivered in a timely manner. We must also—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Okay, Minister. I've given you about 2½ minutes—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I haven't finished. Can I complete? I want to complete.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, I've given you 2½ minutes to answer that question, and you still have not told me what red tape you have cut.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll give you an example of where the Business Bureau has been effective. We had that situation with the sinkhole—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, the question is about red tape. What red tape? You cited red tape. You said you're cutting red tape. What red tape have you cut?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've just read it out to you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No, you've read me 2½ minutes of talking points, but you haven't actually told me what red tape you've cut.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We've made it easier for businesses to procure government contracts. We've got the Business Bureau to service people, to help people navigate through whatever issues and challenges that they have. That helps with red tape and can cut the red tape. Whatever we're doing as a government, we're considering the needs of small business and making sure that we're—where in the past that wasn't the case.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, to consider the needs of small business, I presume you would have to meet with them. Could you share with the Committee how many times you've met with small businesses from April to June, for example?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think you should refer to my diary for that. I'll take that on notice. I can't—I've met with many small businesses.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I believe it's not actually many small businesses. It looks like you had a small business round table with Mr Donato and perhaps two other small business meetings. Do you think that that's enough meetings with the small business community, given the challenging economic times that we're in?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That doesn't include all of the events that I attend and where I meet with small businesses at those events and talk to them.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Your meetings should be disclosed in your diary disclosures.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, not when I go to events. Those meetings are specific meetings in my office.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** When you're meeting with these businesses, are they letting you know that they're concerned about interest rates, for example?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Look, interest rates—it's a problem across the board. We all know—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you think that they expect you to be across the detail so that you can advocate for them?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's not a big secret that interest rates are high and are putting pressure on all business.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you think that small businesses expect you to be across the detail so that you can advocate for them effectively in Cabinet and with your department?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** What detail? What, the one-tenth of 1 per cent that I might—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** The details about how many businesses are going insolvent, are going into administration.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Of course I know that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** The pressure that they're facing to borrow money to keep their businesses alive.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** This is just a really cheap line of questioning, seriously.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I don't think it is, because I think small business owners understand that you need to be across the detail to actually operate effectively.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** So you think you go into a small business function and just talking about interest rates is all they want to hear and all they want to know? Is that what the perspective is?

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I think they want to know that their Minister is across the detail so that he can advocate for them effectively.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm across the details and it's not hard to say that there are higher interest rates. It's not a hard thing to say or to acknowledge or to know.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How do you plan to prioritise and address the concerns of businesses given the limited engagement that you have and, obviously, a limited understanding of the detail?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, they're your words. I reject that. They're your words. I talk to business on regular occasions.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** You can't even tell us what measures you've taken to cut red tape, Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Of course I have.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** You just read out six points that gave me no detail about actual measures to cut red tape.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't know how you interpreted that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Okay. I think when you're talking about support that the Government could be giving, I'm wondering how you can justify demanding the repayment of the COVID-19 grants from small businesses, given companies like Qantas have been able to keep their taxpayer-subsidised money.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The COVID-19 grants—are you referring to the backlog that was identified? I mean, look, there was Service NSW—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I'm referring to grants that your Government and you, as Minister, are responsible for administering. Small businesses are being demanded to give back that money to Government after it was agreed upon by this Parliament that those kinds of measures were necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, and those funds were granted during the previous Government.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Which your party agreed to in Opposition.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Service NSW are conducting fraud monitoring and compliance activity. There was evidence of systemic fraud, and the previous Government said from the start—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We're being told that small businesses are doing it tough, and you're telling me that you know that they are, and they're being asked to give back money that this Government agreed to give them when they were in Opposition.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Let me give you a complete answer on where it stands. Service NSW are conducting fraud monitoring and compliance activity on the COVID-19 microbusiness grants. High levels of fraud and inability continue to be discovered. Compliance activity resumed on 10 April 2024, with guidance for the treatment of customers experiencing hardship and updated procedures to allow 90 days for customers to provide documentation evidence. Compliance and fraud detection activities are funded through carryover funding for the 2024-25 year, with these tasks expected to be finalised within this period.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So did you advocate for those policies to be implemented?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The customer service Minister, Jihad Dib, is the Minister responsible.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Did you advocate for that 90-day period, for example?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's being administered through the customer service Minister.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How are you helping small businesses?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Are you offended by the 90 days? Is that what you're saying?

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** No, I'm asking if you actually had any role in advocating for that kind of thing.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There have been discussions; we have discussions. I don't administer it. We've had discussions about easing the pain. Look, I fought fairly hard in Opposition for the microbusiness grants. If I remember, the previous Government didn't want—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Okay, but what are you doing as a Minister in Government?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, let me finish. The previous Government didn't even want to consider microbusiness grants at the start, and that was through their—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We're just talking about COVID-19 microbusiness grants.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We produced them.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, you produced them in the end under pressure. You produced them under pressure because we kept running—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** And you're taking them away.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, we're not taking them away. But do you truly believe, where there's been fraudulent activity, that we're not going to look to recover that money? Is that what you're saying? And where there's true hardship, there's consideration.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We're wondering how you've been able to determine the difference between, sure, genuinely fraudulent activity—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's 2024. It's been a number of years.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** —and actual grants that were administered properly through this process. What have you been doing to ensure that there is a differentiation between fraudulent activity, for example, and the actual proper administration of those grants so that small businesses aren't targeted unfairly?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've been advocating for them to be very careful with how aggressive they are in terms of the recovery process.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Okay, so you've given that advice to your department.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** And I've got from my electorate office many examples where I've written on behalf of small businesses in my community where I helped them with pitching their argument as to why—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I suppose the problem is, though, that you're not meeting with them as Minister, according to your diary disclosures, to sit down and actually understand what is going on in the small business community. Where are the meetings with stakeholder groups? Where are the meetings with representative organisations and advocacy bodies?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Formal meetings through my ministerial office are one thing.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Yes, it's a pretty important thing.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** But I'm on the road. It's pretty important to get out there, Ms Munro.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I totally agree, but—

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** Point of order—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's very important to get out there and engage with the business community.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** —can you walk and chew gum?

**The CHAIR:** I will hear the point of order.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** So the suggestion that I'm not—I talk to small business every day.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Mr Kamper, your colleagues have taken a point of order.

**The Hon. GREG DONNELLY:** I just think it's really important to go back to the previous point that when a question is posed, you must let the Minister answer it. You can't just talk over the answer being provided by the Minister. This is back and forth, and the Minister must be provided with an opportunity to answer the question posed to him.

**The CHAIR:** I acknowledge the point of order, but I also acknowledge that Minister Kamper was handling himself quite well, and there probably was a bit of talking over the top of each other going back and forth. I just remind people: Let's give each other a couple of seconds breath.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** They're upsetting my birthday party.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We'll sing you a song later, Steve.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** You'll sing later, yes. We'll make up after; we'll hug and that.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** They say it's your birthday; we're gonna have a good time.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, have you read the *Sports, Climate Change and Legal Liability 2024 Report*, or have you been briefed on it?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I can't say I have. No, I can't say I have.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You're not aware of it?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** The New South Wales Office of Sport actually received an F-ranking when it comes to climate change initiatives, and it was actually one of the three worst performing sports agencies around Australia in relation to climate change initiatives. Were you aware of that?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I can't say I am.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Does it concern you to receive an F-rating?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It sounds pretty bad, yes, but I think I could pass it on to Karen to actually talk about that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I might speak further to Karen later, but my question is at the moment, as the Minister, does it concern you that we've had an F-ranking and it's one of the three worst sports agencies around Australia for climate change initiatives?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Why the F-ranking? Can you detail me why—where we're failing as a State?

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is that why I'm asking—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm asking you, yes. I'm asking you, just so I can get a better understanding of what the F—because you don't want Karen to respond to it.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** No, I'm asking you, Minister, if you're concerned about it.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I said yes.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You are concerned about it. Thank you. What steps are you taking to ensure that the Office of Sport doesn't receive an F rating again in 2025?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I would pass that on to Karen to answer the question. That's what they're here for.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** That's probably a fair one to throw to Ms Jones.

**KAREN JONES:** Yes, I am aware of our ranking. I think the comparison between us and other States is a little bit different because the Office of Sport does have a number of government assets. In fact, we've got 20 locations around the State, so we do have a fairly large asset portfolio in comparison to other sporting agencies around the State, which don't have the same level of assets. For us, our assets are ageing and we are investing in them. We are actually looking at improving particularly the environmental sustainability of those assets and looking at specific climate change initiatives. I would hope that there would be an improvement in coming years.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, some of the metrics in the report are looking at some pretty basic things. I can hand you a copy of it if that's going to be of use.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I will take a bit of time to read it.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Some of the metrics are pretty basic. We are looking at things like mentioning climate change in the office's annual report and mentioning climate change in the strategic plan or on the website. Surely they're things, given that the Government is committed to addressing the climate emergency as a priority, that are easy fixes? Is that something that you would be open to looking at changing?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Will you be directing the Office of Sport to prioritise some of the changes that are needed urgently in this space?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** This one might be to Ms Jones. Does the Office of Sport currently have any climate change initiatives?

**KAREN JONES:** Through the Minister, not specifically at this stage. However, we have commenced some research work. In fact, we've done a partnership with a university in the tertiary sector around climate change and climate change impact on sport. That work has two streams, if you like. The first stream is what sort of leadership can we show to the sports sector, in particular, around the 96 State Sporting Organisations that we recognise, and what can we do as the lead government agency for sport and active recreation in the State to start



showing some leadership in climate change action for sport. The second stream of that work is something I've alluded to already, which is our current asset portfolio and what it is that we can do to start building in and instilling good environmental and sustainable practices into our own assets.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, have you been briefed in on any of the work that has been done in this space within the Office of Sport?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not at this stage, no. But now that you've brought it to my attention, I will focus on that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** As you know, there has been a significant community concern around the impact of synthetic turf, and we've talked about it previously at budget estimates, particularly in respect of climate change, human safety, animals and the environment generally. The chief scientist report on synthetic turf came out in 2022, and we're still waiting for the Labor Government's response. Have you sought any updates from the planning Minister about this response and when it will be finalised?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've had brief conversations with the Minister in relation to the impact of that report. Keep in mind, there's enormous community pressure within the sporting communities to deliver more and more of these synthetic pitches. There were so many matches that were rained out last year and put a lot of pressure on sports, so it's problematic. If we're going to continue to provide facilities and surfaces for a growing community, we need to get it right, if we're going to go down that path. But synthetic surfaces are used by councils, facility owners and managers in place of natural grass to accommodate demands on sporting fields and open space.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I just wondering if you've spoken with the planning Minister about the Labor Government's response to that report, rather than what synthetic turf is actually used for.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, I have had a conversation and I do understand that there's an enormous cost impact on future surfaces. I might ask Karen whether they've had any dialogue with the planning Minister's office in relation to it.

**KAREN JONES:** Obviously at the Office of Sport, we look at the use of synthetic turf from the sport lens, particularly for our sporting fields. It's really important, from the sport lens anyway, that we acknowledge that some sports are moving towards synthetic surfaces, given the environmental impacts and environmental events that have occurred of late. But we also need to acknowledge that there are some sports out there that have traditionally been played on synthetic surfaces. I call out sports like tennis, hockey and lawn bowls, for instance. We acknowledge the chief scientist's report. We also welcome the draft guidelines that were issued by the department of planning, and there was consultation done earlier this year around those guidelines. As the sporting agency, we have participated in the development of those guidelines and we still remain consulted and engaged on the issue. However, I do feel that if there are any updates to be provided on the Government response and also the final release of the final guidelines, then those questions are best directed to the planning Minister.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, in regard to the *Synthetic Turf in Public Open Space—Guidelines for Decision-Makers*, have you also been consulted on that or is it just the office that's looking into it?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The office is. I haven't had any further consultation in relation to it, no.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Are you aware of where we're up to with those?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** In what respect?

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** In regard to how far along we are in seeing where the guidelines are going to land?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's the planning Minister. I'd maybe ask him, if you get an opportunity.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** While we're all waiting for the planning Minister and whole-of-government response to this, what are you and your office doing to address the real concerns about the use of synthetic turf, particularly around the environment?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think I'll pass that one to Karen. I'm not really sure.

**KAREN JONES:** In relation to what we are doing or what we have done, I think I've mentioned this in budget estimates hearings previously. We are not retrospectively applying any of the guidelines. The guidelines are still in draft form, and we are still awaiting the Government position on the chief scientist's recommendations. Once we have those, of course, as an agency we would fully respect that, and we would go about enforcing those guidelines, through the mechanisms that we have available to us. For the Office of Sport, that means our existing assets, as well as any funding opportunities through any of our grant programs.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, do you think that we'll see any kind of change around the grants and funding from the Office of Sport around synthetic turf and where it has been used, and the Government actually providing grants for the use of synthetic turf?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's a good question. Possibly. In terms of funding—Karen will correct me if I'm wrong—I think we've been more focused on facilities and amenities over the recent year. Keep it in mind that we could have to have a greater look now at how synthetic pitches are rolled out in the future. It is front and centre when we're looking at applications. I think a lot of them are already on foot and you're providing the supplementary support to finish a job off. It gets a bit tricky because they are in progress, but we are obviously concerned that we may have to change our approach moving forward in terms of funding.

**KAREN JONES:** If I can add to that, as I mentioned in my previous answer, we would absolutely look at the guidelines once they are in final form and look at implementing those in relation to future grant programs or future developments around synthetic surfaces. In addition, many of our former grant programs around infrastructure have not just been around what surfaces might be provided, as the Minister has alluded to. It has also been around amenities, particularly female-friendly amenities, to try to encourage women's and girls' participation in sport. But also, other eligible projects have included things like infrastructure upgrades and also drainage upgrades to help improve the durability and sustainability of existing turf fields. I think it's safe to say that once the guidelines are finalised, then the Office of Sport would look at enforcing those guidelines.

**The CHAIR:** Minister, I wonder whether you can provide an update, from your perspective, on the Coopers Island issue. I raised this with you in the previous estimates and the answer I received, on notice, was that Crown Lands met with DPI Fisheries on 22 January, there were discussions around safety issues present at Coopers Island causeway, and Crown Lands had installed signage restricting access. Do you have an update as to whether access for recreational fishing has been restored?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Thanks for that question. The Eurobodalla Shire Council, New South Wales police and Crown Lands have been working together to resolve conflict over access and use of the Coopers Island causeway by recreational fishers and the local landowner who uses the causeway for vehicle and stock access. I might ask Mel to give us some greater detail on where we have progressed in that regard.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** This one was a complex one because it actually relates to a very narrow causeway, which is tricky.

**The CHAIR:** I've been there.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** What we found is that we were required to do a fairly detailed search to establish ownership of the land, and the causeway is actually a fixture attached to a privately held block. So it is private land. In light of that, we will be addressing the signage issue, because it's essentially private land but we're also working with the fishers out there to find alternative spots for them to be able to access, more safely, areas where they can fish. It was a complex one. We had to do a fair bit of archival searching and get the Crown Solicitor's advice to establish ownership. Now that we have, we are going to continue to work with council, but also the recreational fishers, to look for alternative spots that are, in fact, safer for them to access and use.

**The CHAIR:** Excellent. Thank you. I might just change tack. Minister, anecdotally we're hearing a lot about volunteering being on the decline. Fewer people are volunteering. Whether that's a symptom of COVID or a hangover from COVID is unclear. Is there any work being done by your departments around how we kickstart people volunteering for local sporting clubs et cetera? Kids' local sport doesn't run without mums and dads and people volunteering. If it's on the decline, that's not good for kids' local sport.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Absolutely, without volunteers—especially at a grassroots level, a community sport level—it just won't function. It won't happen. I'm very grateful to all of the volunteers who are out there. It's very important that we work together with all of the State sporting organisations to provide whatever support we can to look after the interests of the volunteers and protect the volunteers from undue risk or abuse in and around sporting venues. I've got a bit of a note in terms of what we've done in relation to referee and volunteer safety—the work that we've done in and around that. I think it's important that I give you a complete answer. You spoke about COVID being one of the reasons why volunteers are dropping off. There are violent incidents around sport and community sport such as attacks on referees, brawls in car parks, antisocial behaviour that leads to violence and other criminal acts. That is dealt with under our laws and by our law enforcement agencies. The New South Wales Government's position is that violence and crime are matters to be dealt with by the police.

I've had too many people who have volunteered in the past come up to me and say, "I just can't put up with this type of behaviour or these types of incidents anymore." Our sporting organisations have a responsibility to deal with all of that antisocial behaviour which occurs at their sport, through robust codes of conduct, policies and disciplinary processes. I've held two round tables addressing unacceptable conduct at sport. These led to the

formation of a Fair Play Network where sports regularly come together to discuss ideas and strategies to address poor behaviour. This Fair Play Network is chaired by Sports NSW and supported by the Office of Sport, and in partnership with the Office of Sport it recently piloted de-escalation workshops that saw over 70 people from the sector gain skills in de-escalating heightened situations to reduce the risk of aggression and violence occurring at sport.

The network met three times in early 2024 and developed an action plan. I recently approved \$500,000 for key elements of this plan that will be delivered over the next three years, including further de-escalation training for people in the sector, especially ground managers and club presidents; piloting a software solution for incident and case management—it's very important that our volunteers feel safe, Chair; developing new fair play resources for use at local sportsgrounds, such as audio and video messages; and developing a campaign to promote fair play across community sport. Campaigns such as Shoosh for Kids and Play by the Rules also assist in promoting positive spectator behaviour. I look forward to reporting further on the work that we're doing. It is very important that we continue to honour our volunteers at events throughout the year. I'm very proud to say that our sporting codes do that, and I try to attend as many of those events as possible.

**The CHAIR:** Is that plan that you mentioned public facing or is it something internal?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The campaigns have been public facing. We've promoted them throughout the process.

**The CHAIR:** But your actual plan, where you said you are attributing \$500,000, is that public facing at all?

**KAREN JONES:** As the Minister said, the Fair Play Network was established after two round tables hosted by the Minister with the sports sector and identifying any sort of bad behaviour at our sporting events, particularly at our community sporting events, and how we might be able to address those. That Fair Play Network is chaired by the peak body, which is Sport NSW, and it is attended by several sports which are members of Sport NSW, but they are also representatives of, as I mentioned before, the 96 State Sporting Organisations that we have in this State. It is also supported by the Office of Sport and, as the Minister has gone through, there are a number of initiatives that are coming out of that network. I think it's really important to say at this point, though, that the vast majority of community sport that's played on the weekend is harmonious and it is incredibly beneficial to the members of our community.

To your point earlier, Chair, in relation to volunteering and the decline in volunteering numbers, we've alluded to today that sideline bad behaviour is one thing that does detract away volunteers, but the sports sector—not just the Office of Sport but more nationally, particularly through the Australian Sports Commission, there are strong volunteering initiatives to try to retain volunteers in sport. In fact, if you go to their website, you'll see their actual volunteering plan, that we contributed to and which we actively participate in, along with the broader volunteering initiatives that are coming out of the Department of Communities and Justice in trying to retain our volunteers, not just in sport but all throughout our community and not-for-profit activities.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. I only have 30 seconds. I'll pass to the Opposition.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, you spoke about Service NSW—can I pause for one second. As a point of order, I think the clock has been reset incorrectly.

**The CHAIR:** No, it's the remaining time to take us to 10.45 a.m.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, you spoke about the Service NSW Business Bureau, which you launched in October of last year. A new structure, of course, was meant to be announced by the Service NSW staff, including the Business Bureau, last week. That announcement has now been delayed. Did you or anyone from your office instruct Service NSW to delay that announcement?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I haven't.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You haven't? Nobody from your office?

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

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you know why it's delayed?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Sorry?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Do you know why that announcement is delayed?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I've got no idea.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Sorry, you haven't been briefed as to why the announcement has been delayed on quite a big change to something that you've lauded as one of your major achievements?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's just a timing thing. Let's not get too worked up about this.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So we'll take it that is just a timing thing. When will you give staff in the Business Bureau certainty about whether or not they're being retrenched at Service NSW?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** They're not being retrenched. I've got the Business Bureau fully funded.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So there will be no impact at all on the Business Bureau at Service NSW as part of this restructure?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The Business Bureau budget allocation for 2024-25 is \$30 million, including a \$25 million base budget plus \$5 million additional funding for frontline staff to maintain essential services. This provides for the business concierge, frontline support, business digital tools, delivery of a small business charter, and business communications and awareness channels.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So no changes at all?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We heard it here first.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes. There it is.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We'll see if that ends up being the case, Minister.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, has the business case for a roof at Accor Stadium been completed?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There was a business case completed. I think Kerrie has got some greater detail on that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Have you seen the business case, Minister? We can ask questions of the bureaucrats in the afternoon. I'm just wondering if you've seen a business case, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've seen some information.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So you haven't seen a whole business case?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I can't say I've seen the whole business case, no.

**KERRIE MATHER:** It hasn't been completed.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It hasn't been completed; there you go.

**KERRIE MATHER:** The business case will be completed later this year and actually submitted through government processes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is there a date or a timeline?

**KERRIE MATHER:** It will be probably in the next two months and then it will progress through the Infrastructure NSW Treasury gateway process.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, have you asked for that business case to be completed at a particular time?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** From what I understand—and Kerrie can correct me if I'm misinformed—that was commissioned prior. Was there a request for a business case for a roof on Accor?

**KERRIE MATHER:** Yes.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Was that prior to my engagement as Minister or was it something that was in the pipeline?

**KERRIE MATHER:** It was an allocation from the prior Government—a grant to complete the business case. So a business case was partially completed in consultation with Infrastructure NSW. We were initially thinking it was going to be a lower tier-rated project. They decided, because it would be the first retractable roof completed in New South Wales, that it required a higher tier rating, which means additional requirements to be included in the business case, which then went through a process to do that. During the course of that process and as a result of media commentary following the NRL season opening at Allegiant Stadium earlier this year, there

was a lot of commentary about a fixed-roof option as opposed to a retractable roof. So we decided it would be prudent to consider a fixed-roof option as well, so that was included.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Was that at the direction of the Minister?

**KERRIE MATHER:** No, it was a judgement call by the management on the basis that—Infrastructure NSW appoint an independent panel, and one of the things that the panel looks at through these processes is what options have you considered. Given the very extensive commentary around a fixed-roof option, we thought it would be prudent to include that so the business case wasn't delayed by their request to actually consider that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I'm asking the Minister questions first and foremost: Could you please provide me with the cost of the business case?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I haven't got that in my head. As we said earlier, it was a funding allocation from the previous Government.

**KERRIE MATHER:** It was a grant of \$5 million.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Kerrie may have that, or we can take that on notice if you like.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Did you approve the \$5 million as part of your budget?

**KERRIE MATHER:** It was a carryover. It was an allocation from the prior Government and it continues to carry over. It's mostly technical assessments that actually are included in that amount.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are you drafting a Cabinet submission to put that business case to Cabinet, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The business case hasn't been completed yet, so I'm not drafting anything at the moment.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Depending on what the business case says, then you'll make a judgement, because you've said already that you would like to have—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** This is a decision I'll make in due course. It's something that we'll consider and make in due course, but there hasn't been a real desire to pursue that as a priority at this stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You were keen after Vegas but then the Premier said, "Nice to have, but we don't have the—"

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Vegas was quite impressive. I think there were about 120-mile winds out there and it was pouring rain. We saw how there was no interruption to the matches on the day and how good it was to have a covered facility. We want lots of things in life, but I was quite impressed with the calibre. It was just a comment.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, when you came back you said you were very keen about it. As has been alluded to, there was a lot of media. The Premier very quickly said that there were no plans right now, and he essentially kiboshed the plan. I'm wondering if you've spoken to the Premier about that and why the business case is continuing if he has said that there aren't any plans for it to occur.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I speak to the Premier on a lot of things. I commented on how good it was in Vegas to have had a covered stadium. At no stage did I say that I was going to sit there and fight to the death to get a cover on the stadium. It's a decision that is made with a lot of consideration and, given the economic settings that we inherited—we inherited some pretty tough economic settings.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** But you've chosen to continue spending money on this business case despite the Premier saying that there are no plans right now.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There are no plans right now, but a business case can still be valuable if we do have plans tomorrow.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** These figures that were reported in the media are around \$150 million to \$250 million. Then there's \$300 million that was spoken about as well. Can I clarify what figures we're expecting to come out in this business case? Where do these figures come from?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't know where you got your figures from. There are people speculating out there. It's not my statement.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** In February the Premier said that he got an estimate in the range of \$150 million to \$250 million. Where did he get that estimate?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've got no idea.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is your department talking to the Premier?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It wasn't a discussion with me.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So he's making it up?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I didn't say he made it up; I just don't know where he got it from. You're asking me a question, and I can't answer.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** You didn't give him that figure?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Do you want me to make something up to reply to that?

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** No, I'm just confirming that you didn't speak to him about that figure.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, because I had no idea what a final cost would be.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, you might remember last time around—despite my love of the Wests Tigers, who've had a couple of wins, which is good and unusual—that we discussed whether Souths had approached you at all to move to Allianz Stadium. Subsequent to those budget estimates hearings, have Souths approached you, or Venues NSW, to move to Allianz Stadium?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** They haven't approached me. I don't know whether they've approached Venues NSW.

**KERRIE MATHER:** What we have talked to them about is that they have three or four uncontracted games, which we'd love to host in the network. We have talked to them about a couple of games at Allianz, but they're still under discussion.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So that's the status at the moment. We might return to that this afternoon. Minister, what is the status of the NRL Grand Final beyond 2024?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We are working on that in conjunction with Minister Graham. It's John Graham's responsibility to secure that.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You can't confirm—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Maybe you could ask him what the conversations are. I don't really want to openly discuss whatever dealings or conversations have been held there.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So at this stage we can't confirm the NRL grand final in Sydney in 2025.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, we can't confirm in 2025.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, are you aware during the winter sport season that Sydney broke a record for weekend rainfall and that children's sport was cancelled across Sydney thousands of times?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, I was aware. I discussed that earlier.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you have an understanding of how many times? Have you asked the department for briefings on that?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There have been conversations in relation to a horrific loss of games and weekends that kids had to make up. There was a lot of stress on parents and, yes, it's an issue. Unfortunately, it goes back into the conversations that we were having earlier in relation to synthetic pitches and how synthetic pitches in many respects provide a solution. But whatever other conversations have been held through the Office of Sport—do you want to touch on that?

**KAREN JONES:** I can—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I can ask that later this afternoon, thank you. Minister, are you aware that many associations, like the North West Sydney Football association, are not refunded by councils for field hire when fields are closed?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's an agreement between them and the council.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I'm asking if you were aware of that.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** You're not. This season there six or seven weekends that were missed, and you weren't aware that sporting clubs were not able to use the fields but were still being charged?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've got a general understanding that there were a lot of games that were missed, but it hasn't come up.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** But you didn't understand that those clubs were being—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't think they've written to me. I'm not sure whether the Office of Sport has had any dealings with it. Karen, have you had any?

**KAREN JONES:** Through the Minister, the Office of Sport is absolutely aware of the weather impacts that it's had on community sport.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Have you briefed the Minister on that?

**KAREN JONES:** I think the important thing in this case—the answer is no, I haven't specifically briefed the Minister on the weather impacts. I think, anecdotally, we all know what the impacts are, and there has been very limited representation to us on those issues. I'd say the reason for that is because the majority—the vast majority, in fact—of community sport facilities out there across New South Wales are owned and controlled by local government and local councils. The issue that you raise in relation to the North West Sydney Football association, that is an agreement that's achieved between the council and them. It does not involve the State Government.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, now that you are aware of this, are you going to look at providing some support for local sporting organisations that have been left worse off as a result of these field closures?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm very happy to have the conversation with them.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That's excellent to hear. If you're just finding out about this now—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I understood that there were a lot of clubs and games that were cancelled.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Will you offer support to impacted communities?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** If I get a request to look at specific hardships or problems—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So nothing proactive?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** —I'm happy to assist.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We've spoken about better playing surfaces, but also drainage would avoid field closures in some instances. Have you taken any steps to rectify the situation around playing surfaces and drainage to provide better access to communities who are using these facilities?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll see what the Office of Sport's been doing, through Karen. It's an operational—

**KAREN JONES:** Like I've said before in my evidence this morning, drainage projects have been eligible under our grant programs that we've had. In fact, with all the grant programs that we've run in former years, there are around about 400-odd projects that are currently in delivery across the State as we speak. Of those projects, a number of those—I can take the number on notice, if you like—refer to drainage.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Yes, that would be helpful.

**KAREN JONES:** We can provide that figure.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Could you also please provide on notice the number of games that you're aware of that have been cancelled?

**KAREN JONES:** Through the Minister, we can do that. That would take significant time. We don't actually have collected data on the draws of every sporting organisation across the State every weekend. I think at the last count, roughly, there are around 12,000 clubs across the State. To actually draw that figure out would take the Office of Sport some time. By all means, as the Minister has already alluded to, we are happy to have those conversations with State sporting organisations as the peak bodies in this State to talk about the weather impacts on sport. Unfortunately, I don't think there is a quick solution. But for us, again, there is a very limited impact that the State Government can have at this stage, given that the vast majority of those fields, as I've already

said, are actually owned and controlled by local councils and they're the ones who make the decisions around closures.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, Penrith Stadium: First the Minns Labor Government promised a new stadium at Penrith to match the Coalition's commitment, and then it became only a refurbished stadium. We now know that it's in fact 1½ grandstands, and on 19 August a further 200 seats were slashed from the eastern grandstand due to a residential property developer and their concerns. Will you admit that you're delivering the wrong stadium for Penrith, on the wrong site, and that the people of Penrith are ultimately the ones that are going to miss out?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll absolutely not admit that. As soon as I became the Minister for Sport and also developments, I engaged with the Penrith Panthers. It was clearly understood from day dot there was a \$308 million commitment to rebuild Penrith Stadium, and we've worked in with that cost envelope. There's a scheme that everyone's happy with that has been put in place. Yes, there have been a few adjustments here and there to accommodate certain planning glitches, but I think it's all going—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You think it's a winner.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's a winner. It's all going as per schedule, and we're looking to deliver that for the 2026 season. I think Venues NSW and Projects have done a very good job of consulting with the Panthers and putting the whole scheme together in a very short period of time.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister Kamper, is Penrith Stadium below the probable maximum flood level?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not sure. I'll have to throw back to Tom Gellibrand, who'd probably have some greater knowledge in relation to that technical question.

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** I don't believe so. Sorry, did you say "below"?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Below, yes.

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** Yes, it is below.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, do you think the probable maximum flood level is an appropriate flood planning level, in that case?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I can't comment on that. Tom, would you—

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** Your question goes to floodplain management and planning decisions within flood plains, which is obviously a really important question. My engagement in this area is in relation to the Penrith football stadium, which is proposed to house people during events. It's not a hospital; it's not for permanent accommodation. The extent to which that's a suitable use within a flood plain or in areas in and around the probable maximum flood is a matter that Planning would take into consideration in assessing a development application. It's an existing stadium at the moment, and the planning process that we go through to get approval for the stadium will, no doubt, address the potential impacts of flooding.

**The CHAIR:** We've only got a couple of minutes left, so I'll stay with the Opposition until 10.45 a.m.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, in supplementary budget estimates earlier in the year, you indicated that you were concerned about postcodes being ineligible to access the local sport defibrillator program and undertook to review your future approach. Has this review occurred?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've got some notes on that. I might just go into a little bit of a history there. It's in '23-24.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** No, I don't need the history; I'm just wondering if you've reviewed the approach for your plans.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The review's on the way. It's in progress.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** It's in progress, so you haven't made any findings yet as part of the review?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not as yet, because it's in progress.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you have a timeline or a date that you've asked the department to report on?



**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** How much longer have we got, Karen? Maybe Karen can tell us the times and dates.

**KAREN JONES:** We have heard what the concerns were around the local defibrillator program and, in particular, the use of postcodes related to SEIFA indexes. We are currently reviewing that component, as the Minister has said. That review is underway right now and we are looking forward to opening the program and releasing the revised guidelines later this year.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Will those revised guidelines relate to postcodes?

**KAREN JONES:** We are looking at addressing that issue, yes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, has funding been set aside for the continuation of that program for 2024-25?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, it has, and \$500,000 has been set aside to continue the program.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When's the next round opening?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll let Karen get this. I can't remember dates.

**KAREN JONES:** Through the Minister, like I've just given my evidence on, we are reviewing last year's guidelines with a view to reopening the program later this year.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, have you set up any directive related to how the program should be funded specifically related to postcodes? Can people be assured that no matter where they live, or in what postcode, they will have access to a defibrillator?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've asked for a review. That was because—I did say at the last—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** But what do you want to achieve through this program?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I want to try to make sure that the communities that really need a defib, or haven't got access to one, that they get them. I want to call out Heartbeat of Football for the work that they've done to promote the culture to get this happening within our community.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** But the problem was that the program didn't work in the first place because the postcode system was unfair.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** You're saying what am I doing in relation to that space.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** You have to fix your own problem.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I have supported and worked with Heartbeat of Football to continue the good work that they're doing in this space. I am focused on it. I've had two people that are close to me that passed away on a pitch—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** —and there was one quite recently.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I'm sorry to hear that.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's important that we get it out there—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I agree.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** —but it's also important that we get it to a lot of the poorer communities that really haven't had the ability—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** As you obviously know, unfortunately heart attacks don't discriminate by postcode or socio-economic status.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I appreciate that but we don't want communities missing out because they don't have the necessary personnel or ability to put together applications. I want to make sure we're hitting all of them, so the review will look to cover all those situations.

**KAREN JONES:** That's correct, Minister. As I said before, we have heard the concerns around the SEIFA indexing and that is the key component of the review around last year's guidelines in comparison to this year's. There is a budget allocation, as the Minister has already alluded to and, as I've already said, the revised program will open before the end of this year.

**The CHAIR:** I'll throw to the Government.

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** The Government has no questions, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** I'm shocked. Cover up. We'll now break for morning tea.

**(Short adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back after that brief interlude. I will now throw back to Ms Hurst to start off questions from the crossbench.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I've got one follow-up question in regard to our discussion around synthetic turf. Minister, you said that you are concerned that you might need to change the approach around funding. Can you expand what you mean by what your concerns are?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We have a situation where we need to comply with the guidelines. It's going to be much more expensive.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Expensive for real grass, you mean?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Expensive to deliver a synthetic pitch in accordance with the guidelines. They are concerns. It's going to put a greater cost burden if we were to continue to rollout a synthetic pitch. If it has an extra—I'm just throwing numbers around—50 per cent or 60 per cent cost to address issues that are brought up within the guidelines, then that is a concern.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** With the increased cost, is that coming from using alternatives to synthetic, or are you thinking of using a synthetic turf that is more environmentally friendly? What is this increase?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** A synthetic turf that's more environmentally friendly that would meet or address the issues in accordance with the guidelines.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Your ministerial diary shows that you met with Mr Peter V'landys and Premier Chris Minns on 25 January this year. Can I ask what the purpose of that meeting was?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** On 25 January. It should be recorded in the—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I don't think that there was much detail, actually. You don't recall that meeting at all?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not specifically on that day. Whatever is in the diary is what we would have met on. I'm not really sure whether it was with the—I can't really recall.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You don't recall what that meeting was, and you don't recall what was discussed?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No. that was eight or nine months ago.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you recall who sought to arrange that meeting? Did Mr V'landys reach out to you to organise that meeting?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I would have to have a look at the diary entry. Have you got a copy of the diary entry or what the purpose of the meeting was?

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I don't actually think I have one on me.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It generally has the purpose of the meeting.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** The purposes of some of these other meetings are very broad.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Typically, your diary says "portfolio matters".

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** "Portfolio matters" is usually what it says. That doesn't really give us much detail.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, it could have been—I'm not sure, as I said—in relation to the NRL, was it? I'm not sure. I'll take it on notice, if I can?

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** If you can take that on notice in regard to who actually sought to arrange the meeting, that would be really useful.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, okay.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Was that the first time that you've met with Mr Peter V'landys, or have you met with him prior to that meeting in January?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've met Peter on a number of occasions during events. I've been invited to NRL events.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So you've met him several times before that meeting.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, I've often met up with Peter.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Just to confirm, Minister, the diary says "portfolio matters" in regard to that meeting on 25 January. You don't recall what was discussed?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm the sports Minister, and he's the head of NRL. I suppose—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So, probably the NRL?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, probably NRL.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** In February this year you went to Las Vegas. Was that at the invitation of Mr Peter V'landys?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I was asked whether I'd go along. At the end of the day I discussed it with the Premier, and I thought it was a good event to attend and a good initiative. It was a really good milestone, in terms of breaking through internationally, for NRL. There was a request whether I would come, but I chose to do that and I chose to do a lot of other things in Vegas in relation to where I could gain some ideas and understand how to promote greater content into our stadiums here in New South Wales. I had some great meetings with a whole heap of organisations there.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Can you tell me a little bit about some of the other meetings that you had while you were there?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** In order, the first meeting I had was with the Golden Knights, the ice hockey there at Las Vegas, to have a look at how—that was a really interesting exercise, because you saw a sport that was pretty non-existent in Las Vegas. Nevada had very small grassroots participation—something like 90 or so grassroots players. In a period of five years they've won the major cup. They have 6,500—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So you met with ice hockey.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** And looked at the way they've promoted the game and how they've increased the popularity of the sport. I gained ideas of the way they conduct themselves, the way they operate and how we could possibly transfer or get some ideas in terms of improving venue's content.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Who else did you meet with, other than ice hockey?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I went to the Las Vegas raceway there. That was really interesting. I don't want to say too much about that meeting because—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Was that horseracing?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, motor racing.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Motor racing, yes.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We compete against Queensland and Victoria for content and for opportunities, so I'd rather not go too much into that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Yes, and who else did you meet with?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That was quite an exciting and quite an interesting meeting. I went to the UFC. That was great, and it was quite valuable. I had a look at the way that they operate and actually touched on a concept of maybe partnering with PCYC. That type of sport is pretty much PCYC grassroots. I remember as a young kid that combat sport was—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Can I move you along to get who the other meetings were with?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That progressed to the point where, a number of months later, they established a partnership here in New South Wales which will support the PCYC.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, I've just asked you who you had the meetings with.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** With the UFC. I'm trying to complete my answer.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Ice hockey, motor racing and the UFC.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, the UFC. I met with the tourism agency in Las Vegas. That was a really interesting meeting to understand how they encourage content and events in their State. I got ideas from there. It was quite valuable. Just that outcome with the UFC and PCYC, in itself, I think was really worthy.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** They were the main meetings that you had?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I was also there to support the NRL. I'm 60 years of age, as of today. I can't remember a greater year for the NRL.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Happy birthday!

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Thanks. Yes, it's my birthday today.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** She's late to the party.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Keep it mind, Sue, when you jump in.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, your ministerial diary disclosure shows that you also attended the NRL chairman's welcome on 29 February.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I was getting to that. You asked me what did I do there, and I'm trying to go through it. Yes, I attended the NRL events. There was the big street fair which I got to a little bit late because I finished late from the UFC.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You got to the NRL chairman's welcome late, did you say?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I went to the chairman's welcome lunch. I'm just doing this off my head now, but maybe I can refer to my notes if you want.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Did you have any other meetings or events that you attended with Mr V'landys, or was it just the NRL lunch?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It was the NRL lunch, the street event—the street activation. That was a fantastic experience. It was great and I was really proud to be there, supporting our wonderful NRL on behalf of the New South Wales community.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Yes. Any other events? So it was the lunch and the street activation event?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I also went to the stadium and inspected the stadium. That was separately.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** That was with Mr V'landys, was it?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I don't believe so. He may have been there separately and we might have crossed paths. I can't properly recall, but I specifically went there with my chief of staff. We were guests of the stadium, who took us through and had a look at all the different—the way the roof works and the moving floor.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Just to clarify, the only two events that you attended when Mr V'landys was also there was the NRL chairman's welcome and the street activation event?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The games as well. I was there on the games day. There was also an event—another street event—earlier on when I saw him there. When I say I saw him, I said, "Hello," and just got into the event. What else was there? There was one night—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do you want to maybe take it on notice to give a list?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No. I went for dinner one night together with a whole heap of other NRL personalities.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** And racing?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I don't have really any connection with racing.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I just know that they both attended those events.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't know if any racing—I just knew NRL people that were there.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Hello, Minister. I just want to ask you a few questions about Crown lands and conservation. Are you open to Crown lands being identified for conservation purposes and being added to the protected area network, transferred over to a conservation agency?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not really across any movement that way.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** But as Minister, just as a kind of proposition, do you have interests in seeing lands in the Crown land system, for which you're responsible for, being transferred to the protected area network of New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, I think I'd look at that on a case-by-case basis.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** If the community was to nominate to you and say, "Hey, this land's currently under your care and control, but we think it's got high conservation value, it would be better under a different tenure system," is that something that you're open to?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes. I'm not offended by it, let's put it that way.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I would hope not. Is that the only process open to do that?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** If I could ask Mel to give some greater information on what the processes are.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** We do have areas of the Crown estate that are directly managed for conservation purposes already. For example, Urunga wetlands were restored from a previously quite contaminated former mine and is now a wetlands site.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Can I ask about that. Is Crown Lands really the best and most appropriate body to be managing those lands? Is there a view within Crown Lands that they should be transferred to national parks and have that kind of conservation status elevated?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Crown Lands is an incredibly diverse estate, so in some circumstances we have done transfers to national parks, so we do them. We've done them in the past and we'll no doubt do them again.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** What is the view in terms of internally? When would you do that and why? What drives that process?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** The whole portfolio is managed from a perspective of delivering community value in context, so there are times when there is land that's recognised for having high conservation value that might be neighbouring a national park, and there have been situations where that makes more sense for it to belong and be managed as part of the reserve estate. We've done that in the past. I don't have a list here, but I can provide a list on notice. Similarly, for example, former forestry sites come into Crown estate when they're no longer being used for forestry. It is a diverse and dynamic portfolio, but where there's a merit-based case and there's an area with really strong conservation values that national parks colleagues are interested in as well, then we can work collaboratively around it.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Is it more that they would they contact you?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** It can be both. There are examples both ways.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** So it's flexible and agile?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Is that a good process, Minister? You're happy with that?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think so. I can't see why—flexible and agile is a good thing.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I should say, we also have areas that are under stewardship arrangements, which is again managed by the Environment portfolio, but we have parts of Crown land that have been dedicated to that purpose too.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** You mean stewardship in terms of—

**MELANIE HAWYES:** The conservation.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** —the biodiversity conservation stewardship?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes, correct.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** How many of those are happening on Crown land?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** If you want me to provide some more examples, I might get that and come back in the afternoon. I didn't bring that in today.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** That would be great, thank you. Minister, are you committed to the goal of protecting 30 per cent of New South Wales land and water by 2030? Sorry, protecting land and water by 2030? It's a Commonwealth goal.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, of course.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Is it a goal you're familiar with?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not overly familiar with, but in principle, of course, I support that.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Have you taken any actions in your portfolio and Crown Lands to assist with that goal, or would you just be waiting to—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not in particular, but with Crown Lands operationally, I don't know whether there's been any action taken.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Obviously we'll work with our colleagues around whole-of-government type commitments. But, as I mentioned before, we already have a partnership with national parks in many respects. We're collegiate portfolios. We have handed parts of the reserve over to national parks to manage. The one I can remember in most recent times was Killalea, which is now being managed by national parks. We will follow directions of the government of the day, but we already do work in that way with our Environment portfolio colleagues.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** But no actual proactive role, so I suppose with the land audit process that's been undertaken, has there been any kind of proactive nomination in relation to that process?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** As part of the profiling of land we'll make recommendations. I think Leon could probably best advise on that in relation to if land is more suitable for other purposes.

**LEON WALKER:** The land audit wouldn't consider that.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Wouldn't consider it?

**LEON WALKER:** No.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I've had some conversations with Mr Walker, but as part of that land audit process, if lands have got threatened ecological communities, rather than just strike those out because they're not appropriate or suitable for development, has there been any kind of proactive process to say, "Perhaps these lands are more suitable to be considered for the protected area network more broadly"?

**LEON WALKER:** That would be up to the existing government landowner to determine that.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Is the land audit process then not necessarily speaking to—is that conversation not happening? It's siloed into—

**LEON WALKER:** In respect of this particular area you're talking about, the purpose of the land audit is to identify land that's suitable for primarily residential uses. It's eliminating land that has, given your example, environmental issues or considerations that need to be protected, but it's not then proactively doing anything else with it.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** In questions taken on notice at last estimates, I received a response that details identifying individual lots as part of the land audit are Cabinet in confidence, understandably, but is the number of sites that have been processed as part of the audit that have threatened ecological communities considered Cabinet in confidence, or can I be told the number of sites?

**LEON WALKER:** Can I take that on notice?

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Thank you, I'd be very grateful. If that's the case, can information also be provided about the audit statistics in terms of pollution statistics as well?

**LEON WALKER:** We definitely have those issues included in the criteria. I don't know if the team are tracking in terms of their filtering those specific issues to be able to give you a count quickly, but we could do it.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Minister, what's the timeline for the completion of the land audit?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The land audit is ongoing work. I don't think we have a deadline at this stage. But it's ongoing and we'll just be releasing land as it goes, in certain blocks.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** With that, are you notifying where you're coming up with contaminated lands and so on? Are you notifying the EPA or other agencies? Or are they already aware of these issues on our lands?

**LEON WALKER:** In the land audit, the first filter looks at public information. So if a site is identified as being contaminated on EPA's register, all it's doing is picking that up and identifying that it wouldn't be suitable for a residential—

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** So it's not doing any new work?

**LEON WALKER:** It's only when a site is identified as potentially being suited for residential use and we do more site-specific due diligence that it might identify that there's contamination on the site that wasn't previously known. If it was of a nature or serious enough, then we might trigger further reporting on that site.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Can I ask about the Coffs Harbour foreshore redevelopment? I don't know if anybody has asked. What's the plan with that? What's the latest? Are you planning to put a rezoning proposal or have you decided that it's actually a really bad plan and the community doesn't want it and the council would rather the land be used for other purposes? Where are you up to, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** In relation to Coffs Harbour, there has been a lot of conversation about the site. It's the site right next to the rail track. It has a road beyond that and then you have the foreshore area.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** I've been to the site a number of times and stood with community, and they don't want your development there.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not convinced of that. Property and Development NSW—and I'll give you a full and complete answer on this—is continuing to lead the New South Wales Government's revitalisation plans for the Coffs Harbour Jetty Foreshore Precinct. It has the capacity to meaningfully deliver on important planning policy aspirations—namely, evolving the regional tourism offering and economy, as well as delivering much-needed housing supply. Much of the precinct is currently inaccessible for public enjoyment. Residual railway land is fenced off and separated from public access, while gravelled areas provide overflow parking. These do not reflect the potential of this foreshore. Importantly, the land is not being developed for profit. Any revenues that are generated from that site will be reinvested back into that precinct. I think it's important to appreciate that. The community is and always has been at the heart of the master plan. We encourage people have to their say again when the rezoning proposal progresses to public exhibition, which is, I think, anticipated later this year. That's where it's at, at the moment.

**Ms SUE HIGGINSON:** Any affordable housing—

**The CHAIR:** I'll pass to the Opposition. Sorry, Ms Higginson. It was well over time.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, we have a bit of a segue with the land audit.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Just before we start, I'd like to answer questions taken on notice before.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No, we can do this at the end.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** We can't do it in our time.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Point of order: We're not going through with questions on notice now.

**The CHAIR:** Sorry, Minister. We can do it at the end of your session. I'll allow some time at the end for you to wrap up and come to us with anything before 1.00 p.m.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to the land audit and your evidence to Ms Higginson, the Premier had indicated previously that it would be completed within months. You say that it's now ongoing. We've talked about Tony Barber before. This is a bit like *Lamb Chop's Play-Along*. It's the audit that never ends. Now that you've gotten through and have actually identified four sites, when will the first home be developed as a result of the land audit?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's a pretty cynical type of question.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It's a pretty clear question. When will the first home be developed? When will the keys be available?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** My job is to deliver land so we can build homes on it. For 12 years, you had plenty of opportunity—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So your answer is that this is not your job. Is that right?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, that's not my answer, but it was definitely not your job. You neglected that for 12 years. This is the problem.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It's a very a simple question.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We've taken on that task—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You can't give me a time frame.

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** —because of your inaction for 12 years. I don't blame you because you weren't a Minister.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you for the display, Minister, but you don't have an answer with respect—

**The CHAIR:** Mr Farlow, stop. Purely for the benefit of Hansard, can we return to question and answer, question and answer—not question and answer over the top of each other. I don't know how Hansard will transcribe any of that. I would say it will come out as "catfight ensued", perhaps. Can we give each other a bit of space to answer and ask questions, please?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The question of when the first home is going to be built as a result—I can't give you a date on that. There—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you, Minister. That's the answer to the question. You've indicated that 30,000 homes will be delivered over the next four years as part of this audit. Is that just the land for the 30,000 homes identified or are you actually promising to deliver 30,000 homes, constructed, with keys in doors, by July 2028?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The 30,000 homes would be delivered on the surplus Government land that we're—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So it is keys in doors and constructed by July 2028. That's the marker.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** There has been mention of 44 sites. So far, you've announced four. When will the other 40 be announced?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** They'll be announced in due course.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Will they be announced in stages or tranches?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There will be tranches, and it will be beyond the 44 after that. That's a work in progress.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've announced four sites. One of those is 301 Samantha Riley Drive in Kellyville. Why was the parcel at 301 Samantha Riley Drive, Kellyville, listed for sale through Colliers Sydney West, with expressions of interest to close on Wednesday 13 March 2024?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I can't answer that question.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You're not aware of that.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You had no knowledge of that before? You didn't step in to stop it being sold off or marketed by Colliers West at all?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Do you have any idea how much was paid to Colliers to market this property?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've got no idea. I'll take it on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Can you also take on notice the final cost of Colliers for marketing the property?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to 301 Samantha Riley Drive at Kellyville, does that also include the parcel at 301B, or is it just 301?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't have particular—

**LEON WALKER:** We can take that on notice.



**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, given that your EIE for Kellyville and Bella Vista TOD proposes to increase heights on the site to 67.5 metres, with a floor-space ratio of 2:2 on a site that's more than 21,000 square metres, why are you only proposing to deliver 75 to 83 new homes on that site?

**LEON WALKER:** We'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, you've indicated Homes NSW were developing this site, and 50 per cent are to be social and affordable homes. What is the breakdown for social and affordable on the site?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I will take it on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Will the affordable homes be managed by Homes NSW?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** On that particular site?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Yes.

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

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We've got a lot on notice.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't know whether final decisions have been made with these things.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Who is the current entity that owns that site at 301 Samantha Riley Drive in Kellyville?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll take it on notice. They're really specific details.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, it's budget estimates. You're the Minister for Lands and Property. You're the "Land Audit King".

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll take it on notice. Do you think I've got the titleholder and every single bit of detail on hundreds and thousands of properties?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've only got four sites. It's not like I'm asking you to go through thousands. These are the four that have been announced. You'll take on notice as to who is the current holder at the site?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, I'll take it on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** This is one thing you should be able to answer. This site is supposed to be developed by Homes NSW. Is that correct? That's what was in your press release.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Take my word for it—good. I'm glad you're across the detail. In terms of that land, will that land be transferred to Homes NSW or will it be retained by its existing landholder at present?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That transaction will be determined.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So that hasn't been determined yet?

**LEON WALKER:** For homes that will be developed by Homes NSW, yes, they will take title to those sites.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What's the accounting treatment for this transaction in terms of the title? Has there been any valuation done of the property in terms of its accounting treatment?

**LEON WALKER:** That question would be best targeted to the Treasurer.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So you don't have an answer with respect to that. Is there any work that has been undertaken by Property and Development NSW in taking a land valuation of these sites that have been announced as of yet?

**LEON WALKER:** Property and Development NSW facilitate the process. Valuations are actually performed by Valuation NSW.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Will there be any budgetary impact for either entity as a result of the transaction from its current holder, which—I'll have a stab at it—I suspect is probably Sydney Metro, to Homes NSW? Will there be a budgetary impact at all?

**LEON WALKER:** The simple answer is yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What will that budgetary impact be?

**LEON WALKER:** That's another good question for the Treasurer.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We will put those questions to the Treasurer then. Now let's turn to another one of those sites—North Eveleigh. You've indicated that there will be 500 homes there. Are you still proceeding to develop all of the 10-hectare Redfern-North Eveleigh parcel of land?

**LEON WALKER:** The announcement was specific in regard to the clothing store site.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What about with respect to the rest of the 10-hectare site?

**LEON WALKER:** A decision hasn't been made in respect of the balance of the site.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So we've got no confirmation in terms of diverse housing, a startup hub, an entertainment precinct, a town square and public parkland in the area?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, not at this stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have those other sites formed part of your land audit at all—that being the paint shop site and the Carriageworks precinct?

**LEON WALKER:** I'd have to take it on notice. It is likely that we reviewed that. I'll take it on notice and come back to you later.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The former Government's plan for the clothing store site was for 600 new homes. Why has this been reduced to 500 under your proposal?

**LEON WALKER:** That would be a good question to ask Minister Jackson.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So nothing to do with you, okay. With respect to Homes NSW developing the site, 50 per cent, again, is to be for social and affordable. Do you have any idea of the breakdown on that site at all?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I don't.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to the private homes that are to be developed on that site, will that be undertaken by Homes NSW or will you be putting that out to market? What is the proposal for that on the site?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** If Homes NSW chooses to undertake it and take on the site—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So that's a decision for Homes NSW, nothing to do with you.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That is a decision for Homes NSW. We'll give them the time to make that decision.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, with respect to Camden, another one of those sites—and that's the parcel at 72, 84 and 86 Menangle Road at Camden—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Just a single-dwelling housing site, is it?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, this is your land audit.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not across the profile of each one.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Do you know what's on that site at the moment?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** What I do is I deliver the land audit through—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You deliver the land; other people do it. Okay, I get it, Minister.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's right. You're asking questions on specific blocks of land.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But you've got four sites; it's not that hard.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, it's not in front of me.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But this is one of the Government's key initiatives—the land audit.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, it's delivering the land audit. That's right. We've put the process in place.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** This is something that the Premier said would be complete within months. He tasked you with delivering it.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** And we're doing that.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've got four sites now. I would have thought you might have been across the four sites, but anyway.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Ask me how many rose gardens are on the site—like, seriously.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, 72, 84 and 86 Menangle Road in Camden—what's presently on that site?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I don't know what's on the site.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You don't know what's on the site?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've got no idea?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've got four parcels of land. This is your part; this is the land that you made available.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There are thousands of parcels of land that we are assessing. I can't know what it is on every single site.

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** Point of order—

**The CHAIR:** Order! Minister Kamper, a point of order has been taken.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** There are four of them!

**The CHAIR:** Order! I will hear the point of order from Mr Murphy.

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** It is a matter of procedural fairness. The member is asking the Minister a question. The Minister is answering the question. Then the member is speaking over the Minister during the answer and sometimes after it, making his own commentary on the answer, which is really unhelpful and disorderly. He ought to be called to order for that.

**The CHAIR:** I won't give him a formal call to order, but I will ask him to allow the Minister to answer his question in full and try to keep the snide remarks to a minimum.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I have been suitably chastised, thank you. Minister, let me now inform you that, currently, it is a parking site for staff and visitors of Camden Hospital. Are there any alternative plans for parking at Camden Hospital?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** You'd have to ask the health Minister.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, you've identified this site and you've said it's surplus to use. Wouldn't you think that there would be potential alternative arrangements?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The relevant agencies and owners have defined it as surplus to use. If you talk about hospital parking, ask the health Minister. Just put it in your pocket and ask it later.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So you know nothing about it.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've got nothing about the parking for the area and nothing for the nurses or people who visit Camden Hospital at all.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No. Leon, have you got any insight on that?

**LEON WALKER:** The Minister is correct. For each particular site, we engage with the owning entity. If in this particular example it was being used for parking, they'll have identified other ways to satisfy that parking requirement.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We'll ask the health Minister and see what the future is for the good people of Camden who use that hospital facility. Minister, with respect to the WestConnex dive site on Parramatta Road at Camperdown, when you say that the WestConnex dive site will be delivered in partnership with the private sector, what do you mean by that?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Exactly that—it will be delivered in partnership.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But what does that mean? Does that mean that you'll sell it? Does that mean that you'll retain it and they will develop it? Does it mean you'll have an expression of interest process?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It could mean a mix of both.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've made no determination as of yet?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, not at this stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Does it fall in your bailiwick to make that determination?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Whose responsibility is that?

**LEON WALKER:** The delivery agency will make a call on the most efficient and effective way to deliver the site, and this is a particularly large site. There is a mix of uses possible on that site, commercial and residential.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Who is the delivery agency?

**LEON WALKER:** It could either be Property and Development NSW—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Which is you.

**LEON WALKER:** —or Landcom. Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Who else?

**LEON WALKER:** Landcom, I just said.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So nothing has been said about it being Landcom at this stage. Aren't you effectively just selling the site holus-bolus to private developer interests?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, we haven't said that.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Are you ruling that out now, or what?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We haven't said that but, essentially, it's about getting a housing outcome, at the end of the day. If it's got to go that way—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Doesn't this break your no-privatisation pledge?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** —decisions will be made after first preference has been given to Homes NSW or Landcom.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've outlined in your press release that Homes NSW doesn't get a look-in here. There is no social or affordable. It's not going to Homes NSW. I guess you've said it's either Landcom or Property and Development NSW. If it is Property and Development NSW, will you be developing the site or will you put it to market?

**LEON WALKER:** It's a large and complex site, and a final decision has not been made on the configuration or the components of what will be developed. But it will include housing.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It will include housing; that's good to know. When will that decision be made?

**LEON WALKER:** That's a work in progress.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So we've got four sites and we've got one where no decision has been made on what's going to happen with it, so this land audit seems to be going swimmingly so far. Minister, as recently as March, the Minister for Housing said that the Government is "committed to 30 per cent social and affordable housing in all developments on government surplus public land". It was also part of your *Fresh Start Plan*. Why is there no social and affordable on this site?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Overall, our target is a 30 per cent outcome.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So your policy has changed and it's an overall target now, rather than all public land?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's the position we've got, yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It's an overall target now?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's an overall target, yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, when it comes to this site, RPA literally is just down the road. It's a stone's throw away. Why wouldn't you have any key worker housing as part of it? Why wouldn't you have any affordable housing as part of it, in a conveniently located site, particularly for health workers at RPA?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We haven't got the full definition of what's going to be there yet.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've already said. In terms of your release, you've said it's a private market operation. You've put no social and affordable housing on the site. Why did you make that determination for a site so suitably located, close to RPA?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The site has been provided by our land audit and the decisions made in accordance with best—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Did you make that decision or was that made by somebody else?

**LEON WALKER:** Minister—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, you explain how it works.

**LEON WALKER:** It could include key worker housing. A final decision has not been made on the elements of the housing that will be included on that site.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Will those private homes be build to sell or build to rent?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think Leon just advised that the key decision hasn't been made. The final decision hasn't been made yet.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, with respect to some other issues with Crown lands—Ms Munro might be able to help me.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, from 1 July this year, concessions for Crown road enclosure permit fees began to be phased out. Prior to 1 July, landholders eligible for a concession paid a \$173 annual permit fee. Beginning 1 July this year, permit fees will progressively increase to \$595 per year from 1 July next year for holders of a single permit, and from 1 July 2026 for holders of multiple permits. Thereafter, it will be CPI adjusted. This represents a 243 per cent increase. Obviously, Crown roads are numerous in rural New South Wales. I draw your attention to Clare Buckley of Highland Grange in Jindabyne. She has nine Crown road enclosures on her property, meaning permit fees will increase from \$1,384 to \$5,335 off the bottom line. The department of lands and property recently began phasing out concessions for Crown road enclosure permit fees. What are the concessions for?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Since 2004 enclosure permit holders have been granted concessions to reduce their annual rent to \$180 per year, costing the Government and taxpayers approximately \$9.6 million a year in forgone rental income. From 1 July Crown Lands commenced phasing out concessions for enclosure permit holders with one permit over a two-year period. For holders of multiple enclosure permits, concessions will be phased out over a three-year period.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I understand. I just read that out to you, Minister. I literally just said that. My question was what were the concessions for?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Under the Crown Land Management Act 2016, the department is required to apply—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, if you're just going to—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** —statutory minimum rent—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Okay, Minister—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I can give these questions to the bureaucrats afterwards.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The concessions—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No, Minister, we'll redirect.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** Point of order—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We'll redirect. He's restating what she's already put to him.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** And also, I can—

**The CHAIR:** I will hear the point of order.

**The Hon. STEPHEN LAWRENCE:** The Minister was in the process of answering the question. He is entitled to do it in the way that he sees fit and he shouldn't be interrupted immediately with commentary.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I withdraw the question.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I'll redirect it.

**The CHAIR:** There has been specific advice from the Clerk around redirecting. Even though there is nothing in the standing orders that says you can or can't do it, it has to be in keeping with the procedural fairness policy that was adopted—that thing about allowing a gap to make sure the Minister has finished his answer. Noting that you've withdrawn the question, do you want to ask something else?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Yes. Minister, during budget estimates yesterday, the agriculture Minister refused to rule out the sale of agricultural research station lands as part of the review of the New South Wales research strategy headed up by Mary O'Kane. As lands Minister with an interest in the lands used by the New South Wales agricultural research stations, will you rule out selling or transferring these lands?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not across those particular facilities.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You have no idea about the agricultural research stations?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, it's a matter for Tara Moriarty.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But it falls under Crown Lands, in terms of this land and its transfer.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** She said it's a matter for you.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There has been no conversation about selling those lands.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Would you like me to answer generally about the sale of Crown lands?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We'll come back to you. Our time has expired, so we will come back to you this afternoon, Ms Hawyes, on that. Thank you.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Good morning, Minister. Are you aware of the escalating anti-Muslim and anti-Sikh hate speech that is occurring in parts of Sydney, the increasing fears for safety and security within these communities and, particularly, what I've been told is discrimination faced by caste-oppressed communities, including the rising incidents of caste-based racism and bullying experienced by kids at school in New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I have been aware of certain issues within the communities in relation to that. We do work hard with Multicultural NSW to identify where there are certain tensions within the community and we try to work with those respective communities to try to get on top of the tension.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** What does that mean? You're aware; that's good. What are you doing as Minister for Multiculturalism with those communities when you say you're working with them to address the tension?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** On many occasions you have to identify what is real tension and what is just maybe two or three vocal individuals, and get across and engage with both communities. On many occasions, in terms of religious tension, I'm very pleased to say we have the faith council that we have appointed and we try to work with members on our faith council to work through the respective communities and to work together towards trying to quell any difficult situations. Joe, have you anything else to contribute there?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** We're aware of the tensions, and I think at times these tensions become problematic, particularly with foreign government ideals and so forth that can disrupt our social cohesion and community harmony in New South Wales. First off, we condemn any form of Islamophobic behaviour whatsoever. We condemn any form of attack based off someone's faith, their culture or their language. It has no place in New South Wales. With respect to caste tensions and Muslim tensions, or tensions within the Indian communities, is there a specific reference point that you can steer us towards so we can potentially answer the question more specifically?

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** I certainly can. I was just interested, firstly, to see the Minister's knowledge of the issue, to be honest, as multiculturalism Minister. I think you've been asked questions about this in the past and I'm aware that the community has also contacted you seeking assistance. A community consultation report released by the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia in May 2024, in collaboration with the Australian Human Rights Commission, revealed that caste was being taught as a beneficial construct in the

New South Wales public school Special Religious Education syllabus. The report also found that, as a result of that characterisation, children from caste-oppressed groups were being subjected to caste-based racism, and there was an increased incidence of caste-based bullying in New South Wales public schools. That is incredibly troubling. That is a report by FECCA. In your earlier answer to my question you mentioned it may be a few individuals. Clearly, it seems a little bit systemic, according to this report. What are you doing about addressing those tensions?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** If it is in relation to what is being taught in schools, it's something we need to address with the education Minister, the Deputy Premier.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Are you aware of this report by FECCA? Has the Federation of Ethnic Communities' Councils of Australia contacted you? It's well and truly within your remit.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I haven't personally come across that particular—I don't know whether my agency has.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** We partner with the Ethnic Communities' Council of NSW. They haven't raised it as a concern with us.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Minister, are you aware of a discrimination complaint that has been lodged against Multicultural NSW and Parramatta Council at the Australian Human Rights Commission in relation to the platforming of far-right Hindu extremist groups that have contributed to the ongoing vilification of Muslim and Sikh communities?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll pass that on to Joe. I'm not personally aware of that.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, it was made aware to us this week that a complaint was lodged with the Australian Human Rights Commission. I'm advised that Multicultural NSW hasn't received any formal correspondence or notification from the Australian Human Rights Commission. It's interesting that it had already got its way to the media before it got to the Human Rights Commission. That's ultimately a matter for the Human Rights Commission. I have no further comments to make on the matter at this time. Can I just say there has never been an instance where, if that complaint had been raised with us, that I wouldn't have looked into that complaint in a fair and balanced manner. It's ultimately now a matter for the Human Rights Commission, and we'll work closely with them at the right time.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Firstly, when you said it's a pity it hit the media, was that in relation to my question to you?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** We received a media inquiry 90 minutes after we were told that it had been lodged with the Human Rights Commission and no information was submitted to us from the Human Rights Commission.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Let's address the statement that if you were aware of it, you would have acted on it. As I understand, my colleague Abigail Boyd asked you in budget estimates last year, Minister, whether you'd meet with community leaders to address these widespread concerns of discrimination against, again, Muslim and Sikh communities by Hindu nationalists, largely. Has that meeting occurred?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** With Hindu nationalists?

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** No, with the communities who are expressing concern about the discrimination against them—leaders of those Sikh and Muslim communities?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've engaged with Sikh and Muslim communities. In relation to those specific tensions, Joe's—Multicultural NSW—

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** With respect, Minister, it does sound as though you haven't really been working too much in this space. All of the questions I have asked you on this issue, it's almost as though you're unaware of the tensions. You're either unaware or they're not a priority for you.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I focus on keeping harmony within our community. I engage with all faiths and ethnic communities on a regular basis, and I attend all of their events. If there is a chronic issue between two particular communities or two faith communities, I look to the faith council to assist me through that process. From a positive perspective, some of the issues that other States have had, I think we've managed them much better.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Has this issue been addressed and raised at the faith council? Are you aware of that?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I can assist there.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, you've attended all of them.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Ms Faehrmann, there are a couple of things. First, the Minister has representations on the faith council from the Hindu community and the Sikh community. He also has an advisory board member of the Sikh faith. He has members of the Shia community in New South Wales and the Sunni community in New South Wales. This hasn't been raised through the faith council, to answer your question specifically. We are aware of a number of meetings had between officers in my department and concerned individuals about this. We take those really seriously. I think anything that threatens our social cohesion and community harmony in New South Wales is deserving of the focus and attention of this agency. The complaints, I think—

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** Thank you, Mr La Posta. I've got about 40 seconds left; I can come back to you. I'm sorry to do that to you. Minister, will you discuss with the education Minister, Prue Car, about the FECCA report and the issue with bullying of caste at public schools?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Absolutely. I'm most happy to bring that to her attention.

**Ms CATE FAEHRMANN:** What are you doing in relation to the reports that the Ramadan Nights market at Lakemba are at risk due to their popularity and increasing costs. A recent report on that issue stated that a New South Wales Government spokesperson said it was currently considering funding for the Ramadan Nights market and other important cultural and religious events. I'm just wondering what that entails. Can you share anything with us?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** In relation to Ramadan Nights, I think they're considering changing the framework or whatever. In terms of the funding of Ramadan Nights, that's historically been funded by Destination NSW and partly from Multicultural NSW. We are on target to deliver record funding in terms of community events and multicultural events across the State. Around October we'll be making a decision in relation to where we'll be on the funding.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Ms Faehrmann, I confirm that there was a program for the last two years, funded by Multicultural NSW, to partner with the Ramadan Nights festival. I agree with your sentiments; it's a wonderful festival. I met with the CEO and director of Canterbury-Bankstown council as recently as last week. My understanding is that there is another government grant program at the moment that they're exploring. That's really for them to talk to the specificity of that, and it's for a different Minister. But we've reassured them that we very much value and greatly appreciate all of the efforts that they go to through that program and that as soon as the grant program opens in October, as the Minister just said, we'll be directly in contact with them and encouraging them to apply.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I have some more questions in regard to the Las Vegas trip. According to disclosures on the New South Wales Government website, the flights for you and your chief of staff cost \$30,000. I assume those were first-class plane tickets.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Business class.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** According to the disclosure, you spent A\$522.15 on food for the eight-day trip. Was this including the food expenses for your chief of staff?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** A good trip!

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Yes, that's exactly what I was thinking.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Hot dogs.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** That works out at about \$30 a day.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I didn't claim a lot of it. I just paid from my own pocket.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** You paid for a lot of it yourself?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I paid out of my pocket. If we were going to an event where there was food at the event, sometimes you would go—when we visited UFC, they might have a wrap there for lunch or whatever. I'm pretty low-cost. I'm trying to keep my weight down, so I'm very careful.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That's why we didn't bring you a birthday cake today.



**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I did so many steps in Las Vegas. Wherever you go, you're doing 15,000 to 20,000 steps a day to get from one place to another.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Did you receive any free or complimentary meals during your trip? Is that why the cost was so low?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No, I paid for things out of my own pocket.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Didn't you just say that you had wraps and things?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I went to events where there was food or a lunch or there'd be nibblies. I'd pay for myself, or Ed would pay. Did you shout me, Ed? Yes, Ed shouted me on a few occasions too.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Were any of the free meals that were provided during the trip paid for by the NRL, Racing NSW or Peter V'landys himself?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not Peter V'landys and not Racing NSW, but there was an event—a launch event—where we had lunch. Whoever paid for that—it would be the NRL. Yes. I don't have anything to do with Racing NSW. That's a different Minister.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I understand that's a different Minister, but I understand that the Las Vegas trip with the NRL also included a lot of people from Racing NSW. That's why I posed that question to you.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not really familiar with them. I'm not across the industry that much.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Did you receive any free or complimentary tickets to events while you were there?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not me personally, but I think my chief of staff could have visited an event at the Sphere. I went to a UFC event. I was a guest at a UFC event.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Did the UFC pay for your ticket for that event?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes. I was asked to attend to watch a fight within—it wasn't a large stadium—their little boutique facility there.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** It was a small event. What about the Sphere event. Who was that provided by?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The operators of the Sphere, I think. I'll take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** Continuing our conversation around volunteering and switch tactics in terms of multiculturalism—you might pass to Mr La Posta if need be—obviously multicultural groups are largely volunteer based. I'm interested if there is any work being done in that space about increasing volunteers and ensuring that volunteers don't drop off in our multicultural groups.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm not familiar with anything specific, but Joe might—

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, I wanted to jump in before, but I talk too much as it is. Yes—it just got sent to me before—we partnered with the Centre for Volunteering because I think, at times, there can be a misconception that culturally and linguistically diverse people don't volunteer as much as other different groups. We partnered with the Department of Communities and Justice and with the Centre for Volunteering. There's a great report, which I'm happy to share and table with this group, that is about the contribution that our multicultural society makes to volunteering. It is something that is front and centre in our thinking. I think they surveyed over 830 different representatives. It's divided into two parts. The first part gives voice via focus to the groups of the sector representatives who were identified as being part of a multicultural society, drawing on the focus group's learnings. The second part reports on the findings of an online survey, which took a sample of 835 responses from a broad cross-section of New South Wales residents on their volunteering experiences, with specific regard to multicultural intersections, to answer your question.

The report observed that for volunteers from multicultural backgrounds, acts of giving are culturally embedded and develop deep community connections and support systems. For multicultural volunteers, these support systems created a sense of belonging and societal engagement, which extends far beyond the immediate multicultural community. I see that in my own sporting community where I volunteer on a Sunday morning—the very rich and deep and different groups that volunteer every weekend.

**The CHAIR:** Can I just expand on that? I note that last year when I attended a Harmony dinner there were a lot of awards being given out to well-deserving individuals and businesses, but in many cases those

individuals were doing their work in a paid position. Has there been any thought given to opening up a separate award section for specifically volunteers in that multicultural space?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I think that's a great idea.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's excellent, yes.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** It's something we're willing to entertain.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Thank you for that.

**The CHAIR:** Excellent.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes. Thanks for your suggestion.

**The CHAIR:** No worries—always happy to offer suggestions and have them received in a positive light.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Just to clarify: I don't want there to be a misconception that the majority of people that win awards are paid. Many of them run their weekend language school or they run community groups and so forth. By and large, I think the majority of them do it for passion, love and cohesion as opposed to financial remuneration or responses, but very happy to think about a standalone category, with the Minister's blessings, to focus on volunteers particularly.

**The CHAIR:** Just to encourage that passion and drive and keep it going because obviously a lot of volunteers fall off because they just get burnt out. We want to be able to encourage them to keep going and encourage others to pick up the torch or carry the mantle when those people do eventually drop off and want to pass it to someone else.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think it's an excellent recommendation, Chair.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Thanks, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** I will pass to the Opposition, unless there are more questions from Ms Hurst?

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Just going back to the synthetic turf, since the last budget estimates, I'm just wondering, Minister, if there have been any changes or actions to address those community concerns around the health and environmental impacts of synthetic turf or are we just waiting for those reports from the other Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We're just waiting on the guidelines, like we said earlier. I think there's not really much more I can provide in relation to that.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, while I've got you, at the last budget estimates I asked you about the Her Sport Her Way strategy, which expired on 30 June. You indicated that your office was working on an updated strategy. Can I check where that's up to and what we can see coming up?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We made provision to continue.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Minister, I'm more than happy for you to make an announcement.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Ms Jones can give the updated version.

**KAREN JONES:** I am very pleased to say that the next version of our women in sport strategy is pending release. It's quite an exciting time and we're looking forward to the release of that document in the coming months. I do want to also just say, though, that in the time in between has also been really well utilised by the Office of Sport and also through the Government, particularly around grants that have been issued, particularly around Level the Playing Field—the \$30 million grant, that retouched on it, that went towards facilities for women and girls specifically. Also, even today, for instance, I've got some of my sector performance team, particularly that team that has been involved in Her Sport Her Way and also the next version of the women in sport strategy. They're currently talking to around 200 teenage girls out at Cricket Central about the important issue of teenage girl retention in sport. The work is always ongoing in terms of the women in sport space and we do really look forward to the release of the next strategy.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Just quickly, Minister: Have you been involved in that updated strategy yourself?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, I have. I think Karen would vouch for me here. Whatever funding, whatever programs, whatever initiatives we're putting out there, women are at the forefront and the welfare of women and girls, not just on the pitch but in administration as well and in refereeing right across the board. A lot

of our funding and initiatives, the criteria have always been the need to meet a minimum level or minimum requirements in relation to addressing an equal level of representation and facilities and support in sport.

**KAREN JONES:** I'll just support the Minister on that and say that the Minister and his office have been very clear in terms of the direction that we need to take the women in sport strategy. As the Minister has already communicated, everything from grassroots participation all the way through to sport administration, coaches, officials, volunteers, even around making sure that there is good female representation through all aspects of sport and there have also been a number of funding opportunities available, also instigated through the Minister.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, how many times has the NSW Faith Affairs Council met with you in the past six months?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I attended two of the meetings. I'll take that on notice. It could have been three. Hello, Wes.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** G'day, Minister.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** He came for your birthday. It's a birthday present.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** A special cameo appearance, just for you.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I can assist there, Mr Farlow, if that helps. Since the council's inception with the initial 12 appointed members, there was an initial meeting held on 27 September and then, I think the Minister's right; there were three subsequent meetings.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When was the last meeting?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** It was 4 July and it was excellent. At the Minister's direction, we had the police commissioner come to the Faith Affairs Council and talk to them.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I didn't attend that one.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Because you were busy?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you, Mr La Posta. Minister, during any of these meetings, was the Equality Legislation Amendment Bill listed as an agenda item?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not in my presence.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Not in your presence but, Mr La Posta, for any of the other meetings?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Can take it on notice? I'm not sure if it was listed as an agenda item. I think it was raised and there a course of action, but can I just take that on notice and I'll come back to you this afternoon.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, has that bill been raised with you as part of that Faith Affairs Council meeting?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not at the council meetings, no.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** None of them, so it's never been raised?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not at the meetings.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Just allow me to check the agenda. I'll check the agenda and we'll have an answer for you shortly.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Whether it was on the agenda or not, have the Faith Affairs Council raised that bill?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Members have asked.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Members have?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Members have raised concerns with you about that bill, and what were their concerns that they raised with you about that bill?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Typical concerns that you get from faith communities in relation to the equality bill, but it's an issue that's going to be dealt with through the Attorney General. It's the Attorney General's work.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** And to that point, have you set up a meeting for the Faith Affairs Council with the Attorney General, or was he present at any of those meetings?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The equality bill's not our bill, so it's a topic of conversation.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But let's be frank, you've got a lot of stakeholders who are interested in it.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, it's a topic of conversations that we're holding, but at this stage I'm not sure.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Just from a procedural point of view around the Faith Affairs Council, there are 19 different groups. They have divergent views. They're not a homogenous group, obviously. With regards to the equality bill, there is a range of different views that sit around the table about that proposed bill in its various different forms. It is unusual for the Faith Affairs Council to specifically request or write to the Minister unless there is universal agreement on something. The role of the Faith Affairs Council is to understand what parts of government are tackling various different things.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr La Posta, with all due respect, I'm not asking about writing; I'm asking about the conversations of the meeting, and I'll continue to direct them to the Minister. We might return to this later on. Minister, have you directly passed on the concerns that have been raised with you by members of the Faith Affairs Council to the Attorney General?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Elements. There hasn't been a real strict meeting and dialogue in relation to it, but there's been conversations with one of my staffers that's engaged with some elements of the—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Gosh, staffers!

**The CHAIR:** Order!

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Nothing like knowing the Minister's going out and fighting for you.

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** Point of order—

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

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** Chair, I've let this go a few times, but the Hon. Wes Fang keeps interjecting with comments that are redolent with malice and just helpful. He ought to be called to order.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** They weren't redolent; there was maybe a smattering.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The members of the Faith Affairs Council know who to converse with in my office in relation to it. Any connection with the Attorney General's office or advice from there, that will happen at some stage. We're not in a position where we really need to address those issues at this stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, in the spirit of good suggestions that are being offered in this Committee and your openness to them—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes, give us a great suggestion.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** —do you think it'd be an idea to have the Attorney General or other relevant Ministers come before the Faith Affairs Council for their consideration of pertinent issues like this, and the equality bill?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Or the faith council's recommendations, maybe, can be put to the Attorney General and his chief of staff.

**The CHAIR:** Can I pause there, Mr Kamper, to make a ruling. I remind the Hon. Wes Fang that interjections are disorderly.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Even when they're funny?

**The CHAIR:** Even if some people find them funny. I will call the member to order if it continues. That is your warning.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Fair.

**The CHAIR:** You may proceed again, Mr Farlow.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, have any other Ministers come before the Faith Affairs Council during your time?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Not to my knowledge, no.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So you said you had the police commissioner there. You didn't have the police Minister there at all?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I wasn't there for that event.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The police Minister hasn't attended?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The police Minister wasn't there, no.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** The chair of the Faith Affairs Council makes requests in terms of the agenda items. Under their terms of reference, the Minister can't tell the Faith Affairs Council what they should discuss. They come and they say, "We would like the opportunity to liaise around this issue or this issue." Sorry, that was the point I took too long on before. When they request something through the secretariat, if they request that they would like someone from the AG's office or DCJ to come and talk to them around this bill, then there's nothing stopping the Minister, at his discretion, from facilitating that. But they haven't put that request forward. They didn't request the police Minister to attend; they requested the police commissioner to attend to talk about some of the ways that she and her team operationally manage some of the issues that have sensitive intersections with faith.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** If the Faith Affairs Council were to put the equality bill on the agenda, do you think it'd be a good idea to have the Attorney General attend, or a relevant Minister, for whatever item it might be that Faith Affairs Council list? Is that something you'd be happy to take up with your colleagues?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's something I'm happy to take on board, yes. By the same token, it's not to say that any recommendations or even dialogue in connection with the Attorney General or his key staff in relation to these issues—conversations can be held and opinions can be passed on.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, your Government has committed \$85 million over the next four years, including a record ongoing investment to Multicultural NSW. Could you please tell me what the record ongoing funding that Multicultural NSW will be receiving towards operational expenses?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I think it's pretty pleased—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Come on, Mr La Posta. Where's his note? He needs it to be quicker than that.

**The CHAIR:** Mr Fang, I will call you to order for the first time.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'm fairly pleased to say that we've locked away operational funding and locked it away for four years. As I said, it was a record—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Could you just please answer the question? It is a very direct question.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'd like to give a complete answer. Multicultural NSW received an additional \$85 million in funding over the next four years, a record ongoing investment by the New South Wales Government. In 2024-25 Multicultural NSW's overall budget is \$71.6 million.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** It says \$71.3 million here in the budget, Minister.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** It might be operating versus CapEx and OpEx. We've got a small amount towards capex. That might be the difference. It might be \$300,000 of capex.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Thank you. The budget overview said that there's \$73 million in a permanent boost.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Anyway, 2024-25 is, as I said, \$85 million over the next four years. It's \$27.5 million in 2024-25 and \$15.2 million per annum thereafter. Programs are delivered by Multicultural NSW to support our diverse community.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Could you please table that, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** A further \$12 million over the next four years has been provided to Multicultural NSW through the Premier's Department for delivering the internationally acknowledged COMPACT Program recognising the importance of socially cohesive communities.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Minister, would you mind tabling that information, please?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Yes. There's a lot more.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Thank you. In terms of the record funding that you speak about, adjusting for inflation, our budget figure would have actually sat at \$73 million to \$74 million accounting for inflation. I'm wondering whether your claim about boosting funding accounted for that?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I can help there. I thank the member for their question. The funding was fixed-term funding, so one of the challenges for our agency has been having ongoing funding for things. We're very grateful to the previous Government in terms of the initial investment that was made, and we're very appreciative of the current Government for now making us, I think, the highest funded department in the country in terms of tackling issues that impact on social cohesion et cetera. The investment is twofold. There is a component of the investment that's about programmatic funding, which I think the Minister was going to lead us to in terms of multilingual New South Wales, social cohesion and so forth, which I will allow him talk to.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Just on that, that's actually delivered through Customer Service, not through—

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Multilingual New South Wales?

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Yes.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No, that's our interpreters and translators. That's a new investment that the current Government has made in providing whole-of-government translation services and interpreting services through our department at no cost.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So that wasn't previously undertaken through Customer Service and Service NSW?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No, not the best of my knowledge. That was something that was initially started off the back of COVID in terms of Government looking to improve access to timely information to our linguistically and culturally diverse communities, and something this Government has sustained and grown in terms of the investment into whole-of-government. If you think about information on the back of a flood, there were serious challenges around communities in Liverpool getting access to the same timely information in language that could build an awareness—as there was to communities in Camden, where they knew where the evacuation centres and everything was in terms of government support.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I understand why they are necessary and why they were implemented under the Coalition Government. I wanted to check the details of where they're being funded and who is actually delivering those services.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, conveniently the Government decided to release the *Multicultural Media Review and Policy Report 2023* a week after your February budget estimates, so I'm glad we prompted you on to that. Unfortunately, we were unable to ask you about the details. Are you aware that, following its release, many key independent multicultural media outlets are unhappy with the Government's report?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I've been in two meetings with multicultural media units in relation this whole review but we're committed to supporting the sustainable multicultural media alongside with Minister Dib. That was published in 2024, delivering on an election commitment to review New South Wales Government advertising with independent multicultural media. I met with IMMA on 26 March this year and again on Monday 12 August, together with the customer service Minister. We have addressed a number of issues with IMMA that they have raised with us. We've got a very transparent process, Minister Dib and myself, together with all of the relevant officers, as we go through that review—greater transparency in multicultural media channels used by New South Wales Government agencies.

DCS is committed to increasing the consideration of press and radio spend through contract management with the New South Wales Government media buyer; encouraging government agencies to use multicultural media through developing tools, like the communication playbook, to educate government communication managers on effective communication to multicultural audiences; delivering online briefings for New South Wales Government communication staff, with more than 500 staff in attendance; building a national communications community of practice; delivering a media landscape webinar about the importance and value of traditional multicultural media, which was attended by 370 government communication officials; hosting a panel of independent—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you, Minister. I might redirect the Minister—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** This is the work that we've been doing with that, and it's all still in progress. That's the intention: to try and make sure that we are hitting the mark and supporting multicultural media groups. We also want to make sure that we get some value out of it as a government, too.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thanks, Minister. One of the concerns that was raised directly with DCS during the review referenced the Victorian Government's position where advertising spend has increased to 15 per cent, excluding translation services and expenditure with SBS. Your Government has since settled on a 1.5 per cent increase, from 7.5 per cent to 9 per cent, and this spend still includes SBS and social media platforms. Independent multicultural media say that they will not benefit from this increase at all, particularly with rising operational costs. What is your Government going to do in response to ensure that independent multicultural media is supported in New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We're going through this whole review process. We're putting an enormous amount of effort into making sure we are able to establish the right spend that's required to get out and communicate to our ethnic communities. I believe we're doing it the right way. It's not about just throwing money or grants to multicultural media. That was something that was requested. It was modelled around what happened during the COVID period where there was a whole heap of money—just lump sums—thrown to operations. That's really not the way we want to go about it. We want to make sure that our ethnic media is actually connecting up with the communities that we need to deliver messaging through to. Part of this process is getting that right. Our spend—we've increased it. They were saying, "We want an extra percentile." They were saying they were getting nothing. They said, "What do we want?"

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** *The Greek Herald* doesn't seem to be happy these days.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** An additional 7 per cent on nothing? An additional 5 per cent on nothing? So here, we're talking about what's actually getting to them, and we're working through that. Joe's been active in this process.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, are you able to advise how much has been spent on traditional multicultural media in the last 12 months?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I haven't got that number in front of me, no.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I think it's 9.8 per cent of the total advertising spend. In terms of what the cost breakdown is, that's probably a question best directed to the Department of Customer Service and Minister Dib.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You don't have that here, those figures?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No, we don't. I think it's important to delineate that Minister Kamper's role is an advocacy-based role. He's there to advocate on behalf—these really are matters for Minister Dib and the Department of Customer Service around the whole-of-government advertising spend. It wouldn't be appropriate for myself, or for Minister Kamper, to comment on how those programs are rolled out. What we do know though, is that through the Minister's leadership and our support—and he was transparent with the commitment in the lead-up to the election around 9 per cent, and they've delivered that now through Cabinet. I think now the spend has exceeded 9 per cent and is about 9.8 per cent. The other thing that we're doing, as a whole-of-government thing through the Department of Customer Service, is reviewing how they structure their advertising campaigns. There is a lot more structure in terms of, as the Minister alluded to, how government campaigns are. That's an exercise that we need to build a better awareness and understanding of *The Greek Herald*, as you mentioned, *Indian Link*, *Chinese Daily*, *Rete Italia*, *The Sunrise Daily*—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you, Mr La Posta. We might head back to what this afternoon.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** And we have David Giang on our advisory board too. That provides advice to the Minister on behalf of these groups about what is and what isn't working, Mr Farlow.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Minister, I noted this morning that you gave an answer to a question—you read it verbatim, I suspect, off your sheet—about projects in regional New South Wales. You mentioned Cooma, Tuncurry, Albury and Tamworth. Did you commence those projects, Minister?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll pass that on to Mel as I'm not across the details.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Ms Hawyes, was that commenced under the previous Government?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** The MOU was commenced under the former Government.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Minister, in relation to that, can you provide an update as to where those projects are at the moment?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I'll ask Mel. Have you got that?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I'm happy to. Whilst the program of cooperation with, as it was, Land and Housing, started under the previous Government, it has continued. More projects are underway as sites are assessed for their feasibility for potential regional housing supply.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Have you spoken to the mayor, for example, of Cooma, who is screaming out for additional land for Snowy 2.0 projects, and other infrastructure projects, that have been rolled out there? These programs that were rolled out under our previous Government are still nowhere to be seen under this Government.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** The approach was agreed under the previous Government. The projects are continuing, and the pipeline of further assessment is continuing.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** It's 18 months now, Ms Hawyes. How long are these people going to have to wait?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I understand. The projects move from feasibility assessment through to planning, DAs et cetera, and they're at different stages. As I said this morning, if you're after a response as to when will construction began, that is a question best put to my colleagues in Homes. They are all at various stages of planning approval at this point.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Minister, how many regional projects have you got underway to release land in regional New South Wales?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I couldn't give you a number.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** There would be a mix. There's some in Crown lands, and then—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Is regional New South Wales land release a priority of yours?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** It's part of the mix. It's going to be part of the land release.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Part of the mix. Thank you. I want to move on quickly, because I've only got a short amount of time left.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** That's a shame.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Are any of the 40 remaining sites that you've identified in regional New South Wales?

**LEON WALKER:** I'll take that on notice.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** We'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** Can you advise when the successful tender of the Dubbo regional sports hub will be announced?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Are you familiar with that information, Karen?

**KAREN JONES:** I am familiar with that project, Minister. In terms of actual tender documents and any announcement around that, I will take it on notice.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** We asked about the project in November last year. Can you let the community know when construction is going to commence and shovels will be in the ground?

**KAREN JONES:** Through the Minister, I am happy to take all of that on notice and provide you with project timelines.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you, Minister. I'll probably take the last couple of minutes. Are you able to provide an update on where we're at with the land acquisition review, if possible. If it requires significant detail, I'm happy for you to take it on notice.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** The Government, led by the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, commenced the land acquisition review in 2023. The land acquisition review includes a legislative review of the Land Acquisition (Just Terms Compensation) Act 1991, involving the New South Wales Government and public consultation, and a review of the whole-of-government approach to acquisitions. The department is considering stakeholder comments, legislation in other jurisdictions, and public feedback from the discussion paper published for consultation.

The review aim is to eliminate uncertainty and complexity in the legislation and to clarify legal rights of landowners and the obligations for acquiring authorities. A discussion paper with themes for consideration was published, inviting public input from 22 March 2024 to 3 May 2024. Following the review, recommendations will be presented to the Government for consideration. Targeting late 2024, the review will not affect current or



recently completed negotiations. The review seeks to improve the just terms Act and the whole-of-government approach to acquisition, to help landowners understand requirements and to negotiate compensation more effectively. The Government framework emphasises helping individuals understand their rights, providing support throughout the process and assisting with relocation.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you. We might have some follow-up questions as that progresses. There are two minutes left. Are there any further questions from anyone before the break?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, in the first round of the Safe Places for Faith Communities Program, 103 community faith organisations received funding. Who had a role in assessing which applicants would be successful? Was that you, or was there a panel?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** There was a panel. There was a process put in place.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, my goodness, extensive—very extensive—and we brought all different parts of government to help us.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We might come back to that. Minister, did you have any role in making any of the assessments or approving the final list?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** No. At the end of the day, I got the recommendations that came through the assessment process and embraced that assessment.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Just for complete transparency, the Minister got a brief. He signed the approved brief.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Minister, would you be able to provide this Committee—on notice, of course—with those 103 successful applicants?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Absolutely, not a problem.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Absolutely, yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Fantastic. How many applicants applied under this round that were unsuccessful?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** From memory, I can't—

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Just give us a sec, Mr Farlow, and I will find it.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We can come back to it in the afternoon, Mr La Posta. For the first round, an initial \$3 million that groups were going to have access to was increased to \$5 million. Is the Government going to consider increasing the funding available for the next round to ensure that as many organisations as possible can improve security to their places of worship and other facilities eligible under the program?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** It's a budgetary related question, Mr Farlow. There is an amount in the budget for this year. I can take the specifics on notice in terms of how much it is, but it was part of the Minns Government commitment of 15 million over four years—not 15 million a year, 15 million over four years. We've delivered the first tranche of funding, which was \$5 million, brought forward because of current issues in community, and absolutely can take it on notice and check in terms of what our budget amount is for next year—or this year, sorry.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you. Mr Fang?

**The Hon. WES FANG:** With four seconds to go—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Say, "Happy birthday". You haven't said, "Happy birthday".

**The Hon. WES FANG:** I will say, "Happy birthday", Minister—happy birthday.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Thank you, Mr Fang.

**The CHAIR:** Unless the Government has specific questions, I am happy to give you time to clear some of the decks.

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** We don't have any specific questions. The Minister has done a fantastic job.

**The CHAIR:** Any questions you've already taken on notice, if you want to clear the decks and give yourself less homework—

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** I do, just in relation to business insolvencies. I wish to provide an answer to a question I previously took on notice in relation to, as I said, business insolvencies. Business insolvencies have

increased amid challenging economic conditions, including business cost pressures and weakening consumer demand. We've seen increases in the rate of insolvencies for the last three years, two of which were when the Coalition was in office.

For the benefit of members, here are the numbers: During '21-22 there were 1,903, an increase of 20 per cent on the previous year. In '22-23 there were 3,282 insolvencies, an increase of 72 per cent on the previous year. Last financial year, '23-24, there were 4,634 business insolvencies, an increase of 41 per cent. It should also be noted that insolvencies were dramatically reduced during the COVID-19 pandemic due to business support such as JobKeeper. Businesses that otherwise may have gone insolvent during this time could have been kept afloat due to the level of financial government assistance during this time. These numbers are clearly concerning, especially when we think about the number of small businesses in the State and their contribution.

New South Wales is home to some 850,000 small businesses. Small businesses in New South Wales pay more than \$75.9 billion in annual wages and salaries to employees every year and contribute \$535.6 billion to annual sales and service income. Small businesses comprise the overwhelming majority of all businesses in New South Wales, around 97 per cent, and employ 1.8 million people in the private sector, which is about 43 per cent of the State's private sector workforce.

The challenging trading conditions are also having an impact on business confidence. The NSW Small Business Commission's momentum survey tracks small business confidence. Confidence levels remain subdued amidst challenging trading conditions, despite recording a modest improvement for a second consecutive month between May and June, increasing by one percentage point to 26 per cent. Rising input costs, including freight, fuel, government fees and charges, insurance, materials, rent, utilities and wages, together with staff shortages, interest rates, compliance burdens and weaker customer demand were cited as factors weighing on confidence. There's just some data, because you're looking at percentiles and data.

**The Hon. WES FANG:** What's the current inflation rate today?

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Four.

**The CHAIR:** Are there any questions from the Government?

**The Hon. CAMERON MURPHY:** No questions, Chair.

**The CHAIR:** Is there any other question that's been taken on notice that—

**The Hon. WES FANG:** No, it's not. It's 3.5.

**The CHAIR:** Order, Mr Fang! Are there any other questions that have been taken on notice that you want to clear up, or we can do it when we come back from lunch. That concludes our time with the Minister. We thank you, Minister, for your time. Enjoy the rest of your birthday.

**Mr STEPHEN KAMPER:** Thank you so much.

**(The Minister withdrew.)**

**(Luncheon adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back to this afternoon's session with the departmental witnesses. We'll kick off with questioning from the crossbench.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** My questions are for you, Ms Jones. I was hoping to follow up on the Level the Playing Field program. I understand that it was oversubscribed. Will it be extended or repeated next year?

**KAREN JONES:** There is no funding allocation to continue the Level the Playing Field grant program this financial year.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** The primary objective of that program, as I understand it, was equitable access for women and girls, and there was an additional objective to increase utilisation of sports facilities for people with disability, First Nations people, LGBTQIA+ people and people from culturally and linguistically diverse communities, which is a huge remit. How many of the projects that were funded address those additional objectives?

**KAREN JONES:** I will have to take that on notice, to go through each one of those. It was part of our guidelines and part of the assessment criteria. That element was given a weighting in terms of the assessment. In terms of those projects that were successful, that covered off on that area or that had a high score in that area, I can come back to you on notice for that.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** I expect you'll take my next question on notice as well. Similarly, I'm really interested in the projects for construction of new or upgraded universal design change rooms, toilets, and parent and child change rooms or creche facilities. I understand those projects were eligible and I'd be keen to understand how many funded projects provided new or upgraded universal design facilities but also how many unsuccessful applications there were for universal design facilities.

**KAREN JONES:** Again, I can take that on notice. I think it's important to make the distinction between female-friendly facilities and universal design. Universal design is an architectural term that means that the facilities will be highly accessible, regardless of disabled access or whether it's for women and girls. Ideally, you want all the facilities universally designed. I'm pretty confident that if not all then most of the facilities that were successful in that grant program would have met that criteria. But, specifically around female access and prioritising female access, both successful and unsuccessful, I'll take it on notice.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** I was also interested to see there was a project that was awarded funding, which was in Shoalhaven. There was a \$2 million project at Francis Ryan amenities upgrade that was subsequently withdrawn. Where has that \$2 million now been reallocated?

**KAREN JONES:** When we went through the process of assessing all of the grant applications, they go through a pretty rigorous assessment process, as I've mentioned already. They get ranked and they get scored. With that, those that fall within the funding limit are the ones that then get recommended through for funding. But we have also created a reserve list. A reserve list means that if there are any projects that don't proceed, or if there are any surplus funds, then those reserve list projects may be considered. It's important to know that the Level the Playing Field funding agreements were only settled in June this year, so we are still seeing and gauging some of the projects and where they're up to in terms of delivery. We're waiting to see whether or not the full program will be fulfilled. As you've alluded to, Shoalhaven has since communicated to us that they won't be proceeding with the application. After we've waited a period, we'll know what that leftover money looks like and then we'll move towards the reserve list.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** So all of the leftover funds will be reinvested in projects that were unsuccessful?

**KAREN JONES:** That's still up to the Minister and the Minister's consideration and final approval of that, but that's the intention.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** I was also hoping for an update on the Organisation Support Program, which we've talked about extensively before. How are those organisations going with their progress under that scheme?

**KAREN JONES:** The Organisation Support Program is the program where this current Government significantly increased the funding towards that program. Previously it had funds of \$2.4 million allocated to it. Last year it increased to \$5 million. This year it's increasing to \$10 million. As part of the increase in funding, we also took the opportunity to look at restructuring the program. How it works is the 96 State Sporting Organisations are put into categories, depending on their participation numbers and their size, as to how much funding they are eligible for. That scheme hadn't changed for a number of years, so we took this opportunity to revisit that.

We've spent the last few months recategorising State Sporting Organisations, asking them for information to support what category they should be in. That will then determine their level of funding. We are now in the process of settling that, and State Sporting Organisations should expect to hear from the Office of Sport very shortly around where they've fallen into in terms of categorisation and how much funding they are eligible for. We also tightened up the criteria around eligibility, particularly around introducing some accountabilities for them. I'm pleased to say that some of those accountabilities are around women in sport and making sure that they improve their women representation, particularly on their boards.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** Will that work that's nearly finalised be publicly available once it's finalised?

**KAREN JONES:** Yes, absolutely. All the Organisation Support Program is available in our annual reports, and we will continue that stance.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** What's the expected time frame?

**KAREN JONES:** We are expecting the Organisation Support Program to be released in the coming months.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** I also want to ask about viewership. You've mentioned previously that one of the barriers to equal pay and equal sponsorship, or some of the issues that are outside of the direct control of the Office of Sport, are dependent on viewership. I understand there were a couple of very good small projects recently, like the Olympic viewing live sites. Is there any other work underway to support viewership?

**KAREN JONES:** Actually, nationally, there has been a lot of work around the visibility of women's sport and, in particular, the media reporting on women's sport. I do have to commend our Victorian colleagues. They were the ones who produced a report around the visibility of women's and girls' sport in the media, and particularly the level of commentary that was provided around those. That has provided a really good database for everybody else across the country. On top of all of that, as I alluded to in this morning's session, we are on the cusp of releasing our new women in sport strategy. I am pleased to say that the commercialisation of women's sport and, in particular, having more broadcast and more accessibility, and that then leading to higher attractiveness around sponsorship, is definitely a focus area in our new strategy.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** That's really great to hear. For those live viewing sites, I know they're so popular and appreciated by the community. I know that outside of Sydney, some local councils have done a similar initiative in their local areas. Are there any plans for the department to support that sort of work outside of Sydney?

**KAREN JONES:** We don't actually support that work. We encourage it, absolutely. If anybody is interested in live streaming the Paralympic Games, which start first thing tomorrow morning, I would strongly encourage them to do so, not just for our para-athletes but also for the girls and women who are participating in the Paralympic Games.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** I'm trying to understand the process for certification of football grounds. I understand there's a process to get certification under FIFA to hold soccer matches. It has been brought to my attention that, particularly for new synthetic turf fields, there are some clubs and councils that are not pursuing that recertification because of the costs involved. How does that process work, and is it something that you have any input into?

**KAREN JONES:** No, we don't have any input into that. As you mentioned, it is something that's controlled by FIFA and then it sort of filters down through the federated sports model into Football Australia and then into the State sporting organisations for football. I suspect that there would be different categories whether or not they are planning on hosting international-type events, through to national events, through to State events, through to community events, in terms of what type of grading the actual pitch would need to have. But any further questions on that, in terms of cost implications, I can take on notice and see what I can find out for you. But ultimately it is something for FIFA and Football Australia.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** In the past there have been grants from the Office of Sport to a handful of facilities to build or renew synthetic turf. Will that continue to be the case moving forward?

**KAREN JONES:** Like I mentioned this morning, we don't actually have infrastructure grants available this year. But those infrastructure grants that we have approved in previous years, obviously they are all under construction. We won't be doing anything retrospective to those. We do await the final synthetic turf guidelines. Once they are actually out and endorsed then, of course, the Office of Sport would comply with those.

**Dr AMANDA COHN:** In my very last sliver of time, what involvement have you had with the draft guidelines process from the Department of Planning?

**KAREN JONES:** We have been involved. We have been consulted in the development of those guidelines and also through the former consultation process too.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** I think these questions are best directed to Mr McLachlan. At the last estimates hearing, I was told that there was a process of setting up a privacy auditing compliance team that would monitor and enforce the conditions of the new licencing agreements regarding property sales data provided by Valuation NSW. Are you able to provide an update on that team and where that work is actually going?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** Sure, thanks, Ms Hurst. Since the last budget estimates period, the team has been established and the framework, if you will, has been developed. Audits are underway of tier two licence holders, with tier one licence holders scheduled to be audited in the next couple of months. I look forward to sharing the findings of both those audits at some point in the future.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** How many full-time-equivalent staff are part of that new team?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** There are four full-time-equivalent staff in the privacy and data team.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** What kind of powers of enforcement will those team members have if they find someone is breaching the conditions of the new licencing agreement around privacy?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** The rights afforded to the Valuer General and, by interference, Valuation NSW, are outlined in the licences. Some of the actions that Valuation NSW could take, depending what was found or not found, range from, in the simplest terms, a letter to address concerns that may be occurring, to, in the most severe terms, termination or suspension of licences.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Has this team or Valuation NSW more generally received any complaints regarding the misuse of personal information so far?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** Yes, we have received—I guess it depends on the definition, but we have certainly received inquiries or complaints. But I think it's important to clarify that we've only received those from one party. When I say complaints, it's not numerous parties complaining.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Sorry, just to clarify, is it one party making several complaints, or is it all one case?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** It is one party making numerous complaints, yes.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Can I ask what action has been taken on those complaints?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** I think that is something that would be predominantly confidential in nature, given that the complaints are confidential, per se. What I would say is that whenever a complaint is received, we have a complaints and feedback handling policy, and it's managed in accordance with that. But broadly speaking, if a complaint is received, it's investigated or it's reviewed. Depending on the nature of the complaint, it's either deemed that the threshold has been met for further investigation or the threshold has not been met. In most instances, the threshold would not have been met in the ones that you are probably referring to. However, as I said, a team has been established. There are audits underway of licence conditions to investigate whether or not those conditions are being complied with. Outside of that, until that audit is completed—which should be in the next couple of months—I couldn't say any more.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** What steps have been taken to make the public aware of this new team? Has there been anything set up that might direct the public to that relevant unit so they can actually quite easily report concerns?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** I am pleased to say that we have completely refreshed the Valuer General's website and it's something of a milestone. If you don't mind me saying, we've completely refreshed it, reduced files on the website, and removed 800 PDFs, some dating more than 30 years ago. The user experience and customer experience for people to inquire or make a complaint to Valuation NSW or the Valuer General is streamlined on our website. On there, there are details about how you can make a complaint or inquire about an issue. Separately, we obviously have a call centre team in conjunction with Service NSW. We receive about 50,000 calls per annum about a variety of things. Depending on the nature, contacts are logged and complaints are lodged and addressed.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Since the last estimates hearing has there been any engagement with other jurisdictions about what they're doing regarding the use of personal information in this space?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** I think I did outline this in previous estimates, but—

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** We have spoken a bit about it before, but I think I flagged it with you that some jurisdictions were taking a different approach. You were saying that you'd start to look into them.

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** In terms of my answer, Mr Hurst, in previous estimates I did say that we had done a benchmarking exercise, to a degree, with other jurisdictions. Where we had arrived at is, in our view, leading those jurisdictions both in how the licence is set up—the terms and conditions—and also the pricing arrangements for similar-sized jurisdictions. Since the last estimates though, we have been consulted by other jurisdictions from both a Valuation NSW perspective and a Valuer General perspective, who meets with her counterparts I think every quarter or every six months. I am aware that both WA and Queensland are doing reviews, but those reviews are in their infancy, as opposed to in New South Wales, where a review has occurred. We are in a new licence period with a three-year trial. Following those three years, I think we committed in the Joint Standing Committee on the Office of the Valuer General that a further review of the three-year trial period will occur by the Valuer General and Valuation NSW.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** My next questions are probably best directed to Mr La Posta, but correct me if I'm wrong. It was announced in July that the New South Wales Government has committed \$6.5 million to develop the Migrant Workers Centre. Can you tell us where the work is up to for setting that centre up?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** We are working at the moment across the government. There are a couple of different parts of government that need to be familiar and have understanding with this centre. It sort of intersects with a couple of different parts. It intersects with a SafeWork component, an industrial relations component and a migration law component. We are still trying to ascertain as to whether it has responsibility to inter-relate with community legal centres and so forth at the moment. The different parts of government have already met once and we've got a subsequent meeting coming up in the next week or so. We are going to start to build the parameters

around the process that Government will run to ensure it's a successful group or partnership, or however it is, and that there is an open and transparent process to determine who is successful on delivering that on behalf of the Government.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Do we have any idea at the moment where it will be based or how many staff will be likely to be employed, or is it too early stages?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I think it's too early.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is it also too early to get an idea from your other key functions of what the centre will do and what kind of services it will be offering?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, I just touched on that before. As you're probably aware, judging by the line of questioning, there is an argument to say that those who are recently arrived migrants or who have language barriers or cultural barriers don't necessarily understand some of the established practices that exist in our business communities that are there, particularly those who are working in, say, primary manufacturing jobs or jobs where there is a greater likelihood of implications on their health and so forth in terms of the roles they play. I also sit on the anti-slavery committee with Dr James Cockayne. There is an over-representation in terms of our migrant communities, particularly temporary visa holders, in terms of acts of modern slavery and so forth, and people not being paid fairly for work. So a component of this is about determining all of the things that you were just asking before, and we're just not at that point in terms of understanding exactly what the need is that's there. I'm very pleased that there has been an announcement. All parts of government are committed to working to deliver the announcement. We just have to go through a thorough process before we make any public commitments.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Is there any consideration at this point to having some kind of advocacy or legal advice service as part of this? In these early stages, is that on the table?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** To that point, you've got Legal Aid that provides lots of that, and you've also got Community Legal Centres that provides that. Part of our responsibility is determining where is the gap, or where is the breakdown, or where are some of these challenges, and then who are the right partners to piece together to do the work? I think all the questions that you're asking are things that we're asking through this process as well, to determine the specifics of it.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** Sorry to keep pressing when I know it's early stages, are we looking at grants as well in this space, or is the centre more likely to be advice and support based?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I think it's the latter.

**The Hon. EMMA HURST:** So more about advice and support?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, I think it's about finding the right group of partners that can deliver the need, as opposed to a grants program that's going to empower a series of small players, because you run the risk if you go out with a smaller grant program that they're not necessarily connecting the dots to deliver the need that the acting multiculturalism Minister, Minister Jackson, and the Premier made as part of their announcement.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Ms Hawyes, I want to pick up on some questions I asked the Minister around the Crown land enclosure permit fees. My first question was around what the concessions are for. The phasing out of concessions has begun, but which concessions remain and which ones are being phased out?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Under our Act, we are required to apply what is called statutory minimum rent, including for enclosure permits. For the benefit of the Committee, these permits are essentially a piece of public land that might be within, say, a pasture. The concessions that were applied were done a long time ago. They're a legacy setting. They're not for a particular purpose that I can advise in a contemporary way. They are a legacy piece and, as I said, we are obliged to charge statutory minimum rent. We have moved forward to meet those obligations, but we're doing it in a phased way, recognising that those prices have been at that concession level for quite some time. There has been a two-year phase-in period for people with one permit and a three-year period for people with more than one. We also have hardship provisions and people can contact us if they are struggling to meet the requirements or they want to do something different with their permits.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** The statutory element of that, where are those fees set out?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** It's section 6.2 of our Act, where it says that the department is required to apply statutory minimum rent.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So it requires legislative amendment to change the requirement?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** No, that's the base setting as a rent. We have a concessions policy for hardship and those sorts of issues, but that's the baseline setting that's in our statute.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** The concessions for hardship, are they on the website? Are they publicly available?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes, our concessions policy is publicly available and that goes through those concessions and their availability for people.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** If somebody is unable to pay for this increase, which could be quite large—many thousands of dollars—what is the process for their application? How is that determined?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** They are, obviously, able to contact us. When we set about changing the settings to revert to statutory minimum rent, we contacted people and provided contact information and advice about where to go if they needed to talk to us about it.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What are the pathways that people can pursue if they can't pay?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** They can surrender their permit. Some people choose to purchase the piece of land; that is available to them. They can talk to us if they're in particular situations of hardship and they might need more time to pay—say, a phased-in time, more time to pay, that kind of thing. There are various options but, really, people should contact us with their individual circumstances.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are you aware of where that additional revenue is going? Will that go to consolidated revenue?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** No. Part of our budget requirement is that we are required to raise an element of revenue for the purpose of reinvestment in the estate. Revenue we generate through leases, licences and these permits is used for core land management activity. It might be bushfire mitigation, it might be asset renewal, it might be contaminated site clean-up. There is a range of normal activity, our BAU, that we would use the revenue for.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So it goes back into the department. Do you have an idea of how much additional revenue will be generated from the shift?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes, but I might need to take it on notice because I can't see it right in front of me. Yes, I do have it here. These settings have been since 2004, and in total that's about \$9.6 million a year in revenue from having the concession applied, bringing the fees below statutory minimum rent.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How much revenue are you anticipating in this budget year, also 2025-26 and 2026-27?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** That does depend. The first batch of invoices has only just gone out and we have seen people making inquiries. It really does depend on how many people might opt to buy that parcel of land, seek to purchase it, so I can't set a definitive figure until we've seen the response to the first batch of invoices.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is there an estimation in the budget at all?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I would have to take that on notice because, as I say, the invoices have gone out, along with communications to people. It's a matter for individuals to assess whether they want to do something different—for example, purchase that parcel of land.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** If you could take that on notice, that would be greatly appreciated. You may also wish to take this on notice: How many people have been contacted with regard to the change?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** We have sent out communications to, I think it is around, 20,000 people, and we've obviously got comms established for people to call us, so we've been taking calls and talking to people who might be deciding whether they're going to purchase that piece of land. Comms have gone out to at least 20,000 people.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you have an understanding of the urban, rural, regional, remote breakdown?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** These exist across the State. Obviously not many are in metropolitan areas, but they are across the State. I can get that information for you, if you're after a sense of what areas have the greatest—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That would be excellent.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I don't have that to hand.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I understand. Thank you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Ms Hawyes, how many Crown land claims are unresolved as of today?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Do you mean Aboriginal land claims?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No, Crown land claims.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes, but Aboriginal land claims on Crown land?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Yes.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Just while I find my note with the most up-to-date number, I can report that we were very proud recently to settle one of the oldest land claims—in fact, the eldest land claim still on our books—which dates back to the date of the statute. That was a series of land claims in Brewarrina. We are working through a number of these legacy issues, but that was quite an achievement for our agency to settle one of the oldest that we've got on the books. In terms of land claims, the land claims statute, as you know, provides a statutory right to claim. It is, inherently, a dynamic process. Claims come in. The current figure is 39,729 claims on the books. As we've talked about before in these sessions, that doesn't necessarily mean 39,000 individual parcels of land. There are many, many temporal and spatial overlaps in the land claims across the State.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** How many were resolved in the financial year 2023-24?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** We resolved 474 in terms of fully granted, refused or withdrawn. Sorry, I should say, we also have a number that we were asked to hold the assessment for at the request of the land council network. I think that's around 250.

**KIERSTEN FISHBURN:** It's 328.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes, that we were asked to hold.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Sorry, could you say that again, Ms Fishburn?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Have you got that figure there?

**KIERSTEN FISHBURN:** I've got it in front of me. It's 328, at the request of the NSWALC.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** There's the amount that we actually finish, and then there's a whole number that are pretty ready to go but they're waiting for further direction from the land councils.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Of those 474, how many were granted?

**KIERSTEN FISHBURN:** I've got it if you want me to, Mel.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** That is 296.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What consideration has been given to the backlog of outstanding cases, and what measures are being taken to ensure that the number is continually being reduced?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I think we have talked about this pretty regularly as well. As you know, we have increased the effort, doubled the size of the assessment team and worked in a very different way with land councils. We have—credit to the team—rebuilt relationships with land councils that were coming previously from a fairly low point of trust. We have a land council reference group. We have a new approach which prioritises assessment based on the priorities of the land councils, and a number of those priorities are around things like land that may be desired for housing outcomes or other important outcomes to the land council. So we've really changed the way we work. We got some funding in the last budget round to look at a business case that could resolve more of those land claims at scale, so there's work underway on that business case as well.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When it comes to triaging Aboriginal land claims, how has work progressed regarding the contemporary prioritisation framework?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** We have almost completed a prioritisation approach, in consultation with our stakeholders. That's in the final stage of consultation with NSWALC. As I said, we have already adjusted our approach to work far more proactively with the land council network, NSWALC and others to understand what are the priority claims from their perspective and work on those. Some of those have been for things like land that can support enterprise and business expansion or new housing development, so a range of things as well as culturally significant lands.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Of course, you'd be aware of the Audit Office report that found it takes, on average, 4.4 years to determine a claim, and it will take around 22 years to resolve the backlog on current approaches and resourcing. Noting that there is an alternative pathway for the settlement of claims via agreement-making and Aboriginal land agreements provided for by section 36AA of the Aboriginal Land Rights Act, what has DPHI Crown Lands budgeted for Aboriginal land agreement negotiations in terms of operational costs, number of full-time employment positions and land transfers in 2024-25?



**MELANIE HAWYES:** There's a fair bit in that question.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Do you want me to break it down for you?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** If I miss anything, I'll come back to it. In terms of the Audit Office report, that is a couple of years old now, and we have implemented a number of those recommendations. We also are using—as I think you mentioned in your question, Aboriginal land agreements are available. They're legally available instruments under the land rights Act to enable the Minister to deal, transfer, exchange or lease land to the land council and, in doing so, resolve Aboriginal land claims. We have a number of those in train. The Brewarrina land claim I mentioned before was resolved through a land use agreement. Similarly, in Orange we have done an Aboriginal land agreement that has had multiple parties, with land transferred that has facilitated outcomes for the land council, but also for the local council and for the sporting ground at Orange too. So we do work and use the Aboriginal land agreements.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** How much land, by both area and value, has left the Crown estate in the last financial year?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Do you mean by way of land claims or by way of everything?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** By way of everything, in terms of disposal, in terms of land claims—yes.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I'll need to take that on notice because I don't have it aggregated here. For Aboriginal land claims, I think it's around 1,200 hectares. I would need to come back to you to add together the amount, which would be sales of enclosure permits and closures of small parcels of paper roads. That would be a significant undertaking to do that and bring it back. I don't have it to hand.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That's fine. I will put further questions to you on notice and a breakdown, potentially, that we might seek as well, to assist you in that.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Sorry, can I just add to your question about Aboriginal land agreements?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Sure.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** We have 15 under negotiation, and seven have been completed and executed.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Who is best to ask about the interment services levy?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Myself, but also we can invite Jen Hickey, the CEO of CCNSW.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What additional revenue has the interment services levy generated for Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW since 1 July?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** I can't really answer that question right now because it's based on activity data that's happening right now, and we won't collect that until October and then invoice in November.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What's the general pattern of reporting?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** For the larger operators, which are operators who have conducted more than 1,000 interments over an average of a three-year period, they have been asked to provide quarterly levy payments. For everybody else it's an annual thing, so that won't be collected until next July. Actually, their activity report will come in next July, and then their invoice will be after that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How many are over that 1,000?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** Most of them are over that.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you have an understanding, in terms of the revenue anticipated, of how much you'll be generating this financial year and next financial year?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** Yes, this financial year we have estimated that it will be \$5.05 million, and next financial year, \$5.15 million.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How much additional expenditure will go into regulating cemeteries and crematoria outside of the metropolitan area?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** I don't know that I can break that down specifically, but I can tell you that all cemeteries will be licensed and are required to have put in their licence by the end of September. In terms of regulation, we'll be using our priorities to look at risk management and then saying which ones we want to go audit. That will be site visits as well as desktop audits.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is there an understanding of what might constitute risk?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** Yes. You'll be probably aware of The 11th Hour report and the IPART report. From our complaints data and our own site visits, the biggest risks are poor record-keeping, to start with. That constitutes people being buried in different graves than what's on the register and also, with the levy coming back, we want to make sure that the registers are right. Poor maintenance is a big issue. There's the interment rights and understanding what your options are and what you're purchasing. The new conditions require you to have a clear contract. We've developed a model contract for operators, and so we'll be checking to see that they're using a better contract than they have at the moment. And then there's the pricing transparency as well, so making sure that the operators are really being transparent about the prices they're charging so people have options and can compare prices if they want to.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How many additional staff will the increased revenue allow Cemeteries and Crematoria NSW to employ?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** At the moment we have 14 FTEs plus three temps, which were brought on about December last year. At full capacity, we'll be up to 23 FTE.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How many of those will be in regional areas or outside metropolitan Sydney?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** In terms of the staff, we have two in regional areas, of the 14 at the moment. But the idea is that the education and training team will be doing the site visits, and the audit and compliance team will be out on the road as well.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Where are those two currently?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** One is in Orange and one is up north, Newcastle way.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Finally, just confirming, that two isn't intended to be increased with that increase to 21 FTE. Is that right?

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** Sorry?

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** The two you've got as regional members at the moment—that number isn't going to be increased with the increase to full-time staff.

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** Do you mean more people in the regions?

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Yes.

**JENNIFER HICKEY:** There is workplace policy from DPHI, which is that you could work anywhere, so if we think that we need someone in the regions, yes, we would specifically target that or, if people apply from the regions, we can target that.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The determination's been made not to increase the wall of Wyangala Dam. Is there still a commitment with respect to Reflections Wyangala Waters holiday park and the upgrade of that facility?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I'm going to need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No updates on the Reflections Wyangala Waters holiday park, are there?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** No. It hasn't come up for a while so, I'm sorry, I'll need to take that on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That's all right.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Can I correct one of my previous answers?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Sure.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I think I advised you that it was about 1,200 hectares that had been transferred as a result of positive land grants. It's actually 1,989 hectares to 55 different Aboriginal land councils.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you, Ms Hawyes. And \$37.8 million has been budgeted to deliver on the Government's obligations under Indigenous land use agreements entered into with native title holders. Can you break down how that \$37.8 million will be spent?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Yes. I think it's really important to differentiate the land claims statutory regime and system from native title. They are under different statutes. Native title is under a Federal statute. The funding we secured in the last budget was for the purpose of implementing a number of Indigenous land use agreements

and they are negotiated under the Federal regime to enable the coexistence of native title with other uses and activities on the property. The funding we have been provided in that allocation was around meeting commitments made in ILUAs that had been negotiated in the past and negotiating ILUAs that we need to negotiate now in light of increasing numbers of native title claims being determined through the Federal Court system. We have a number of negotiations underway with different native title holders to enable that harmonisation of land use and rights and interests.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What obligations does the Government have in this regard?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** They are many and varied because they are negotiated with particular right holders. In some instances, there have been agreements negotiated that have involved a commitment to transfer parcels of Crown land. In some instances, there have been commitment to construct minor works—for example, a jetty that might facilitate access for that native title group to fish and access their traditional lands. There is a range of different commitments made through that negotiation process.

**The CHAIR:** I might direct my questions to Mr La Posta. The Multicultural NSW advisory board—I believe you've had some changes. You've had two new members and two original members receive reappointment out of a field of 250 people. Are you able to talk me through the process of how people are selected and approved to go on the board? Is there a panel that sits and oversees that process? Obviously, people are shortlisted out of about 250 people, are they?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, good question. The process that we ran last time—it's been a bit funny, not in a humorous way. It's been technically difficult to manage because, with some changes to our advisory board. At a macro level there are 16 people on the advisory board—Nick Kaldas as the Chair and myself as the CEO with an automatic place on the board, so there are 14 community leaders other than the Chair. We've had these very sporadic appointments and renewals. It hasn't been three tranches of four people that have come off at various different times—someone expired in November 2023; someone expired in December 2023; all of these different things.

What we sought to do was to run an expression-of-interest process, as you said before. Through that expression of interest process, we've effectively built a talent pool of people that's there. We're also quite cognisant of people going through the effort if they did it, say, six months ago, to then have to go through the effort to do it again, so we've got all of their details on file. When we're making a recommendation around suitability, we're trying to understand authenticity within their community—that they're actually what they say that they are—relationship current to Multicultural NSW or various different parts of government. Some of them are wonderful members of Sydney local health districts or are on their local health district boards, or are a part of mental health, or DCJ, or Office of Sport, multicultural advisory groups—all those. We try to understand what their existing level of engagement is and then once we've done all of that, we put a sort of shortlist in front of the Minister.

I can give you the exact specifics in terms of how many were on that list on notice but let's just, for the sake of this conversation, say there were 40 shortlisted names. We give the Minister a matrix of the skills that are on the board, the ancestry on the board, the professional background of those who are on the board and then talk about where we think there are shortcomings on the board or opportunities on the board. For example, someone, as I used David Giang as an example before, runs a very successful multicultural media business and we didn't have someone with that skill set on the board. He comes from a great, significant community, a Vietnamese community down in Cabramatta, and they didn't have representation. That made a lot of sense in terms of having someone that brought different skills and came from a different community. I am so proud of how interested people are in our board, but obviously 250-odd doesn't go into two or three spaces.

**The CHAIR:** No.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Inevitably, you have 247 disappointed people that have gone through the process.

**The CHAIR:** Can we just rewind a bit and talk about that anomaly? You called it funny. I'd probably just call it an anomaly where people are coming on and falling off the board at different time periods. Is there not a fixed tenure?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, there is—three years.

**The CHAIR:** Obviously, that doesn't take into account people resigning due to personal circumstances, et cetera.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Correct. One of our most recent advisory board members was a youth member, Esther Adeyinka, recently got promoted to be a senior member on our board, which was great for us in terms of youth members transitioning to senior members. Her circumstances have changed and she's moving interstate, so

she offered her resignation. That happens from time to time. I think the other thing to give consideration to is there's been lots of change historically in multicultural Ministers. I think I'm up to my seventh in five or six years.

**The CHAIR:** And a bit more.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** With that, yes, you've got to make sure that there's merit-based assessments with all of these processes. But there's been constant change each time we've gone one of those.

**The CHAIR:** Is there a maximum tenure for any of these?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Nine years—three terms of three years.

**The CHAIR:** Is there anyone who is coming up to that nine-year maximum tenure?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No, but it's at the Minister's discretion at the end of the three years whether he chooses to renew. There are two more advisory members who have their existing term expiring, I think, on 15 December this year and the Minister can make a decision as to whether he renews or not. We currently have two vacancies on the board, so there is the opportunity for up to four spaces before the end of the year.

**The CHAIR:** Are these positions remunerated in any way, or is there any covering of costs in terms of travel expenses?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes. In accordance with the GSE Act and the government's boards—don't quote me on the exact terminology that's there.

**The CHAIR:** No, that's fine.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** But they've got a certain classification. In terms of at a high level, standard advisory board members are paid roughly about \$5,000 a year, which is a nominal contribution. Very few of them seek any sort of reimbursement over and above that, but if we ask them to chair Regional Community Networks or other things, we obviously pay their travel costs and they're paid a nominal fee for their time over and above their standard advisory board responsibilities.

**The CHAIR:** That is a nice segue to Regional Community Networks. Are they all fully subscribed in terms membership?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No, they're not. I would love to give a plug. I will get the advice in a moment on my phone in terms of the regions that still have spots that are available, but I was actually really pleased with the direction from Minister Kamper to increase and to now have 10 Regional Community Networks. The sheer interest that we got in Sydney south and Sydney west—originally we'd had south and west as a merged entity. We've separated those so we have 10 different Regional Community Networks across the State. The common question is do they line up with every other part of government in terms of Regional Community Networks? The short answer is no.

**The CHAIR:** I'm not surprised.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No one Regional Community Network lines up with each other. Even the other day when they showed me a map, I was like, "Why does that have a big puzzle square at the bottom there?" They said, "That's because that council's in and that council's not in", and all of those different things.

**The CHAIR:** One day, we'll get there.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** We hope. But the long and the short of it is that, for us, it's really important. Your colleague Mr Fang is not in the room, but to have that regional representation bringing the voice of lived experiences—our intention is very much that government is on receive mode for information from leaders in community. It's about how they can speak to the local police commander, the local manager from Service NSW and that the Business Bureau can use these as engagement tools as well. Department of planning, Office of Sport—all the different parts of government can engage with the different community leaders that are right across the State.

**The CHAIR:** And multicultural youth networks—same question. Are they fully subscribed in terms of positions or are there vacancies?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Great question. There are three members from each Regional Community Network that roll up to be the voice of youth for Multicultural NSW. That group is chaired by the two youth advisory board members, which is sort of a nice—and we support them with training and development and really wrap our arms around them to help empower them in that role. There are no spots left on the Multicultural Youth Network but I'll come back to you in a moment and let you know the remaining spots that are available in a couple of the Regional Community Networks.

**The CHAIR:** Excellent. I can indicate outside of that I don't have any other questions for you, so it'll be up to the Opposition as to whether they do or whether you can get an early—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Don't worry. We've certainly got questions. We're not giving Mr La Posta an early mark yet.

**The CHAIR:** I tried to help you out there.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Thank you, Chair. I always appreciate your support and stewardship of our space. I look forward to it, Mr Farlow.

**The CHAIR:** In the brief minute I have left I might turn to Sydney Fish Market, which I think is Mr Gellibrand. What's been the total number of requests for variations over the life of this project? I'm happy if you have to take these on notice. That's fine.

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** I'd probably seek a clarification first. Variations from the Sydney Fish Market or from Multiplex or from—

**The CHAIR:** Just a broad total. I'm not after delineation between who asked for what; I just want a broad—

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** I'd be happy to take that on notice.

**The CHAIR:** When you're doing that, how many were accepted versus not accepted? For the ones that were accepted, what was the total cost of those variations?

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** Happy to do so.

**The CHAIR:** And also, probably on notice, how many extensions of time requests or claims have been submitted by Multiplex? What does that equate to in terms of total workdays? Does that make sense?

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** Certainly. We'll take that on notice and I'll tabulate it for you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** While we're at Sydney Fish Market, let's stick with you, Mr Gellibrand. This might not actually be for you; this might be for others from Service NSW or perhaps even to the Small Business Commissioner. With the discussions about the Sydney Fish Market and construction costs, there have been a lot of concerns about the effects on small business, for their operations. What support is the Government providing to mitigate the potential impacts on small businesses as a part of this redevelopment?

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** The only contribution I could make to that is to confirm that the existing subtenants of the Sydney Fish Market have got their rights and entitlements enshrined in an agreement for lease that was signed off by them in 2019. That went through their board, and they account for about half of the retail area being developed. The other half of the retail area is what we call the additional retail area and the businesses moving in there will be paying fully commercial rents in today's market, effectively. That's the extent to which we're involved. Place Management NSW will be operating the building when it's completed, and they'll be managing the rents moving forward. In terms of subsidies or support, I couldn't comment on that because we're solely focused on delivery.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Gellibrand, there's been reports that Infrastructure NSW denied the Sydney Fish Market's request for documents related to the construction project. What's your response to that?

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** We've received some requests from Sydney Fish Market under the GIPA Act, and they've been processed in accordance with that Act. Many of the documents that they requested related to the contract that the Government has with Multiplex as well as the administration of that contract. Multiplex, when we liaised with them about the release of documentation, confirmed that, from their point of view, most of those documents were commercial in confidence and related to their commercial position within the market, and they're entitled to make that claim. Accordingly, we went back to Sydney Fish Market and indicated that those documents were being sought to be protected or withheld. I think that's probably the right word, protected—not released. Sydney Fish Market objected to that, so it's gone to the NCAT element of GIPAA, which is still deliberating whether or not the documents should be released.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Gellibrand, from your knowledge, is it the case that only two out of the 38 subtenants have agreed to move to the new Sydney Fish Market at this stage?

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** I think the subtenants actually number 18 in total. The number you refer to might—we've got 18 subtenants that are involved in retail and some of those also have arrangements for wholesale arrangements. The actual signing up of those subtenants is the responsibility of Sydney Fish Market themselves as the head tenant. There is only a small number of them that have formally executed those documents but,

thankfully, the majority of the subtenants have provided us with their designs for the future retail areas, and we're now incorporating those into the building arrangements.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** This probably is not a question for you, Mr Gellibrand, but what specific measures is the New South Wales Government implementing to address the concerns of small businesses that have been raised in the context of the ongoing issues with the fish market construction, its delays and the impact on their business viability?

**CASSANDRA GIBBENS:** I'm happy to jump in.

**TOM GELLIBRAND:** Okay, terrific.

**CASSANDRA GIBBENS:** It's Cassandra Gibbens from the Service NSW Business Bureau. The Business Bureau is available to all small businesses around support, navigation and guidance in dealing with government compliance and regulation issues. In addition to that, the Small Business Commission has mediation services, which have been offered to this particular cohort through this process.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Ms Gibbens, formerly we asked the question of the Minister with respect to the Business Bureau and its continuing operations. Is it your understanding, with respect to the Business Bureau, that things will continue on as they are at this stage within Service NSW?

**CASSANDRA GIBBENS:** At this stage, for this calendar year, yes—this is my understanding.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** For this calendar year? Not necessarily this financial year?

**CASSANDRA GIBBENS:** Sorry, financial year.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I wanted to clarify that. With respect to—and this one might be one for the Small Business Commissioner, who, I note, is just behind you. Sorry to switch it around. Thank you for coming up. How are you, Mr Lamont?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** Good thank you, Mr Farlow.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect, have you heard any commentary following the case of *Loan Market Group Pty Ltd v Chief Commissioner of State Revenue* on their decision with respect to the retrospective application of payroll tax? Is that an issue that's been ventilated with you?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** Yes, I have. I've heard from at least two industry associations that represent that sector.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to that, have you made any advocacy to government with respect to a position that they should be taking when it comes to the potential financial impact on small broking businesses?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** Other than working with the industry associations themselves on how they might approach government—and I think I've also mentioned to the Minister that he would be likely to get representations on this issue.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Do you understand that the Government is taking any action with respect to this at this stage?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** Nothing has been confirmed with me.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you been asked for any advice on potential avenues that the Government could take?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** No.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I am keen to follow up on the COVID-19 microbusiness grants and how the repayment of those grants is being administered. I'm curious to understand what the process is for determining which businesses are being asked to repay money, and how those calculations of the quantity of money that they're being asked to return is made?

**GREG WELLS:** I would like to start by acknowledging, as you said before, that we do understand that businesses are doing it tough and we absolutely, as Service NSW, want to make sure we really put them at the centre of what we're doing. The only reason we'll be getting in contact with businesses is for two reasons. First of all, we've yet to receive proof of eligibility for the money they received because, as you know, microbusiness grants were a self-declaration process, so we're following up to get proof of that evidence. The second reason, obviously, is if we determine someone was ineligible.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How many small businesses or microbusinesses have you reached out to who haven't sent through their proof of eligibility?

**GREG WELLS:** I'll get the exact number on notice for you, if that's okay. We're sort of in the final 20 per cent of the businesses that went through that process. What we have done, as we talked about before, is removed anyone that we've been aware of that's been experiencing hardship. That could be an ABN that's no longer in operation. Certainly for the businesses that operated in LGAs impacted by flood, or for any hardship reason that we can ascertain. I've not contacted those businesses, obviously. What I would say, though, it's really important that businesses get in contact with us. If you do, we will be able to find potentially alternative means to prove your eligibility. We can provide more time, and we can connect you with independent business advisers—that Ms Gibbens talk about as well—to help you get documentation ready. We can really make sure that we understand that business's circumstances. If you're under financial hardship, there are ways we can work through those things too.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How many have been deemed to be ineligible?

**GREG WELLS:** Again, I'll get that on notice for you. I will come back on notice, if that's okay.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Thank you, that would be excellent. In terms of those hardship provisions, who is making those judgements? How does a calculation get made? Obviously with something like floods, you've got some postcodes that have been specifically affected, but what are some of the calculations or decisions being made there?

**GREG WELLS:** We look at the eligibility first of all which was, of course, \$30,000 to \$75,000—businesses receiving 50 per cent of their income from that process and having it reduced by 30 per cent. We look at that to start with. We look at things like if people have had an ongoing income less than those amounts, for example. That would be one indicator. There's a range of hardship indicators that, if we get in contact with these businesses, we can walk through and determine ways through those things.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is that information all public? Is it all online?

**GREG WELLS:** We are progressively updating our website in terms of that process. I'll confirm that for you on notice.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** There was a story recently on *A Current Affair*. Are you aware of that story?

**GREG WELLS:** Yes, I am aware of that story.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** He might have even starred in it.

**GREG WELLS:** I can't comment on individual cases. I can say that with all of those cases, we're working with businesses to try and do exactly what I said, which is find a way through this process. Businesses always have a right of appeal. If, in the end, we do find businesses that are ineligible, there's ways to put in place plans for those things—lots of options. Again, it's really important that businesses get in contact with us. Sometimes when we are reaching out also, it's important to know that we haven't heard from them at all. There could be suspected fraud in some of those cases, so it's important that we do understand that we're getting the money to the right people, essentially.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Have those businesses involved in that show now had their matters resolved?

**GREG WELLS:** One of those was resolved before that program. One, I think, has been resolved since, but was well in progress and has been worked on for quite some time. I think there's one in the final stages of consideration.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Ms Jones, I'll give you a second to get back into the game. No doubt you're aware that the 400 metre athletics track at the Sydney academy of sport is indefinitely closed. I discovered that as my children went off to zone athletics at Sydney Olympic Park yesterday.

**KAREN JONES:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you seen the icare assessment which recommended the track's closure?

**KAREN JONES:** Yes, I have.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Are you aware that the track closure has seen a 40 per cent drop in participation?

**KAREN JONES:** That has been communicated to me by stakeholders, yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Manly Warringah Little Athletics wrote to you on 12 June, requesting an onsite meeting to be facilitated with icare and posing alternatives. I understand you did reply to that letter, but no meeting has been forthcoming. Is that something that you will consider to undertake onsite with Manly Warringah Little Athletics?

**KAREN JONES:** First and foremost, I do want to say that we at the Office of Sport absolutely understand the disappointment around closing the athletics track at the Sydney academy of sport, and the disruption that has caused to our stakeholders. When that closure did actually happen late last year, it was incredibly unfortunate and disappointing, like I said. I have met with the stakeholder groups now a number of times. In fact, I think I've had three onsite after-hours stakeholder meetings to give everybody an update around how we are progressing with any sort of repair or remediation of the track. In terms of the meeting coordinated through myself for stakeholder groups and icare, we have attempted to do that but to no avail.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is the Government committed to fully funding the necessary repairs?

**KAREN JONES:** What I've explained to the stakeholder groups is, obviously, our claim is currently with our insurance for assessment. We have had a draft geotechnical report that was submitted to us just recently. We are waiting for that report to be finalised. What we do understand is that the main factor for the damage to the track has been flooding. We are aware that, also, these flooding events will continue and therefore don't really want to repair a track without at least attempting to address the flooding issue as it stands, otherwise we are throwing good money after bad—constantly. Therefore, once we actually understand what the flood mitigation works might look like, or what a track design might look like that won't get flooded, we'll then actually have to get some cost estimates so we understand the difference between what the insurance claim total would be versus what the actual capital ask would be. Ultimately, if there is a gap, that would be a consideration for the Government.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Ms Jones, I understand from an article in the *South Coast Register* on 8 May 2024, that the \$2 million Level the Playing Field program for the proposed Bob Proudfoot Pavilion was returned by Shoalhaven City Council. Is that correct?

**KAREN JONES:** Yes. I think Dr Cohn was referring to that one previously in her questioning too.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Did the member for South Coast make formal representations, seeking to amend the scope of the project before it was returned?

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

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Since Shoalhaven City Council returned the funding, has the member for South Coast made any formal representations to you on the importance of funding for this project or to the Minister?

**GREG WELLS:** Again, I'd have to take that on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to the West Ryde multi-sports facility, does the Government remain committed to delivering the 5,000 square metre indoor courts and 29 outdoor netball courts as part of the West Ryde multi-sports facility?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** If you're referring to a grant with PCYC—is that the one you are referring to?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It could potentially be.

**KAREN JONES:** As I think I alluded to earlier on in today's session, we've got about 450 projects.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It's the old Marsden High School site.

**KAREN JONES:** Yes, that's the one I'm thinking of. We do have a grant commitment with PCYC at the moment in terms of delivery of a portion of that project. I understand that funding agreement is still in place.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you had any communication with the Eastwood Ryde Netball Association with respect to the delivery of the project?

**KAREN JONES:** Not recently. I think the last meeting I had with them was well over a year ago.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Do you understand that the City of Ryde council is not investing any money into existing netball facilities in the interim because they're waiting for this site to effectively become available?



**KAREN JONES:** I'm not aware of that specific issue, but I'm happy to take it back to our grants team to see if they're aware.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When can the netballers expect to be able to play at this facility? Is there any indication of that at this stage?

**KAREN JONES:** Again, I'd have to go through the funding agreement and have a look at the different milestones. In particular, what components of the project we can actually control.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** If you could take that on notice, that would be great.

**KAREN JONES:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Now to Carss Park pool. We're getting all over Sydney and New South Wales here. What's the current status of the Carss Park swimming pool rebuilding project?

**KAREN JONES:** It's currently with the Government. There's a strategic business case that has been prepared.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When is it expected that that strategic business case will be—

**KAREN JONES:** That's a matter for the Government.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** There's no timeline on that?

**KAREN JONES:** Not to my knowledge. Not at this stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** There is quite a lot of community concern about the delays with the project at this stage. Is there any time line that can be shared with community?

**KAREN JONES:** Not at this stage. Obviously it is an election commitment of the Government. The election commitment went to the Office of Sport to prepare a strategic business case. We've completed that. We are now awaiting a decision on that case.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What is the total budget for the rebuilding of Carss Park swimming pool? Or is that something that needs to come through the business case?

**KAREN JONES:** It does need to come through the business case. I think you'll find that the business case is also Cabinet in confidence at this stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So there's no funding allocation that has been made to date?

**KAREN JONES:** Not to date, no.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you conducted any public consultation as of yet with respect to that project?

**KAREN JONES:** No, we haven't. We have engaged with the local council but, no, we haven't done any sort of stakeholder or community consultation.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But I take it, through all of that, this still does remain a priority of the Government and will be delivered?

**KAREN JONES:** It's an election commitment, so I would think so.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Okay, and the business case is to be completed. Ms Mather, I might get you up for some of these. In the interim, while you're coming up, I might ask Ms Jones if she has any insight. There has been some reporting recently of an NFL game potentially coming to Sydney. Is the New South Wales Government committed to beating out Melbourne and Victoria to secure the game?

**KAREN JONES:** I don't want it to be a hospital pass, but I will hand that one over to Kerrie Mather.

**KERRIE MATHER:** What was the question?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** This is about an NFL game coming to Sydney.

**KERRIE MATHER:** There are a range of new opportunities that we're pitching on with Destination NSW, and that is one of the ones that we're interested in.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** This is for the '25-26 NFL season; is that correct?

**KERRIE MATHER:** It's to be determined. It's at a very early stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is that being conducted by Destination NSW or yourself as Venues NSW?

**KERRIE MATHER:** Together.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** There's no lead, necessarily?

**KERRIE MATHER:** We're working together on it.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you had any discussions with other cities or governments, namely London, which has successfully hosted NFL international games in the past?

**KERRIE MATHER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** If you were to be pursuing this, would you want to sign it off as a multi-year deal with the NFL to host games in Australia, or would it just be a one-off event?

**KERRIE MATHER:** I think they're considering a multi-year opportunity.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You'd be looking at hosting that at Accor Stadium, I suspect, rather than Allianz?

**KERRIE MATHER:** That's right.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** For an NFL-sized field, 110 metres long by 49 metres wide, would there be sufficient dimensions at Accor Stadium under its current configurations?

**KERRIE MATHER:** Yes. In fact, Accor hosted it 25 years ago.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I was there—the Chargers and the Denver Broncos.

**KERRIE MATHER:** That's right, exactly, before it opened.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I asked that question, in a sense, because the stadium's configuration has changed since the Olympics. It still could accommodate it?

**KERRIE MATHER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Excellent. Has the Government considered the requirements every team would need to practise the week before the game, and would there be any other facilities that would need to be used as part of this?

**KERRIE MATHER:** As I said, it's a really early-stage pitch, so there hasn't been that level of detail at this point.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is there any time of year that you would be anticipating that this game would occur?

**KERRIE MATHER:** It would be in the third or fourth quarter.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I think there have been some reports that it potentially could be in conflict with NRL finals at that point of the year, so is that something the Government is considering in terms of alternatives, or potentially even moving NRL finals to Allianz Stadium rather than Accor, to host the NFL?

**KERRIE MATHER:** There just hasn't been that level of detailed discussion. They're really looking at a high level as to Australia versus other countries.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The Los Angeles Rams have been assigned to Australia and New Zealand as part of the NFL's international home marketing area initiative. Have there been any discussions from the New South Wales Government with the Los Angeles Rams?

**KERRIE MATHER:** Not that I'm aware of, but I'm not sure.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Back to the Accor Stadium roof issue that we discussed before, Ms Mather, you indicated before that due to media reports you had undertaken to consider a fixed roof as part of that business case analysis. You noted that business case was an initiative of the former Government. Was there an additional budgetary allocation that was required in order to consider the fixed roof?

**KERRIE MATHER:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It was done under the envelope that you previously had.

**KERRIE MATHER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We also discussed the discussions with South Sydney, and we undertook maybe to come back this afternoon. Do you have anything further to update with respect to those three to four games you outlined that South Sydney might be looking at being accommodated at Allianz Stadium rather than Accor?

**KERRIE MATHER:** It's more that they have three to four games that are uncontracted that they play in other States or other venues outside our network, and we'd love to host those opportunities either at Allianz or anywhere else in our network, in fact.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When could we be looking at that potentially occurring? Is that as soon as next year?

**KERRIE MATHER:** It could be, but we've talked to them about one opportunity in particular. To some extent it will depend on the NRL fixture.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I am curious about the Sydney International Regatta Centre.

**KAREN JONES:** That's me.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you have the annual income that was generated by the centre in financial year '23-24?

**KAREN JONES:** For the regatta centre, no, I don't have it handy, but I will see if I can try to get that for you.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So take that on notice?

**KAREN JONES:** Yes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Have stakeholders raised concerns regarding blue-green algae blooms and, if they have, what action has been taken to address that?

**KAREN JONES:** Yes, we are fully aware of the blue-green algae concerns both at the Sydney International Regatta Centre and also at the neighbouring Penrith Whitewater Stadium. The blue-green algae blooms have become more frequent of late just because of the significant rain events that we've had. What we're actually finding is that it's due to run-off into the local water catchment and the nutrient-rich water that's coming through the ecosystem, particularly in light of recent developments in the local area.

For us, we have regular water testing that we conduct, both at the regatta centre and at Penrith Whitewater Stadium. Obviously, the health and safety of not just the Office of Sport staff but also all the participants is of paramount concern to us. There's not much we can actually do around blue-green algae, except for just managing the impact when it does actually come about, because of the sheer volume of water and size of the water bodies that we're talking about. If we were to take any sort of chemical treatment or anything like that, it would actually have some devastating consequences on the local catchment and ecosystem.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you know how many events have been cancelled or postponed as a result of the algae blooms?

**KAREN JONES:** I can find that for you. No, I will have to take that on notice. What I can say that kind of goes towards that question, though, is that in '23-24 the Sydney International Regatta Centre lost an estimated \$90,000 in revenue due to event cancellations and the Penrith Whitewater Stadium lost an estimated \$306,000 in revenue due to cancellations.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are you working with the Office of Strategic Lands on this?

**KAREN JONES:** We are.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is there some sort of master plan in the works?

**KAREN JONES:** Not to our knowledge, but that is absolutely a question for the Office of Strategic Lands.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Ms Jones, in the 2023-24 financial year, how many children were eligible for Active Kids vouchers?

**KAREN JONES:** Let me find that figure for you. I'll take that on notice and I might come back to you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Sure, okay. I might put all of these on notice because I suspect you're going to have to take all of them on notice.

**KAREN JONES:** Okay.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I'm just trying to work out what I can provide you that you might not need to take on notice, but I think most of these will have some. I might go back to the question we were asking before about the Level the Playing Field grant. With that grant being returned, are there other projects under the Level the Playing Field Program that will not be proceeding? If so, what are they?

**KAREN JONES:** Not to our knowledge at this stage but, like I said, those funding agreements were executed late in the last financial year and so we are waiting on, obviously, first milestones and things like that to be achieved. Obviously, if there are projects that are unable to proceed, then they're obligated to make us aware and return those funds back to government.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is there expected to be any underspend on that program?

**KAREN JONES:** Not inasmuch as that the program has been fully exhausted in relation to the actual allocation and then also the reserve list that I've mentioned earlier on today.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** In relation to the Surf Club Facility Program, I'm aware that the Copacabana Surf Life Saving Club successfully applied for a grant that was \$386,000. They wanted to build a first aid room, a training room and a cafe. Unfortunately, because of escalating costs, they had to change the scope of that and reduce the scope of it. I'm wondering if cost escalation regularly impacts projects. Is that something that's been happening more often recently?

**KAREN JONES:** Definitely over the course of the last couple of years because I think it's a combination of matters, particularly for infrastructure projects which are reliant on grant funding, because, as we know, these infrastructure projects can take some time to actually be completed. Cost escalation is coming about mostly because of pressures that have been in the construction industry over the course of the last couple of years and the pandemic's impact on all of that as well. When there are projects that have been impacted by cost escalation, we do encourage them to let us know as soon as possible. We do actually talk with them about reductions in scope and whether or not any sort of reductions in scope still achieve the objectives of the overall grant program. In some instances—in fact, more often than not—we will get probity advice on the reduction in scope to see whether or not the actual fairness of the grant hasn't been impacted should we agree to a modified project.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Maybe you can take on notice how many variations have been requested and how many have been approved?

**KAREN JONES:** For the Copacabana project?

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** For the Surf Club Facility Program.

**KAREN JONES:** I can take that on notice.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That would be helpful, thank you. In terms of clubs coming to you with variations, is there a way to give you the information that you need to make these determinations that will be looked upon more favourably?

**KAREN JONES:** Not necessarily. What we ask for is a true account of exactly what is happening in terms of their project and how much money they do have or what impacts cost escalation might have had on their projects. Everyone is a case-by-case basis. The leveller, though, is the fact we do have independent probity advice that will go out and have a look at the grant and what was originally set in the guidelines around the overall objectives for that grant program and then test whether or not any modifications to scope would impact either its eligibility or the overall project outcomes in line with the overall guidelines.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Given, as you acknowledge, that sometimes these projects can take a little bit of time, is there a time limit on the requests for variation to come back to you?

**KAREN JONES:** We ask that requests for variations be submitted to the Office of Sport as soon as they are aware that a variation would be required. In fact, as an organisation, we've improved our relationships with grant recipients so that we are touching base with them more frequently so we can have more in-time information. I'll leave my answer at that. It's incredibly important that they get in touch with us as soon as they become aware that a variation is needed.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I want to ask about the Sydney Academy of Sport and Recreation. How much funding has been allocated to investigate the cause of the track's deterioration?

**KAREN JONES:** At the moment, that's all part of the insurance claim.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** How is that insurance claim being managed? Through your office?

**KAREN JONES:** Yes. We make the claim through our insurers. They then assign a team to start the investigation work. We are fully cooperative around that. Like I mentioned before, whilst that insurance claim is running, we are also doing a piece of work in parallel, to understand what the flood mitigation works might look like or what an alternative facility build might look like, so that once the insurance claim comes in, we can understand if there's a difference.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is the Local Sport Grant Program continuing in the 2024-25 financial year?

**KAREN JONES:** That's a decision for the Government.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So a determination hasn't been made yet. That being the case, would any decision consider a change to the allocation of \$50,000 per electorate?

**KAREN JONES:** I can say it definitely won't be increasing.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Definitive!

**KAREN JONES:** But, of course, we always look at opportunities to improve grant guidelines whenever our grant programs are set for renewal.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When will the outcomes of the program from the current financial year be advised?

**KAREN JONES:** They will be published in our annual report.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Nothing before then?

**KAREN JONES:** I can take it on notice for you if you'd like it before then, but I know that our annual reports are due in October.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Watch this space. At our last estimates hearings, you indicated the Office of Sport had not provided any advice as to the relocation of horse training facilities from Rosehill to the Sydney International Equestrian Centre at Horsley Park, as the unsolicited proposal was in its very early stages. As the USP has progressed to stage two, what advice has the Office of Sport provided the Cabinet Office with?

**KAREN JONES:** Nothing has changed.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** No work has been undertaken with the Office of Sport?

**KAREN JONES:** We still don't have visibility of the proposal.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've done no feasibility at all?

**KAREN JONES:** No, we have not.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you had any meetings with the Australian Turf Club?

**KAREN JONES:** Not since the last budget estimates, no.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Back on the blue-green algae, I know that you said it was difficult to manage this situation, but what investigations are happening in terms of preventive measures? You're obviously testing the water, but are there levels at which you can start any preventive measures?

**KAREN JONES:** No, not for the Office of Sport. The Office of Strategic Lands are the landowner of that whole precinct. Ultimately, if there was a solution to be provided, then I would imagine it would be some significant infrastructure-type solution, and that's beyond the remit of the Office of Sport.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I think Mr Walker is keen to jump in.

**LEON WALKER:** I'm not sure about keen!

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I wouldn't want to impugn any motives to you.

**LEON WALKER:** The Office of Strategic Lands sits within my space. The question should probably come in through Minister Scully's session on Friday, but some money was allocated in the budget this year to look at the series of waterways in Penrith Lakes. I know work's being done to look at how this issue can be addressed.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** In in terms of the work that you're doing together, is there any work that's happening between the offices?

**LEON WALKER:** I think it's fair to say it's early days. The money was only recently approved. It has been identified as a key issue.

**KAREN JONES:** I can say that our teams have been working together around identifying the issue and communicating the extent of the issue.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** There is no timeline at this stage in terms of having some milestones to hit for reporting?

**LEON WALKER:** We can take that on notice, or you can raise it on Friday.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That sounds good.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Ms Mather, last question and I think we might be able to dismiss a few people. It has been reported this week that All Elite Wrestling's Grand Slam Australia event has been secured by Brisbane for next year. It apparently beat out both Melbourne and Sydney. Was that something that Venues NSW was involved in bidding for or not? Destination NSW, I mean.

**KERRIE MATHER:** No, it wasn't.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I have one question for Mr Wells. Going back to the micro grants, I want to understand in more detail what businesses are being asked to provide.

**GREG WELLS:** Some standard documentation that we suggested in the application process that would have proven eligibility would have been things like tax returns or business activity statements et cetera. If they're not available—if you haven't submitted a tax return for a couple of years—there are lots of alternative ways to prove that documentation. I think that's on our website, but I'm happy to come back on notice and provide that as well.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are you getting any feedback about that being quite an onerous task?

**GREG WELLS:** It's difficult for microbusinesses in particular; there's no question. But, again, if people get in contact with us, we can get some advisers to assist them to put that together.

**The CHAIR:** We will break now for 15 minutes. It has been indicated that we can dismiss Ms Jones from Sport. You are free to leave early.

**KAREN JONES:** Before I do that, I want to add some information—

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No, come back after the break.

**KAREN JONES:** It's the first time I've ever been excused early.

**The CHAIR:** Ms Jones, do you want to give us those answers? Then I'll let everyone else who's getting an early mark know.

**KAREN JONES:** It will be very quick. This morning Ms Hurst raised the Sports, Climate Change and Legal Liability report and the fact that the Office of Sport has an F rating. The team have since had a look into that. I can say that it was not only the Office of Sport but also the Australian Sports Commission, the Northern Territory Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities and ACT Sport and Recreation that all achieved an F rating. It seems that it is mostly a desktop report. I'm pleased to say that the team have since gone through those desktop factors, and after our annual report and new strategic plan are published, I think our rating will see us at a B.

**The CHAIR:** I'm so relieved. Mr Gellibrand, I can indicate that we no longer require you. Also Mr Lamont and Mr Wells—I'm seeking clarification.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Lamont and Mr Wells, do you mind if we have some consultation in the 15 minutes? Maybe right at the beginning, you might be dismissed, but just allow us some consultation, if that's possible. Sport we're definitely through, and Venues NSW, so Ms Mather, Ms Jones and Mr Gellibrand.

**The CHAIR:** Thank you for your time.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** There may be more as we discuss in the break.

**The CHAIR:** The secretariat will be in touch with you individually in terms of questions on notice. We will return in 15 minutes.

**(Jennifer Hickey, Tom Gellibrand, Karen Jones, Kerrie Mather, Graeme Head and Cassandra Gibbens withdrew.)**

**(Short adjournment)**

**The CHAIR:** Welcome back to the afternoon session. I will throw to the Opposition for questions.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Lamont, as promised, it is your time to shine. Mr Lamont, given small business concerns over skilled worker shortages, what have you done in order to make recommendations to Government to address some of these concerns?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** I would say skill shortages in recent history have actually softened a little bit, according to our survey work. We do a business conditions survey, which we have been doing since April 2020. During the COVID period I suggest that the skill shortage pain that small businesses were reporting to us, and indeed supply shortages, were probably the top two priorities that small businesses were registering. We tracked skill shortages in the survey from month to month. It is important to realise, I think, that the survey comprises about 600 responses each month. They are small businesses that are chosen at random. We capture the issues of concern that are being raised with us through the survey. Skill shortages is one of them.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What are some of the other concerns that you are finding that are actually rising from small businesses as part of your *Small Business Momentum Survey Report*?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** I guess there are a couple of things. So, the cost to business—utilities costs, insurance costs and general rates. They are seeing escalation in labour rates as well. That has been raised. Also, with the data itself we are finding a pretty interesting trend. Remember, this survey is live. A decision around the cash rate, which was raised earlier today, will trigger a response in our survey. It has been a negative response in the main in recent times. We can track that. Obviously discretionary spend in some sectors has also dropped. Retail and hospitality are particularly susceptible to the drop in discretionary spend and the push we have seen in interest rate pressures on households. Businesses sight those as primary concerns, particularly in those industries.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Lamont, your recent survey response notes that only 13 per cent of respondent businesses expect revenue to increase, whilst 38 per cent expect it to decline. What advice have you provided to the Government as a result of that?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** We continue to provide the advice of the importance of reducing the red-tape burden wherever we can. In particular I have made a number of statements around the importance of better regulation. It would be naïve to expect that regulation won't be a thing in the future, but that we accommodate particularly the cost pressures that are being experienced by small business at the moment in any new regulation and, of course, look at ways to cut regulation that perhaps doesn't need to exist anymore. We see that as a really tangible way of actually improving business conditions for business, noting that macro-economic factors and international factors will provide, I guess, some challenges for some time to come.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to the small business charter, part of it is having government agencies procure more from small business. Are you tracking at all the small business tendering scheme and actually holding the Government to its promise to increase procurement with small business?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** We're not tracking it as yet. I guess in my time—the last two or three years—there have been two strategies in respect to small business. Both looked at increasing the spend with small business. One of the issues that I have pointed out previously is that it is a good initiative, obviously, to look at faster payment terms and increasing the spend, but we also need to be conscious of the tendering requirements on small business. We have had various parliamentary committees, which we have provided evidence on ways to practically reduce that. The Minister mentioned this morning one of the recommendations that we provided, which was to reduce or to absolve small businesses of having to have insurance at the time of tender. That is something that we are also tracking in terms of how businesses are experiencing new tenders and new procurement activities. In terms of tracking the actual spend, no, we do not.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** In your *Small Business Momentum Survey Report* you also identified rising energy costs as a concern for small businesses. Of course there is now the federally funded bill relief program, with \$325 for small businesses. Are there any other initiatives that you have suggested to the State Government that could potentially assist small businesses with their energy costs?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** One of the issues we hear a lot—and this was captured in my review of the Retail Leases Act—is that many small businesses don't own their actual premises. They are reliant upon the relationship with a landlord. There are some impediments under the current Retail Leases Act to provide the necessary incentives for both landlords and tenants to be able to share in the costs and benefits associated with making premises more energy efficient. I identified a potential option in my review of the Retail Leases Act that would provide some practical support going forward.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you done any investigation with respect to initiatives undertaken by other States, for instance, South Australia, where grants between \$2,500 and \$50,000 are available for small businesses to invest in energy-efficient equipment?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** We have looked at a range. Over the past 10 years in particular there have been a number of initiatives. I guess the issue that we see—and I really want to labour this point—is the equipment goes so far, but a lot of the issues are around, you know, "Can I put solar panels on my roof?" or "Can I upgrade the network to actually provide for the power requirements that are required by new equipment?" That, we see, has the potential to impact more small businesses. As I mentioned, not all of them require major equipment. They are actually plugged into a grid or they are plugged into an existing service. The potential to offer the option of renewables to reduce their bill or other savings devices, which, generally speaking, require retrofitting or an investment in premises, we see as a better way in the short term.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Has the Government sought any advice from you with respect to the success of the 2023-24 New South Wales regional development trust loan program?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you got any perspectives that you've provided to Government with respect to that program?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Has any feedback been received from businesses to you about that program?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** Not to my knowledge, no.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What work are you doing with the small business bureau at present?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** We make referrals to the bureau. I think it's still—from my perspective—early days. But there are occasions where we work together on issues that are being faced by small business and we often make referrals to the bureau and vice versa. They make referrals to us.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What's the Small Business Commission's role with respect to the small business charter?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** We don't have so much of a role. I have provided comments on drafts previously.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You're not doing any monitoring in terms of the small business charter and its outcomes at all?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** No.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Have you provided the Government with any advice in respect to assisting small business with digital transformation programs and what it can do to support, particularly when it come to cybersecurity concerns that small business may have across New South Wales?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** Not necessarily in respect to New South Wales. I think we have made a number of submissions to Federal committees and inquiries. Perhaps I will take that on notice and come back to you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That would be helpful. Mr Lamont, I think that is all I have.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I was just wondering about the issues around distribution network service provider problems. It is more of a Federal issue, but certainly New South Wales SMEs that are involved in providing electrical services have been impacted by this. Is there anything that you are doing or the Government is doing to assist these businesses that are being impacted by that Federal legislation?

**CHRIS LAMONT:** Not that I'm aware of. It may not be the same issue—we're hearing a little bit about new industrial estates. I don't know whether that's where you're going.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** No.

**CHRIS LAMONT:** We're hearing a little bit about that and the cost of infrastructure associated with being able to run equipment requiring three-phase power, and small businesses having to meet that cost up-front. That's the primary issue that we've been hearing about.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That is a different issue. This is more around the distribution network—entities owned by service providers that are basically exploiting what would be considered lax ring fencing regulation in working together.



**CHRIS LAMONT:** No, we haven't heard about it.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That's it from me.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** We're happy to excuse Mr Lamont and wish him all the best.

**(Chris Lamont withdrew.)**

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Walker, \$5 million was allocated from the Government to continue the land audit. Has all that money been allocated to Property and Development NSW?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes, Property and Development NSW is executing the land audit.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What will that \$5 million be used for?

**LEON WALKER:** It's a continuation of the program that started last year. It's initially paying for the team that is undertaking desktop due diligence and then, for sites that get shortlisted, undertaking the physical due diligence specific to sites to confirm that they are suitable for residential use.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What sort of physical due diligence is undertaken at that point?

**LEON WALKER:** Well, it's a range—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Effectively, is that going out on site and saying, "Yes, we can build homes here."?

**LEON WALKER:** It's a range of things: legal, planning—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Surveyors?

**LEON WALKER:** It might be. Contamination, environmental—it could be flood surveys. It's a whole range of things to determine if it's suitable.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I think this question was asked of the Minister previously. In terms of the suitability of locations for the sites, how much are you looking at regional New South Wales as well?

**LEON WALKER:** It's driven more by opportunity. Rural locations are very definitely within scope, but the priority or the focus to date has been metro locations. TOD locations were the first areas that we looked at. The likelihood is that we'll be moving to TAHE sites next. But we are looking at regional sites as they are nominated by landowning agencies as well.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So in terms of progress it was TOD locations, TAHE is next and then regional is potentially the third tranche. Is that the case?

**LEON WALKER:** There will be some regional sites, but the focus will continue to shift. I think I mentioned at last estimates that the New South Wales Government owns in the order of 280,000 parcels of land across the State, so we could be going for quite a while. It's a rolling audit.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** How many sites have been assessed to date?

**LEON WALKER:** It's over 8,500.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I think it might have been four-something at our last estimates?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes, it was four-odd last time.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So about double the figure that we were at previously. These next questions might be shared between you and Ms Hawyes, potentially. I'll give you some background. Griffith City Council partnered with Argyle Housing, a CHP provider, and officially opened Griffin Green, demonstrating the capability to deliver affordable housing on the ground. Griffith City Council and Argyle Housing have plans for other affordable housing projects. In February this year they met with Mr Greg Sullivan of Land and Asset Management at the department of Crown Lands, seeking to acquire two small allotments of Crown land to incorporate into their next project, outside of the market value requirement. When the eight-step process they were given proved unworkably convoluted, including gaining Minister for Local Government approval, gaining Treasury approval to waive Treasurer's Direction TD92-2 requiring market return for the acquisition of the land, and a budget allocation from Treasury to offset the market value of the land, Griffith City Council considered instead acquiring the land leasehold. To date, there has not been any outcome.

Does the Government acknowledge that local councils, charities and other non-government organisations, not only by the nature of their business but being closer in touch with their communities and to

local land resources, are especially well-placed to identify and deliver affordable housing initiatives in New South Wales, including identifying opportunities to repurpose both Crown land and underutilised government land?

**LEON WALKER:** I'll just start by saying that you do need to look at this as a separation between Crown Lands, because there are unique elements that Mel and her team need to satisfy, and then I can talk to the rest of it, if you'd like.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** To the part about the use of Crown lands for housing, as my colleague Leon says, it's public land. There are characteristics of public land and requirements on public land that don't exist on private tenure. It is very rare to find genuinely vacant, unused Crown land. Generally, there are other rights and interests on the land. That might be an Aboriginal land claim under the State-based land rights regime or it might be native title interests. It is inherently more complicated, and we understand that. That is why the partnership approach that I talked about this morning, where we are doing brokered agreements, particularly with Aboriginal rightsholders, is probably a more fruitful pathway for us to deliver housing land supply.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Walker, could you address that question as well, in terms of the identification by local government of what it considers to be underutilised government land?

**LEON WALKER:** For land that's not Crown land, there is the opportunity for us to look at other mechanisms. It's still subject to formal approvals. You might recall that there is also a policy called the Community Use Policy, which remains in effect. That allows us to make land available to local councils and other not-for-profits subject to meeting certain criteria that could apply in this instance. It would have to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** I would add to that as well, there are situations where we play a role in Crown Lands in brokering swaps. For example, a council might have a depot on a piece of land that they want to use for a housing project. We can work with councils—and have—to facilitate land swaps to create positive outcomes and negotiate the different tenures and rights and interests that are at play on Crown lands.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Walker, as part of the land audit, is any work being undertaken to invite expressions of interests from councils about underutilised land they might have that could be made available for the land audit?

**LEON WALKER:** I would consider the process different, but councils should be bringing those opportunities forward. It is a good question for Minister Jackson. I understand that there is already good engagement between certain councils and Homes NSW, but it would be a good question for that portfolio.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Ms Hawyes, are you familiar with this Griffith City Council proposal?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Not in detail but, as I say, I think you cited one of my execs—Greg.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Yes.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** He works with a number of local government reps, councils et cetera, and they range from projects like the Cooma housing project through to projects where we're helping councils relocate buildings and depots and infrastructure so that they can free up other parcels. I'm not familiar in-depth, but we work with a range of councils on a number of projects.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to this Griffith City Council proposal, Ms Hawyes, will you take the question on notice and potentially come back to the Committee with further advice? And will you perhaps undertake to see if you can progress this at all with Argyle Housing and Griffith City Council?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Absolutely.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you very much. Mr Walker, previously we had some discussion about who land can be made available to. Is it only Homes NSW and Landcom that housing can be made available to, in terms of the delivery agencies?

**LEON WALKER:** No, it's a cascade; so Homes NSW first, Landcom second. It could go to other delivery agencies within the New South Wales Government. Property and Development NSW could be another delivery agency, for example. But there will be sites that are identified for divestment to the private sector for development and, I guess, the terms of the divestment and the development pathway will be a case-by-case thing.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** How long is that process, in terms of determining those sites and their pathways once a site has been identified? For instance, the Camperdown site has been identified. It's been announced that will be a site for development. What is the process from there in terms of choosing how you will divest of that land or invite a private sector partner?

**LEON WALKER:** It is going to be a case-by-case thing. Unfortunately, that site is a particularly large and complex site, so it's probably not a great example of how long that process might take, and there are further government decisions required in terms of the development of that site. It could be as simple as low-density residential lots that can be developed straight away.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Go to the local real estate agent, effectively, and become on market or something.

**LEON WALKER:** If Homes NSW, Aboriginal Housing or the former Land and Housing Corporation wanted it, they could put a shovel in the ground tomorrow, through to other sites that possibly need to go through a planning pathway to get approval. It's not a one-size-fits-all thing.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The 2022-23 year-in-review report of Property and Development NSW stated that Property and Development NSW is leading government property framework policy reform to increase the adaptive re-use of surplus government property. Is this the land audit, effectively?

**LEON WALKER:** It is not the land audit, but it is an enabler of the land audit.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What are the other items of adaptive re-use that are contemplated?

**LEON WALKER:** The government property framework could enable the transfer of government-owned land between agencies for a range of uses. It could be land from Education to Fire and Rescue, for example, to build a fire station. Again, it's an enabling framework. It's still subject to review, however, and a final decision hasn't been made on it.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That might be it with respect to that. Mr Walker, I have a few more questions. Ms Hawyees and Ms Hickey, I think we can probably give you both an early mark. Thank you for your attendance.

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Thank you. Can I just complete—I took a few questions on notice and I have the answers. I may as well do it now to save the teams. This morning Ms Higginson asked me about biodiversity conservation agreements. We have approved the use of Crown land for those agreements on 28 sites across the State. Mr Farlow, you asked me about Reflections Wyangala holiday park. Post the Government's decision not to proceed with the expansion of the dam wall, we have been working with Reflections and council. Reflections is committed to a short-term fix to the park sewerage system but, more importantly, a review of future needs and expansion that will lead to a master plan for the park, including its water sewerage. Council and Reflections are working together on that matter, which explains why they've gone quiet, from my perspective.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is there any budgetary allocation for that work?

**MELANIE HAWYES:** Not from Crown Lands, but I can take on notice how that work is going and where it's up to. My last point is: You asked about the number of land claims before—and I do really need to shout out to the team. You asked about the efforts we've made to accelerate progress in land claims. I need to shout out to the team on this because in the last three years we've done more land claims and land grants than in the previous 40 years of the statute. So I really need to acknowledge the team's efforts for that. That unlocks so many opportunities on land that was previously stuck. I just wanted to put that on record while I had the chance.

**(Melanie Hawyees and Jennifer Hickey withdrew.)**

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Walker, with respect to some of the budget items for Property and Development NSW, there's the allocation of the \$45.5 million property development program. What are the new works that are part of that program?

**LEON WALKER:** The projects that we have underway include the completion of works at the Macquarie Street East Precinct. That's the works to, primarily, the Registrar General's building. Sorry, I don't have the breakdown of the \$45.5 million.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Can you take that on notice?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes, I can take that on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That's the new works \$45.5 million property development program. What is the residential housing north-west Sydney capital works program, which is listed as an estimated cost of \$17.2 million?

**LEON WALKER:** There is a parcel of land in north-western Sydney that we're completing due diligence on to determine the suitability of that site for residential housing.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is that what that program is?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The building refurbishment program has had a significant increase in the last budget. It was estimated to cost \$12.483 million. In this budget it is estimated to the end of the 2023-24 financial year at \$37.245 million, nearly triple the allocation, and is estimated now to cost \$41.05 million. What accounts for this increase?

**LEON WALKER:** That's to do with our office work spaces. We're delivering two new buildings, one in Dubbo and one in Coffs Harbour.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is it a change of scope or is it a cost increase?

**LEON WALKER:** No, it's just that these buildings take some time to deliver, so it's working through the delivery pathway.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Some questions were asked previously with respect to the Coffs Jetty revitalisation program. What's the current status of that program?

**LEON WALKER:** We've lodged the documentation required for the planning proposal, proposing change of uses within that precinct. That's with Planning for assessment. There's still the intention that there would be a public exhibition period later this year.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Will the rezoning proposal be on public exhibition later this year?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Has the rezoning proposal been lodged now?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes. The documentation has been lodged and is being assessed.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** When do you expect that program to be completed?

**LEON WALKER:** The overall works to the whole precinct?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Coffs Jetty, yes.

**LEON WALKER:** It is a long-term program of works. I'd take it on notice, but it is in the order of 15 to 20 years.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What is the total projected cost over the next four financial years?

**LEON WALKER:** I'll take that on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** What's the status at the moment of the Macquarie Street East Precinct?

**LEON WALKER:** I touched on it. The works to the Registrar General's building are very close to completion. The funded works to this point, which were actually approved by the previous Government, are what we call no-regrets funding, to remove the north annex and the records wing of the Registrar General's building.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** The ugly building.

**LEON WALKER:** The unsympathetic additions to that building.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That's very polite!

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** It's very diplomatic.

**LEON WALKER:** I'm actually trying to pick up on some industry terms there.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thanks for imparting them on us.

**LEON WALKER:** The restoration to the facade is nearing completion. There is insufficient funding to reactivate the whole building. That's subject to another phase of work. We will be able to put in place a meanwhile use for the ground level of that building until the future of the building as a whole is realised. There will also be public space created through that project. I think the former Premier and the Prime Minister announced that an area of public space will be named in honour of Queen Elizabeth II. Work on that is being finalised at the moment as well. We're probably looking at October-November this year for the completion of that work.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to the Macquarie Street East Precinct, there have been, over the years, lots of suggestions with respect to the entire precinct of, potentially, pedestrian footpaths and

discussion of—what is it in London? The national museum, I think—a pedestrian concourse. Is that something that is still being investigated or has that been shelved now?

**LEON WALKER:** No. Work on a museum business case has ceased. There has been support provided to the State Library of New South Wales in terms of completing its vision for the library. We've also done work on landscaping for the area in front of the State Library that could improve the visitor experience to that location and probably make it a little safer for pedestrians and the like in that area. But the funding for that piece of work only carries us through to the approval stage. It doesn't take us through delivery. Money's also been provided through our program of work to the Royal Botanic Gardens trust—I think it is, from memory—to assist them with their adaptive re-use of the depot that's opposite the Catholic precinct that's also opposite the Registrar General's building. That's the limit of our work at this stage.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Walker, what progress has been made on the World Heritage nomination for the Parramatta Female Factory?

**LEON WALKER:** That's an ongoing process. That work is actually being led primarily by the Commonwealth Government and Heritage NSW. Our team is obviously facilitating and supporting it as we can, given that we're the landowner, but it's being led elsewhere.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Property and Development NSW's *Year in Review 2022/2023* stated there'd be \$231 million in savings and benefits in 2022-23. Were those savings and benefits realised?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes. We're recording actual savings that we've realised in undertaking our work.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is there an updated target for 2023-24 and 2024-25?

**LEON WALKER:** I can take it on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Thank you very much, Mr Walker. I think that's it for you.

**LEON WALKER:** You asked a couple of questions this morning about sites. I can either try and close it out now—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Yes. That'd be fine. Thank you.

**LEON WALKER:** Do you still have those questions to hand, just to make sure I'm answering the right—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I can have some, yes.

**LEON WALKER:** I think there was one in regard to Camden, from memory.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Yes, the Menangle Road site. Is that right?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes, Menangle Road, Camden. There is the need for some of the uses on that site to be relocated to make way for the housing, but we're working with the local health district and the Ministry of Health to effect that change. Car parking is part of that. Then I think you were also asking about Kellyville.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Kellyville 301 and 301B.

**LEON WALKER:** It's actually quite a large site. The process that was run wasn't actually in relation to the site that we're looking at as being part of the land audit. It's Sydney Water that's actually the owner of that site.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Okay, I was wrong with Metro.

**LEON WALKER:** Metro does have easements running through the site so that might be where the confusion arises.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Can you tell us—because quite legitimately it was advertised as 301 to 301B. That was expressions of interest—Samantha Riley Drive. What was announced was 301 Samantha Riley Drive, Kellyville, in terms of the Minister's press release. What is actually the demarcation on that site in terms of what forms part of the land that's been made available? And then what is being retained by others, or marketed by others, so to speak?

**LEON WALKER:** That's something that I probably will continue to take on notice because—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** If you could take it on notice as to what the actual parcel is, that would be helpful.

**LEON WALKER:** Yes, because it's quite a substantial lot, and it's a portion thereof.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** At least what was marketed was a 21,000 square metre site so—

**LEON WALKER:** From the information I've got here, it's a 97,000 square metre site overall and we're looking at 6,400 square metres of it.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So it's a 97,000 square metre site and you've got 6,400, is it?

**LEON WALKER:** Yes, and that's why when you mentioned earlier that it didn't seem right that there was a relatively small number of dwellings coming off that is because it's a small portion of the overall site.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Anything else you could provide on notice would be helpful as well, Mr Walker.

**LEON WALKER:** Certainly.

**(Mr Leon Walker withdrew.)**

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr McLachlan, I'm just interested in terms of the valuation of properties, what's the impact on a property when it's rezoned in terms of its valuation? For instance, let's say a site is rezoned from an R2 site to be an R4 high-density site. When does the impact actually occur in terms of its revaluation?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** That's a really good question. It is a really complex space so the former, former—I think two formers ago—Valuer General released a paper on this and the impact of rezoning. If you can imagine, it is a bell curve that occurs, but it is predominantly dependent on the market.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So effectively it is dictated by, once you have a site of, for instance—so a site gets rezoned from R2 to R4. At that point, is there any monetary impact?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** Of course there would be but, again—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So you would change your valuation in your assessment based on that change of zoning?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** Our valuations for land or for rates and taxes purposes are done at 1 July every year. What I would say is, in terms of zoning potentiality, a lot of the value is actually realised before rezoning occurs. That's still in the sense of the market takes that into account. It could still be zoned low density but it is obviously achieving a much higher price because of either announcements or potentiality in the market. Developers obviously generally think about these things and can increase the value.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I guess that's the traditional approach, but I'll pick the Premier's own terminology—"the largest rezoning in Australia's history", where you're getting a whole range of things that are universally being rezoned. So it's not necessarily working on the same speculative approach as it may have previously where there's a site and people go, "Okay, in five years time that's going to be become something so I'm going to buy it now," maybe at an increased price, and then have a planning proposal to try and get it rezoned or expect that decisions will be made. If a property is rezoned from R2 to R4 and you make an assessment from the next financial year—1 July, as you were saying. Was it 1 July or 1 January, sorry?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** It is 1 July every year.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is it assessed at that point, effectively, in terms of—

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** It's valued on the current zoning of whatever that may be at that time and, obviously, the sales evidence for that for that zoning is used to value the land.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Would you make it a determination with respect to saying, "Okay, what are similar R4 sales in that area," for instance, or—how do you make a determination?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** Sorry, is the land still zoned R—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** So the land's been zoned R2. Let's say I've got a house and it's zoned R2. Apropos a change occurs, and it's then rezoned R4. No sales have taken place in the area, for instance, on an R4 at that point—

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** It seems like a very specific example.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** To be frank, it's not that specific at the moment; it's fairly universal, I've got to say, in a sense, with some of these TOD zones and the like where there are—

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** Sure. If it has been rezoned and there are no sales—and that's not very often; there are usually sales in the market, and particularly in a metro area it's exponentially more unlikely that

this scenario would occur—that's where valuers would take into account adjustments or look further afield for alike sales, and then adjust that back accordingly.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Let's choose an example of somewhere where, I suspect, there aren't too many changes. My favourite is these sites in Teralba, for instance, where it's an R2 zone and then has been rezoned R4—

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** I'm close to Teralba.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** From my look of things at the moment—not too much sales data. What would you do in a situation like that in terms of assessing the valuation after it's changed from R2 to R4?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** It'd still be based on either if there aren't any sales, which I would doubt—I live quite close to Teralba and there are quite a lot of properties transacting in Lake Macquarie—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** In Lake Macquarie, certainly, but—

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** —and in Teralba. But, if not, again, we would look further afield at similar-zoned properties or make relevant adjustments. Again, it is based sales evidence and appropriate adjustments.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to that, the sales evidence—how far afield do you look in terms of that?

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** I think we would need to potentially take that on notice, because obviously we do look further afield depending on the property type. Residential, it's generally not that far. For instance, as you can appreciate there's unique—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** For regional communities, or something, you're looking further afield.

**STEWART McLACHLAN:** —land uses in commercial-type properties, those types of things, where we would look a lot further afield. It isn't one set rule, but I would say for residential it generally doesn't. It's more rural where we would look a lot further.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Nothing further from us, Mr McLachlan. Thank you very much for your attendance here today.

**(Stewart McLachlan withdrew.)**

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I was asking you earlier about Multicultural NSW in the budget. I just want to understand, with the \$14.5 million that's been allocated over four years to boost social cohesion and countering violent extremism, how much of that is going towards the COMPACT grants?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** That's an excellent question, Ms Munro, and I will give you an answer in a moment. A couple of things—I'm probably giving you too much information, but context—there was the announcement that Minister Kamper made about our budget, which is the record \$85 million, with \$71.6 million this year. Outside of that, through the Premier's Department, we're funded for four years for that \$12 million. I think you just said \$14.5 million then, and \$2.5 million of that is almost funding that Multicultural NSW got. Then there's \$12 million that the Premier's Department in partnership with us—in terms of the COMPACT program, it's \$3 million in grants per year, which is up from last year, which is good. Then we have some auxiliary programs that sit around that as well. It's gone up more than 10 per cent from last year.

Then there is about \$1 million which sits around all of that as ancillary programs that support the networking of the alliance, which is now 80 partners strong and has engaged, I think, more than 40,000 young people in New South Wales. It helps us with our digital resilience networks, off the top of my head, as well. It also helps us in evaluating the effectiveness of the program, because that's a really important piece when we're going back to Treasury to talk about its impact and justification for why it needs further, ongoing—and hopefully more—funding. We've also got an online campaign called "Remove Hate From The Debate", which has engaged over two million young people. We're in the process of working up a revised version of that as well. I'm very cognisant of the Australian Human Rights Commission in terms of their national review of the anti-racism framework as well, and thinking about how some of our work can interrelate with some of their work at a Commonwealth level too.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I do have some more budget questions, but you brought up the Remove Heat From The Debate program. I understand that there was a review that was going to take place around that. I think we were advised that it would be completed in the early stages of this year. Has that program been reviewed, and is the new program underway in terms of being developed or being rolled out?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, is the short answer. Yes, we are in the final stages of refreshing that program to bring to market. The effectiveness of government campaigns are ultimately not determined by the Government. They're determined by how well they impact in building awareness and understanding, and hopefully influence behaviours within the community. With these things, you don't want the Commonwealth Government coming out with some whiz-bang slogan and then the New South Wales Government coming out with a slogan, and the Victorian Government, and the Queensland Government—then there will be other parties that will try.

What we're trying to do is make sure that there's as much alignment as possible with universal messaging, and then thinking about how each Government tailors their messaging depending on what their strength is. A strength of the New South Wales Government, as you both know, is we have majority control over things like education, transport, housing and all these things. How can we get our messaging as impactfully as possible, through young people, through digital campaigns, through education and those sorts of things? That will be brought to market very soon. Yes, I'm a bit like you; I'm a little bit impatient. I would have loved for it to be done now. The only reason it hasn't is because we are very cognisant of the Commonwealth timing.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What is "very soon" and "Commonwealth timing" looking like?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** We've organised a briefing of our New South Wales advisory board by the Race Discrimination Commissioner in September, which is very good. My understanding is that they're aiming to have their Commonwealth framework done by October, which is exciting. We're also very cognisant in thinking about an opportunity with the upcoming social media summit, that Premier Minns and Premier Malinauskas announced as well, as a potential platform to be able to build on some of these things. That's all at concept stage at this stage.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Have you requested involvement in that summit?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, we'd like to be involved

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Have you had any response about that?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I think that's being managed centrally at the moment.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What is central?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Through the Premier's Department and the Cabinet Office. We're very actively involved in trying to make sure that the communities that we're here to represent are considered as a part of that, and that there is voice given to probably the same people that you're thinking of—young people, vulnerable cohorts, minority groups and other things—that they're not left out of that. My team is doing some great work in collaboration across other parts of government. I think that will be determined by the Cabinet in the not too distant future.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Are you working with your counterparts in South Australia to put a case forward?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No. That's an interesting idea. We recently had a ministerial forum where we did some thinking around lessons learnt. We do lots of work in the language space with colleagues in South Australia and our equivalents over there. I think it would be more prudent to see what the decision of Cabinet is—as to whether it's endorsed—and then think about how we can work across jurisdictions.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I'm aware that other interest groups in this area have been advocating to the Government to be included and are having challenges in terms of having those requests responded to or considered. My understanding is that they are trying to work with South Australian bodies to increase the chances of getting somewhere in terms of that involvement—whatever it is on the agenda—and ensuring that guests are on stage and in the room that represent those different communities.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I can't speak to any of that, but I know certainly we've been central as part of the discussion and the conversation, which is pleasing for us.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Back to the Remove Hate From The Debate conversation, how much funding and resources have been dedicated to the renewal of the program?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** As I said before, in terms of the exact breakdown, I will need to take that on notice. As I mentioned before, we have about \$1 million outside of the COMPACT grant program that's for ancillary programs, which includes Remove Hate From The Debate.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So you've got \$3 million.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** For grants.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** And then \$1 million for ancillary?



**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes. That's about fostering that network of 80 different partners. That will hopefully grow. It's about establishing the community of practice where they can share best-practice ideas in terms of tackling issues that impact marginalisation, disaffected young people, resilience building exercises, leadership building exercises and a lot of interfaith and cross-cultural discussion as well.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What's the extra \$8 million for out of that \$12 million that you spoke about?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Sorry, my apologies. It is \$3 million a year for COMPACT.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** So that's \$3 million a year over the forward estimates?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** The next four years.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I know you have said that obviously the Remove Hate From The Debate program needs to be measured in some way. Do you have some specific metrics that you will be looking to report against?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** That's the precise work we're doing right now. Once upon a time—as a general rule, not specific to the remit—you would talk about pagination, eyeballs, exposure or all of those things. I don't think that cuts it in terms of campaigns like this that aren't just about building awareness. They're about influencing choice and influencing behaviours. Awareness equals choice; it doesn't equal change. What we're trying to do is embed and support behavioural change to have more respectful and more productive online dialogue and discussion as opposed to—as has been likened by some in our community—the sewer of hate that appears when there is very divisive topic such as immigration.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** If you crack this, then it will be something that every government department and every marketing team across Australia will want to use.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes. I hope that whatever we do isn't seen as an initiative of the Government. It secures bipartisan support because every MP, in their own right, is a leader in this space. We're all tackling the scourge of racism and hatred in our communities, so the more that we can build an awareness across all of our members of Parliament would be wonderful.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** More specifically, can you explain some of the measures that you are looking at to measure that?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I can't, only because I have a small dedicated team that do all of this critical thinking and I have not yet been briefed on where they are at. I'm very enthusiastic about being briefed on where they are at, but I'll take that on notice and get an update for you holistically as to where they're at.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Thank you, that would be excellent. There is \$4 million allocated to bolster community connection and wellbeing. Where is that funding going in terms of programs? My understanding also is that it's just for this financial year rather than rolling over the forward estimates.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, so all of our programmatic funding, the budget very pleasingly resolved—and I touched on this before. If you look at the agency from where we were when I started in 2019, we were a \$23 million agency. I often laugh with former Minister Dominello about what the scope of the agency was when he was the Minister in its formative years, changing it from the Community Relations Commission to Multicultural NSW, and where it is today. But because of financial restraints and limitations it was two-year, three-year or four-year funding. All of that coincided effectively with 30 June 2024, so the bid that Mr Kamper led—and I'm very grateful for his leadership—was holistically about looking at all of the program funding that we have.

Also, a considerable point—and I think we talked about this at last estimates—almost 40 per cent of our staffing was tied up in that budget bid. Pleasingly, the New South Wales Government, with the support of Cabinet, has resolved to guarantee our finances around our staffing, which is great, so we can offer ongoing roles and employment and all of those different things, but in terms of our programmatic funding it's only a one-year prospect, so we have to go back and demonstrate the impact and the outcomes of our funding for the next budget cycle.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Does that include the community cohesion grants program, that \$5 million? Is that just this year, or is that over the forward estimates?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** That's just this year as well?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr La Posta, I just to return to a question that we asked earlier and was asked of the Minister, and I think you contributed to, around the quantum of funding for Multicultural NSW, the \$73 million I think was put previously by Ms Munro. That is in the budget overview and I'll cite the pages for assistance: page 43, Community Harmony, \$73 million in a permanent boost in funding to support social cohesion and community harmony through Multicultural NSW. When you turn to the agency financial statements in *Budget Paper No. 02*, and I'll cite pages 4-1 and 4-35, we come to Multicultural NSW, which has, in the '24-25 budget, \$71.3 million in expenses and you rightly pointed out before the capital expenditure, which is \$0.3 million, so that gets you to 71.6. Is there 1.4 million we're missing somewhere else, or is it an error perhaps in the budget overview?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I'm always looking for more, Mr Farlow.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Or do you want another 1.4 million?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I'm always looking for more, so if the outcome of me being the last person standing at this table is that I can go back and try and find the extra 1.4, I will. The information that I've got is it's \$71.6 million with the additional \$12 million on top, as Ms Munro was asking about the COMPACT program and our CVE work. I'm happy to take the specifics in terms of that on notice and come back to you around the differential between 71.6 and 73, but my number that I'm working off is 73 with Treasury.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Is it 73?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** It's 71, my apologies.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Okay, 71.6. To strengthen your arm, page 43 of the New South Wales budget *Overview: Our Plan for New South Wales* says you have \$73 million.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Great news.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** See where you can spend that 1.4 million.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Thank you, Mr Farlow. I'm just thinking that part of the response off the back of Wakeley was to seek to provide a small and modest but important amount to the tune of roughly about \$665,000 a year for the next four years, so that might be the shortfall in the 1.4, but I'll take the specifics on notice and come back to you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Take it on notice and see what you can provide.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, thank you.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect as well to the \$85 million which has been committed over the next four years overall, what other agencies and departments are seeing part of this \$85 million? Do you have that information? I take it it's not all Multicultural NSW?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** It largely is.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** For instance, that wouldn't include things like the multicultural media spend that's being conducted by DC?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No. Great question. People often ask me, "What's success in your space?" As I say to my team—and it's not a this year or next year conversation—success is when you don't need Multicultural NSW because every part of government thinks inclusively about the work that we do and captures or mirrors the community that it's ultimately there to serve with all of the different languages, faiths, cultural traditions and so forth. The whole-of-government spend is just that: It's all of the different parts of government. It's about building, for want of a better word, a competency or a capability across—and I'm just picking departments randomly here—education or health or Fire and Rescue or Office of Sport or the Valuer General's office to make sure that when they're communicating they're communicating more inclusively, not just about people like me that are fortunate to be tertiary educated but people that might have been here for five or 10 years that have low levels of digital proficiency and low levels of English proficiency.

Our funding is very much our funding. The majority of our funding, Mr Farlow, pleasingly goes to grants, so it's all about boosting capability and capacity in our community. It's either through festival and event grants, it's through COMPACT grants, it's through partnerships with our peaks, things like Community Hubs Australia, women's hubs, our partnerships with our ethnic communities councils in Wagga and Illawarra and the Hunter and Sydney, how we support migrant resource centres and how we support other organisations that are out there doing excellent work. For a lot of our staff, with the exception of our staffing costs, it's an in and out.

There is a modest component—and this is what Ms Munro was asking before—around the multilingual New South Wales funding, which is the one-stop shop where, let's say, the Government has to issue a really urgent and important campaign. Right now there's bushfires in south-west Sydney. If those disaster response agencies needed us to help them, we could make sure that we were able to support them with material that was translated or access to interpreters in language immediately with no cost to those individuals. If there's a whole-of-government issue around silicosis and we need to get into Greek communities, Macedonian communities, that's where that whole-of-government support can happen at pace.

Coercive control, family and domestic violence, whole-of-government priorities, access to affordable and social housing—these sorts of things where we sit there and we think, okay, there should be no barrier. It's something that we started in COVID and we've really built upon. When we need to get critical messaging to our communities we don't want costs to be a barrier for government departments, so they can access that central fund. But that's also about starting to change behaviours in government departments where they're thinking about this from the start rather than as an afterthought. We almost use it as an exercise to say, "Okay, let's get this right now, but next time our expectation is that you're budgeting for these things, not thinking about just doing them as an afterthought." Sorry, that was a long answer. I'm passionate about this stuff.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That's why we kept you to the end.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Perhaps this is something you can take on notice: The kinds of projects, initiatives or organisations that are receiving grants and money from the Community Connection and Wellbeing Program, community cohesion grants and also the fund that is going to those significant State events that were referred to in the budget media release.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes, so significant State events—think Premier's Harmony Dinner, which we try to do as close to cost-neutral as possible, but we're not quite there. The fact that I even mention cost-neutral, there will be people in my office right now shaking their head. We try to get sponsorship and other things, but there's an inordinate amount of MPs that are always looking for free tickets, so we have to build that into our thinking as well from time to time—none in here obviously.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** I don't think we get any invites anymore.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** It's a balanced approach. Then you've got things like Diwali, Hanukkah event, Lunar New Year, Premier's multicultural events, so these sorts of big events where it's about celebrating significant milestones in our community. Those sorts of things—that's where that fund comes out of. In terms of the grants and community connection and the wellbeing things, Ms Munro, I'm happy to take some of those on notice. There's a whole series of them and, to be honest, the majority of them will be in our annual report because a part of it is restoring what we've historically done because some of it was previously funded. There are some opportunities to tweak some of the grants in line with new priorities, but things like our partnership with community hubs is something where we support 23 community hubs in New South Wales to empower migrant women, to give them a safe space in schools to be able to help them, in partnership with the Commonwealth, Scanlon and community hubs, for things like education, language proficiency and skill acquisition. They're pretty cool. That's an example of some of the programs that we do.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** On the multicultural capital partnerships fund, in the last hearing the Committee was advised that Multicultural NSW was still working through these groups and developing MOUs for the Government in the delivery of public outreach programs upon completion of capital works projects. What's the status of those MOUs?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** The multicultural capital programs were the ones that were part of commitments made to communities in the lead-up to the election. You had the \$15 million for safety and security for religious institutions. Then you had the \$30 million of capital partnership over four years, and then you had another about \$1.47 million one-off partners. In the \$30 million capital partnership, we've got 11 recipients, and then in the small capital works programs, we've got nine recipients that just receive under \$1.7 million. The status of each of those projects is varied, but I am reliably told by my team that almost all of those projects have agreements in place and funding—some where their projects are completed and others where they're just starting some of their projects. I've got four or five detailed pages on that, but it depends how much information, Mr Farlow. If there's a specific one?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** If I could request that perhaps you provide that detail on notice, that would be appreciated.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Unless there is anything commercially in confidence that I can't share with you, I can't see why I couldn't.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Since the last budget estimates hearing, have any requests been made by any organisation to receive additional funding as part of this program, in order to complete their project?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I'd need to take that on notice because the line of questioning that Ms Munro had before for Ms Jones is systemic across all parts of government, which is cost escalation on projects. I think a number of projects were delayed because of the pandemic. Wherever possible, whether they've been Liberal-Nationals Government commitments or the current Government commitments—

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** You've sought to honour them?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** We've tried to extend them as much as possible. Say, the Melkite community, which was an election commitment in 2019, we've carried forward because we know the issues that they experienced because of flooding on the site, delays of COVID and all of those sorts of things. I'm sure there have been a number of instances where communities have sought additional funds. They're always looking for additional funds, but if there are any specific to these partnerships programs, I'm happy to take that on notice.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** With respect to the MOUs, which you believe might all be complete now, will the Government be making a public announcement to outline these public outreach programs and how the community can benefit from them?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** That's a matter for the Minister and the Government.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** But there has been no direction given to you at this stage with respect to that.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** No. Just get them done.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** I will go to the NSW Settlement Strategy. There were a number of objectives that had completion dates of both April and June this year. Have they been completed?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Can I take that on notice? I think, from memory, there are about 150 actions in the Settlement Strategy. There were some challenges around machinery of government changes off the back of the election and subsequently since. With those machinery of government changes, there have been movements from one part to another. There have also been reconfigurations of existing teams and it has been bedding them down. As an overall principle, Ms Munro, the document is progressing well. I'm also pleased to say that this is a document that has been supported with bipartisan support from the previous Government and current Government, which is very important, as conversations, particularly around immigration and the settlement of humanitarian refugees and refugee-like cohorts, become more and more topical. I am very pleased and proud of the work of our team, and the settlement team particularly, in terms of having this document and their ability to collaborate across government. With the specifics of those action items that were due to be completed, I'll take that on notice and come back to you. But overall, as a principle, it's progressing well.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Will there be a document provided that has updated dates for completion if the ones that were listed haven't been met?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes. That's in our interests. Our interest is to keep—

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Will it be made public?

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Or will you provide it to us, at least?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** I'm getting a yes.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** There you go.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Fantastic.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Can we note who said yes? We can bring him as a witness for next time.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** Mr Shaw is not sworn as a witness. So it's on you if it doesn't come back.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** What's the benchmark to determine that items will be completed?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** As I said before, there are so many different action items. Again, I applaud Minister Kamper. He is having a very robust conversation with the Commonwealth, ongoing at the moment, about how they move people during geopolitical crises, because our visa system is largely a product of the Second World War. When we've identified people as refugees offshore for processing, it's a relatively straightforward process in terms of Commonwealth Government support and other things. But when they come through emergency situations on temporary visas, it becomes quite problematic. To your question, part of the Settlement Strategy is about

equipping government to understand the different types of visas that they come on and the different types of support systems that are available to them.

To use the Ukrainian community as an example, they come on temporary visa class of whatever, but they're not able to get transport subsidies. They can't get concessions for Opal or other things. So the New South Wales Government proudly steps in and supports that community with those things. Right now, we've got a potential significant impact in terms of geopolitical instability in the Middle East. What are the consequences of that? What are the visa types and all of those sorts of things? How does the New South Wales Government, as it has, step in to support Gazans with free access to hospitals and schools and these sorts of things?

The reality is—and we learnt this lesson time and time again during COVID—whether they're Australian citizens or not, they're residents of New South Wales, and the New South Wales Government needs to make sure that, within reason, if there's an authentic story to tell, we're providing care and support to these residents here. Commensurately, we don't want to encourage the wrong people to come to Australia or the wrong people to be able to get benefits that Australian citizens should. But, concurrently, the Settlement Strategy is about helping clarify right across government who is entitled to what and how to get better at supporting those groups. Largely, it's about fast-tracking people into skills, qualifications and employment so they can stand on their own two feet as quickly as possible.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Is Multicultural NSW responsible for ensuring that the list is essentially being ticked off?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** In terms of the other partners that are responsible for specific aspects of that work, Multicultural NSW is still overlooking the whole—

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Yes. We hold them to account. We've also got a Government Immigration and Settlement Planning Committee, or GISP for an acronym, that we partner with the Premier's Department, and we co-chair that arrangement. That helps hold all governments to account around matters pertaining to immigration.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** In terms of the GROW pilot program, it looks like there's no ongoing funding and that funding will come to an end in November this year. Could you explain what the Settlement Strategy objective of the NSW Growing Regions of Welcome pilot program sought to achieve?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** At a very high level, what it sought to achieve was—and this is just in general terms—to support people who wanted to work but couldn't find employment in Western Sydney, or didn't feel a sense of belonging in Western Sydney, to resettle into regional areas. It was about encouraging, for want of a better term, a more welcoming regional centre. And it was about connecting employers such as the Kotzur silo manufacturer at Walla Walla, which is a shining example of this, with a skills and talent base in Western Sydney and then encouraging those people to see places like Walla Walla, Albury, Leeton, the outskirts of Wagga or Narrandera as viable hubs to be able to relocate their families to and make a positive contribution to those regional areas.

It was always a pilot program. I mean, the investment that we made is a very modest investment when you think about the hundreds of millions of dollars that the Federal Commonwealth Government invests in settlement and planning. It was about how do we make these regions as welcoming as possible. Now, I don't have the figures in front of me, but roughly 30 families have settled in these. Pleasingly for us, some of them are doctors and lawyers and other things. They were less about sort of primary manufacturing or agricultural roles—some were, but they were also about really important skills that these communities need. That program is being evaluated at the moment. My hope is—and I am down in Melbourne on Friday, meeting with the Department of Home Affairs—to take those insights and then help them shape better settlement outcomes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** On that review, I understand it's an independent review. It started in February, I believe. Is that going to be made public?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** A version, yes.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Do you know when that will be delivered?

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** By the end of the year. We have also got Profession Shergold, who is our Coordinator General for Settlement, in the role. He has been doing it ever since Mike Baird put him in the job in 2015 or 2016. Part of that was the continuity to help use the professor to advise us and then to help influence the Commonwealth Government and other things. If you just look simply at an example that occurred and you look at a place like Armidale, where nearly 500 Yazidi refugees were settled, that was done with very little planning. If we're going to start to have a conversation about any location in regional New South Wales, we need to make

sure that they're equipped—they have the schools, the hospitals and the soft and hard infrastructure. That is what the pilot is about helping inform.

**The Hon. JACQUI MUNRO:** Hopefully the review will be instructive as to what should happen next.

**The Hon. SCOTT FARLOW:** That might be it from us, Mr La Posta. You get a slight early mark.

**JOSEPH LA POSTA:** Can I answer the Chair's earlier question—then we don't have to do it on notice, and it's also a good plug for our Regional Community Networks. I know everyone in this room cares greatly about our regions. I am advised that there are still vacancies across the State, in particular in our Regional Community Networks in New England, Lower Murray, the North Coast, Riverina and Western New South Wales. Some of those vacancies are general members and some are identified First Nations positions. Remember, being a multicultural New South Wales does not exclude our First Nations people. They are a very important part of our multicultural society. Some are designated youth positions between 18 and 24. Our Regional Community Networks chairs are tasked with targeted recruitment. That said, if there is anyone watching today's session or anyone in the room who has contacts or relationships there, please connect them to our community engagement team at multicultural.nsw.gov.au. We are happy to individually reach out to any member in those areas that might be interested. We encourage them to reply.

**The CHAIR:** You are free to go, Mr La Posta. Thank you very much for sticking it out with the good humour you did. The secretariat will be in touch about any questions you didn't give us answers to.

**(Mr Joseph La Posta withdrew.)**

**The Committee proceeded to deliberate.**