



Select Committee on the 2026 Commonwealth Games Bid

Hearing Date: 9 October 2023

Questions taken on notice

Directed to: Allen Garner

Received Date: [Office Use]

1. Joe McCracken, page 26

Question Asked:

Do you know how much it would have cost to remediate the saleyards site in Ballarat, by any chance, or are you happy to take that on notice?

Response:

Preliminary work was being undertaken by Development Victoria to understand the cost of remediating the saleyards site in Ballarat in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency requirements at the time of the government's withdrawal from the Commonwealth Games. In late 2022, initial draft estimates indicated remediation expenses of approximately \$2 million - \$2.5 million (GST excl).

At the time of the withdrawal from the Games, additional site investigations were required to finalise the extent of remediation for accurate costings.

2. Joe McCracken, page 27

Question Asked:

Joe McCracken: Did you guys know the cost at all of doing the remediation work, the decontamination?

Allen Garner: Yes. An assessment of all of that was included as an estimate.

Joe McCracken: Are you able to provide that?

Response:

[Refer to question 1.](#)

3. David Davis, page 31

Question Asked:

David DAVIS: What was the last figure that you were involved with as an overall estimate cost?

Allen GARNER: That was a cabinet submission.

David DAVIS: Sorry?

Allen GARNER: That was a cabinet submission, so I would have to seek advice.

David DAVIS: So was it \$4.5 billion, or was it more?

Allen GARNER: I would have to seek advice.

David DAVIS: You would have to seek advice. Well, maybe we can have that advice. If you are able to provide it, we will have it; otherwise please explain why not.

Response:

In June 2023, the department prepared a submission containing an estimated gross cost of \$4.2 billion for delivery of the Games. This submission was subsequently considered in July which included further information about the budget requirements of some other departments and fiscal risks.

4. Sarah Mansfield, page 33

Question Asked:

Sarah MANSFIELD: ... when was your office first established? You said you were appointed in November.

Response:

The Office of the Commonwealth Games (OCG) was established as a business unit in the then Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions in April 2022.

5. Melina Bath, page 35**Question Asked:**

And then you said you would have regular fortnightly briefings with either or both of the ministers, Shing and Allan. Could you provide to the committee a list of the dates of those? Can you look back through your diary and provide a list of the dates of those meetings?

Response:

The department's records indicate that between November 2022 and July 2023, either or both the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery and Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy were verbally briefed at meetings on the following dates:

Minister Allan

- 7 December 2022
- 16 January 2023
- 22 May 2023
- 5 June 2023

Minister Shing

- 16 and 22 December 2022
- 28 February 2023
- 14 and 28 March 2023
- 11 April 2023
- 9 May 2023
- 6 and 26 June 2023

Joint Ministers meetings – Ministers Allan and Shing

- 19 December 2022
- 6, 13, 20 and 27 February 2023
- 6, 14 and 20 March 2023
- 3 and 17 April 2023
- 1, 8, 15 and 29 May 2023
- 19 June 2023
- 3 July 2023.

6. Melina Bath, page 36

Question Asked:

Melina BATH: And can you just potentially provide those comments or advice to this committee in relation to which unions – CFMEU, ETU, the plumbing unions? Do you have a list of which ones?

Allen GARNER: We do, yes. They are referred to as the big union groups, so they are the building industry groups.

Melina BATH: So you might just provide the list to us?

Allen GARNER: Yes.

Response:

The 4 construction unions (Construction, Forestry, Maritime Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU), Australian Manufacturing Workers Union (AMWU), Electrical Trades Union (ETU) and Plumbing and Pipe Trades Union (PPTU)), in conjunction with the Victorian Trades Hall Council, operate the Building Industry Group and typically work together to adopt common policy positions on Industrial Relations. The department, through the OCG, had preliminary conversations with the Building Industry Groups regarding the Commonwealth Games.

7. David Davis, page 43

Question Asked:

Can you provide us with those minutes or those action items that you had been sent?

Response:

As noted in response to question 5 of this response, the department's records indicate that regular briefings occurred with the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery and Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy.

The government claims executive privilege over the specific content of briefings provided to the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery or Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy, or both. The Premier's letter to the Committee Chair dated 7 October 2023 stated that the government claims executive privilege over information that would reveal, directly or indirectly, the deliberative processes of Cabinet, or the Executive Government, or otherwise genuinely jeopardise the

necessary relationship of trust and confidence between the Minister and public officials.

Additional questions on notice:

1. What were the dates, for how much and who was the request sent to, between the establishment of the OCG and the cancellation of the Commonwealth Games that you sought additional budget funding?

Response:

The OCG was established in April 2022. At this time, the approved Commonwealth Games budget was \$2.6 billion, which was reflected in the 2022-23 State Budget.

An April 2023 submission sought a gross budget of \$4.5 billion, which was not approved. Subsequent submissions provided in June and July 2023 sought a gross budget of \$4.2 billion to deliver the Games, noting the July submission also stated the budget requirements of some other departments and identified a number of potential fiscal risks.

2. Given the OCG had two representatives on the OC Board, it was aware the Board of the Victorian 2026 had written to Jacinta Allan on 4 April “highlighting the critical timelines for decision making.”
 - a. Did your office make verbal representations to any member of the government or Department Secretary about timelines for budget decision making?
 - b. Did you take any notes about these discussions?
 - i. If so, please provide a copy of those notes to the committee.

Response:

No individuals from the OCG or the broader department were members of the OC Board.

- a) As noted in response to question 5 of this response, the department’s records indicate that regular briefings occurred with the Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery and Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy.

During June 2023, the department and OC advised the Minister and central agencies that a decision regarding scope and budget for the Games was required with urgency otherwise the program to deliver the Games would be jeopardised.

- b) The government claims executive privilege over the specific content of briefings provided to the Minister for Commonwealth Games

Delivery or Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy, or both. The Premier's letter to the Committee Chair dated 7 October 2023 stated that the government claims executive privilege over information that would reveal, directly or indirectly, the deliberative processes of Cabinet, or the Executive Government, or otherwise genuinely jeopardise the necessary relationship of trust and confidence between the Minister and public officials.

3. Were you involved in the discussions with stakeholders about cost blowouts in April 2023?
 - a. Who were the stakeholders involved?
 - b. Was any member of the executive government or staff aware of these discussions?

Response:

- a) Throughout April to June 2023, the department worked closely with the OC, DPC and DTF to identify opportunities to reduce costs while maintaining the intent of the regional model.
- b) Refer to question 5 for dates of formal meetings between the department and Minister for Commonwealth Games Delivery and Minister for Commonwealth Games Legacy.

4. With regards to major sporting displacement costs, which sports and venues?
 - a. What compensation payments and organisation were identified? Were they fixed costs?
 - b. The questionnaire from the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust indicates venue hire would be payable but does not mention displacement costs. Is their questionnaire incorrect?

Response:

- a) In around June 2023, the OCG was informed by the OC that early discussions had commenced with a number of venue owners on a range of matters including in instances on potential displacement costs. These discussions were ongoing and were not resolved at the time of cancellation.
- b) The question is a matter for the Kardinia Park Stadium Trust.