QTON No. 29

Legislative Assembly for the Australian Capital Territory
Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2023–2024

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: MR THOMAS EMERSON MLA

Addressed to: Mr Scott Austin, Acting Deputy Under Treasurer, Budget, Procurement, Investment and Finance, Treasury

In relation to: TREASURER'S ADVANCE

Hearing: 13 February 2025
Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 59, 60
Transcript provided: 20 February 2025
Answer Due: 27 February 2025

Mr Scott Austin took on notice the following questions:

Mr Emerson: Yes, okay. Is there reporting on exactly what that is used—apologies if there is and I have not seen it. There is a lot of documents through this whole process. But is there reporting each year on what that is used for?

Mr Austin: So the Treasurer signs an instrument that gives effect to it, and the next financial statements is attached to that, so you can see what it is being used for.

Mr Emerson: Okay. If you would not mind, would you be able to provide on notice what it was used for over the last say, five years, and each period? And I understand you have already got the information. Off the top of your head, do you know what it was used for, last year, of the breakdown months?

Mr Austin: It was a broad range of costs across all agencies, including CHS.

Mr Emerson: Okay.

Mr Austin: But it was – yes, it was split across agencies, so we will probably have to take that on notice.

Mr Emerson: And the process for accessing that, effectively, is kind of through a normal approach to treasury?

Mr Campbell: And then for the Treasurer to make a decision.

Mr Emerson: Yes. And that can be made by any directorate at any time?

Mr Austin: Yes, well I mean, and it being a high threshold demonstration, but—

Mr Emerson: Sure.

Mr Campbell: Except for the fact that if we got an application at the beginning of the financial year, we would probably say, well come back later. Have a go at trying to manage that first and come back later.

Mr Emerson: Okay. So normally you will kind of manage it and escalate it as needed to the Treasurer to solve?

Mr Campbell: Well usually because you will have a budget review process to consider if someone is actually going off track, you may actually want to take policy decisions to get back on track, if it cannot be done any other way. So there is a number of things you would consider in that half year review as well.

Mr Emerson: Okay. And one final question on that. And is it always – because habitually used – exhausted each year or is there sometimes a surplus?

Mr Austin: We might have to check that.

Mr Emerson: Okay.

Mr Austin: I think last year it was. I am pretty sure. But I will have to check on previous years.

Mr Steel: Then there is previously supplementary appropriation bills in recent years because so because of a need to supplement the appropriation because it may have gone too close to being a full amount of the Treasury's advance. So, and that is partially the reason for some of those supplementary appropriations bills has been quite a volatile period that we had been in with COVID, and the need to supplement the budget to support COVID initiatives.

Mr Austin: Yes, so during COVID it was actually temporarily increased to five per cent.

Mr Emerson: Okay. It is like a contingency almost that you put it to manage it. Okay. Thank you.

MR CHRIS STEEL MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

Treasurer's Advance instruments are tabled with the Quarterly Consolidated Financial Reports which are publicly accessible at https://www.treasury.act.gov.au/publications.

The Treasurer's Advance has contained a surplus for the last five years.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Public Accounts and Administration

Signature: Date: 26/2/25

By the Treasurer, Chris Steel MLA