

Item 12

Supplementary Answers to Previous Questions

Supplementary Answers to Questions on Notice are as follows:

Question on Notice – Council 8 April 2019

Councillor Chung asked the following questions concerning illegal brothels:

1. How many complaints has the City of Sydney received since September 2017 concerning the operation of illegal brothels? How many of these complaints have resulted in follow up premises inspection?
2. How many prosecutions have commenced against alleged illegal brothels since September 2017?
3. How many premises inspections has the City performed on massage and para-medical therapeutic premises in the past 12 months in order to detect compliance with conditions of development consent?
4. How many orders in relation to breaches of conditions of consent has the City made against massage premises since September 2017?
5. How many desktop audits of massage premises have been conducted since September 2017? What were the outcomes of these investigations?

Supplementary Answer

Since 1 July 2017, the City has received 61 complaints about premises. Almost all of the complainants are anonymous. There are 10 current investigations in progress.

A 'desk top' investigation is conducted in response to every complaint received. This includes a search for prior complaints and internet advertising to secure evidence and test the veracity of the allegation. Some cases are closed at this point as the premises have approval or may be exempt. If necessary, an inspection of the premises is conducted to further test the veracity of the complaint and secure more evidence. More cases are closed at this point. Many are determined to be higher risk and proceed to further, more intensive investigation. Of the 61 complaints received, 35 resulted in a site inspection.

There have been two successful prosecutions. In September 2018, the operators of CBD Chicago Massage in Pitt Street, Sydney were convicted and fined \$30,000. The operators of Pymont Star Massage in Harris Street, Pymont were convicted and fined \$10,000.

There are a further six prosecutions pending. Two are currently set down for hearing in May and June this year. Another two have commenced for which pleas have not been entered. Another two we anticipate will be commenced within weeks.

Five brothel closure orders have been issued and one order for illegal works has been issued.

There is no proactive inspection program for therapeutic or remedial massage premises.