



Australian Government

National Indigenous Australians Agency

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Chief Executive Officer
Ray Griggs AO, CSC
Reference: EC20-000488

Senator James Paterson
Chair
Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
PO Box 6100
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Cc: Senator Tim Ayres
Deputy Chair
Senate Finance and Administration Legislation Committee

Dear Senator Paterson

Senator,

Since my correspondence of 12 March 2020, regarding the evidence provided by the National Indigenous Australians Agency (the Agency) to the Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee on 6 March 2020, I would like to provide you with an update on progress of the Indigenous Advancement Strategy (IAS) data assurance activity that I initiated.

As you know, prior to last Estimates, a large amount of information was requested by Senator Ayres in a relatively short time-frame and was provided to the Senator and the Committee on 6 March 2020. As previously advised this task involved significant staff effort, manual extraction of data and consideration of some 13000 documents. Given the compressed timeframe, the scale of the work and the same personnel being responsible for the preparation of key Senate Estimates briefs, errors in data compilation were made with consequent impacts which I will set out below.

The responses to Questions on Notice 0120, 0128 and 0247 reflect updated data in them following the data assurance activity.

In the March hearing, Ms Hope advised that the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs made 641 funding decisions during the period 1 January to 10 April 2019. This number did not include the 103 NAIDOC week decisions which were discussed separately in other evidence that day. As a result of the data assurance activity I can advise that there were 878 funding decisions (made up of new funding decisions, NAIDOC week funding decisions and the extension of recurring grants under the ceasing grants process).

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Of these 878 decisions the then Minister:

- agreed with the then Department's recommendation on 797 occasions,
- on 39 occasions the then Minister did not agree to fund an activity recommended by the Department (see [Attachment A](#));
- on 32 occasions the then Minister's decision was to fund an activity that the Department did not recommend (see [Attachment B](#)); and
- on 10 occasions the Minister made a decision without a recommendation from the then Department, of which only one progressed to a grant.

All IAS grants executed by the then Department during that period, were assessed for eligibility and against the selection criteria outlined in the IAS grant guidelines.

As part of the data assurance activity I also directed a review of the data underpinning the evidence given by Agency officials on related questions to ensure answers remained accurate. I can advise you that Ms Collard's statement in October 2019 was not correct when she advised that the then Minister had made 240 new funding decisions between 1 March and 10 April 2019. Following the analysis I can confirm this number was in fact 278 new funding decisions.

As I have advised in successive opening statements to the Committee, the Agency has embarked on a significant and wide ranging reform program over the last 12 months. In relation to these matters the reform program has been focused on remediating the grants and data management systems and practices which historically have not been well integrated. As we discussed in the March 2020 hearing, the changes to the delegation decision making introduced by Minister Wyatt that came into effect on 1 July 2019, have I believe also led to improvements. I am determined to continue to better position the Agency in this area and very happy to discuss the ongoing reform program in more detail with the Committee.

The data assurance activity has been a significant piece of work alongside the significant cultural and organisational change that has been implemented. Providing accurate data to the Committee remains a key focus of mine going forward.

Yours sincerely

RAY GRIGGS

Chief Executive Officer

8 May 2020

Attachments

Attachment A: Details of the 39 occasions where the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs' did not agree to fund an activity recommended by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Attachment B: Details of the 32 occasions where the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs' decision was to fund an activity that the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet did not recommend.

Details of the 39 occasions where the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs' did not agree to fund an activity recommended by the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (1 January – 10 April 2019)

Organisation	Subject
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Develop fully costed capital works proposal to build and manage visitor park in Darwin
Bandjalang Aboriginal Corporation Prescribed Body Corporate RNTBC	Bandjalang Land Management Contracting
Bardi and Jawi Niiminidan Aboriginal Corporation	Capacity building for the Bardi and Jawi Niimidiman Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
Blackrock Industries Pty Ltd	Second Chance for Change Program
Bynoe Community Advancement Co-Op Society Ltd	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Central Australia Aboriginal Media Association	Third Action Plan funds
Complete Employment Service Pty Ltd	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Danila Dilba Health Service	Health-E-Link project
East Kimberley Job Pathways	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Elders Council of Tasmania	To build capacity and capability and improve organisational governance and sustainability
Githabul Nation Aboriginal Corporation	Bodies Corporate (PBC) Capacity Building funding for Barribun-ma
HGT Australia	Inner Sydney Empowered Communities
Karajarri Traditional Lands Association Ab Corp	Capacity building for economic development on Karajarri country
Kimberley Aboriginal Law and Cultural Centre	Kimberley Indigenous Suicide Prevention Activities
Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation	Business Planning and Capacity Building for Kokatha Aboriginal Corporation RNTBC
Legal Aid Commission of NSW	TAEG Cadetships - Judge Bob Belliar Pathways to Legal Careers Program
Mapoon Aboriginal Council	Mapoon Paanja Cultural Festival 2018
National Congress of Australia's First Peoples Ltd	The National Engagement Project
National Congress of Australia's First Peoples Ltd	International Indigenous Housing Conference

Attachment A

Organisation	Subject
Nitmiluk Tours Pty Ltd	Indigenous Entrepreneurs Fund
Northern Land Council	Indigenous Business and Employment Hub System (Hub System) – Specialist advice
Northern Land Council	Indigenous Business and Employment Hub System (Hub System) – establishment and operations
Northern Land Council on behalf of the Top End Default (TED)	TED PBC Capacity Building and Development
Pine Creek Primary School	School Nutrition Projects
Rainbow Gateway Limited	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Regional Enterprise Development Institute Ltd	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Shire of Derby West Kimberley	Fitzroy Valley Future organisation strengthening governance and leadership
South Sydney Aboriginal Corporation Resource Centre	Small Sporting Grants Project
Thamarrurr Development Corporation Ltd	CDP Capital Investment Fund
The Arnhem Land Progress Aboriginal Corporation	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Trustee for Mantiyupwe Family Trust	Wurrumiyanga Community Bakery Indigenous Jobs Initiative
University of Adelaide	Increased TAEG Funding
Urapuntja Health Service Aboriginal Corporation	Wellbeing for Our Mob
Victoria Daly Regional Council	School Nutrition Projects in Yarralin
Winun Ngari Aboriginal Corporation	CDP Capital Investment Fund
Wirrpanda Foundation Limited	Onslow Family Support Project
Yarralin Primary School	School Nutrition Projects
Yothu Yindi Foundation	Garma Festival

Details of the 32 occasions where the then Minister for Indigenous Affairs' decision was to fund an activity that the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet did not recommend (1 January – 10 April 2019)

Organisation	Funding Purpose	Approved Funding \$
Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Corporation Family Violence Prevention and Legal Service (Vic)	Sisters Day Out and Dilly Bag: The Journey	300,000
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Construction and operation of visitor park in Darwin	5,700,000
Aboriginal Hostels Limited	Darwin visitor park operating costs	2,472,000
Access Arts Inc	Therapeutic Arts Workshops	300,000
AFL Cape York Limited	Youth Marine Ranger Development Program	250,000
Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	CLCAC Cairns NAIDOC 2019	500
Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal Corporation	IAS FUNDING RECOMMENDATIONS: MULTIPLE APPLICATIONS	2,000,000
Central Australian Aboriginal Media Association	Reconnection Of Remote Indigenous Broadcasting Services	175,817
Deewin Kirim Aboriginal Corporation	Capacity Building For Indigenous Rangers Strategy - Additional Proposals	115,000
Department of Education	NAIDOC Week celebrations	500
Desert Knowledge Australia	Codes 4 Life, Leadership Through Identity	1,366,047
Ghurrumbil Dreaming Indigenous Corporation	Lismore Inaugural NAIDOC Youth Debutante Ball Ages 15-17	500
Humpty Dumpty Foundation	Support the purchase of medical equipment for hospitals in remote areas of the Northern Territory	200,000
Jali Local Aboriginal Land Council	Capacity Building For Indigenous Rangers Strategy - Additional Proposals	13,609
Keeping Our Freedom Youth Indigenous Corporation	'Learn My Story - Share My Shield' - A Shield Making Workshop for Male Youths in Casino, Northern Rivers NSW	500
Monash Primary School	Embedding Indigenous cultures at Monash Primary School.	500

Attachment B

Organisation	Funding Purpose	Approved Funding \$
NSW Government Schools	Byron Bay Public & Byron Bay High Schools combined NAIDOC Week activities	500
NSW Government Schools	Local Aboriginal cultural Learning and workshops.	500
NSW Government Schools	Language, Connection and Celebration Day	500
NSW Government Schools	Wallsend Public School Community Art Mural	500
NSW Government Schools	Sharing the Spirit	500
NSW Government Schools	NAIDOC 2019 - Byron Bay High School	500
NSW Government Schools	NAIDOC WEEK 2019	300
NSW Government Schools	Richmond High School NAIDOC celebrations	500
NSW Government Schools	A Voice Together- Bossley Park Public School and Darug Country and Community	500
PeoplePlus Enterprises Pty Ltd (TRACQS)	Delivery of the Community Development Programme in Region 52 - Western Tablelands	24,825,452
Stronger Smarter Institute Limited	Stronger Smarter Schools NAIDOC 2019 Voice, Treaty, Truth	500
The Song Room Limited	Transformational Learning in Indigenous Communities	340,372
Torres Shire Council	NAIDOC event	10,000
Trustees of the Roman Catholic Church for the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn as Trustee for St Bede's Primary Red Hill	Yarning Circle	500
Weigelli Centre Aboriginal Corporation Inc	Transport (Bus) upgrades	53,500
Wirrpanda Corporation Ltd	WA Indigenous Business and Employment Hub	9,429,000