

Environment and Communications References
Answers to questions on notice
Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water Portfolio

Inquiry: Inquiry into Australian Antarctic Division funding

Question No: IQ24-000058

Hearing Date: 05 October 2023

Division/Agency: Australian Antarctic Division

Topic: Supplementary response to IQ23-000273 - Support provided by Property Management and Projects Branch of the Department of Finance

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Question Date: 05 October 2023

Question Type: Spoken

Senator Duniam asked:

Senator DUNIAM: That's excellent. I'm pleased to hear that. I might put further questions about that on notice, given the time. I have one final question, and again it might be something taken on notice. The Property Management and Projects Branch of the Department of Finance manage a range of projects. With regard to AAD, there are two: the Macquarie Island project and the Antarctic and Science Precinct. What role do they have in supporting the AAD in what you do in those two locations?

Mr Sullivan: I think we've traversed this at estimates before.

Senator DUNIAM: Sort of.

Mr Sullivan: I'm not aware of any engagement, but officers may be.

Senator DUNIAM: I asked them what they did—and it struck me that it was like Utopia—and they gave me a list of projects, and I've been going around asking what these people have actually done to support these projects. If, perhaps on notice if you don't have anything here, you could let me know what they do, that would be helpful.

Ms Campbell: I'm not aware of any management that they do, but we'll take that on notice.

Senator DUNIAM: If you could, that would be great, thank you.

Answer:

This is an amended answer to the original response to inquiry question on notice number IQ23-000273 following evidence given to this inquiry by the Department of Finance on 19 March 2024.

The Department of Climate Change, Energy, the Environment and Water's response to IQ23-000273 indicated that the Department of Finance's Property Management and Projects Branch does not have a current role in supporting the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD) in relation to the Antarctic and Science Precinct and the Macquarie Island Modernisation Project. This remains the case.

Whilst not actively engaged in day-to-day project management of the Macquarie Island Modernisation Project, the Department of Finance has held observer status at, and has regularly participated in, the Macquarie Island Modernisation Project Steering Committee meetings (late-2017 to mid-2021) and MIMP Project Control Group (PCG) meetings (late-2018 to late-2019), where they provided technical project-related support and advice.

Additionally, one Department of Finance staff member was embedded in the project team for a six-month period in 2017 to assist the AAD in preparing for the Joint Standing Committee on Public Works submission.