

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2011-12 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 178

Topic: Stronger Futures Consultations

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

1. How were communities chosen for Stronger Futures consultations?
2. How were stakeholders chosen for the stakeholder consultations?
3. Which advertising materials were in language? What communication materials- such as the discussion paper, consultation documents or presentations were in language?

Answer:

Question 1.

In scheduling Stronger Futures consultation meetings the Department sought to ensure that residents in all communities and town camps that are prescribed areas under the Northern Territory Emergency Response had the opportunity to participate in a meeting if they wished to.

The public meetings held in Darwin, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Nhulunbuy, and Alice Springs were an open invitation to any interested people outside the prescribed areas who wished to participate.

The location of all consultation meetings, and the number of meetings held in each location, are detailed in Appendix 2 of the report on the Stronger Futures consultations.

Question 2.

The Department sought to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders, including key Indigenous organisations, peak bodies, advisory groups and non-government organisations, were offered the opportunity to contribute their views. Separate forums were arranged for common interest groups, including legal services and service provider organisations, in Darwin and some regional centres. Efforts were also made to consult directly with local government bodies.

Other than seeking to be as open as possible in inviting stakeholder participation in the *Stronger Futures* process, there were no explicit criteria for selecting stakeholders for these meetings.

Question 3.

The Department undertook widespread advertising on Indigenous and mainstream radio networks, translated into 13 Indigenous languages. These short advertisements alerted people to consultations, and urged their participation.

No other communication materials were translated into Indigenous languages. It is not the Australian Government's practice to translate printed materials into Indigenous languages. Communications research indicates that if people are literate in their own languages they are likely to be literate in English. In addition, translation of complex and lengthy documents such as the *Stronger Futures in the Northern Territory* discussion paper into multiple Indigenous languages would be expensive and would require a lengthy lead time.

Interpreters were booked for all whole-of-community meetings and the public meetings in major centres, and were present at 92 per cent of these meetings.

Communication products for the consultations were provided in several formats, and the discussion paper was also converted into a highly visual plain English version.