

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: ANAO Report

Senator: Dodson, Patrick

Question reference number: 185

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 13 April 2017

Number of pages: 1

Question:

The ANAO Report at page 7 cites the 2014-2015 Budget report, saying that the Australian Government would save \$534.4 million over five years by rationalising indigenous programs, grants and activities

1. Could the Department please provide a detailed breakdown of the areas in which savings were intended to be made to lead to that figure being included in the PBS?

2. The Minister said in the Senate on 8 February “On the 8 February, the Minister said “He says we cut out of indigenous funding \$536 million. I actually had to write to Linda Burney and I am not sure, brother, if I am going to have to write to you. But we have said time and time again in this place that that is simply not correct.”

Can the Minister confirm the date on which he wrote to the Member for Barton, the Hon Ms Linda Burney on this issue?

o Could a copy of the letter please be provided?

Answers:

1. The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) has previously supplied these figures in the response to PM172, Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016.
2. The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion wrote to the Member for Barton, the Hon Linda Burney MP on 12 October 2016 on this issue. A copy of the letter is at [Attachment A](#).



MINISTER FOR INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS

Ms Linda Burney
Member for Barton
Parliament House ACT 2600

Dear Ms Burney

I write in response to your opinion piece in The Australian earlier this week in which you raise the important issue of domestic violence in Indigenous communities.

Firstly, let me acknowledge your contribution to this important issue. However, it is important that I clarify, as I have had to on a number of occasions, the true facts of Indigenous Affairs funding arrangements under the Indigenous Advancement Strategy.

It is not correct to state that there was a “half a billion dollars’ worth of cuts to Indigenous Affairs programme”.

The 2014 Budget Paper 2 did show a saving of \$534.4 million across the Prime Minister and Cabinet and Health portfolios. However, the amount returned to the Budget from Indigenous Affairs programmes is less than half this figure (\$239.5 million) as the Government reinvested savings into our policy priorities for Indigenous Affairs including the Remote School Attendance Strategy. Savings in the Budget papers also included Departmental savings that were achieved through the reduction of duplication, administration and red tape that the Indigenous Advancement Strategy delivered.

The figure also does not take account the new funding that has come into the portfolio including:

- \$20.4 million for native title holders;
- \$17 million for township leasing and land administration;
- \$10.6 million for pilot land tenure reforms; and
- \$14.6 million to support constitutional recognition and the work of the Referendum Council.

In addition, it is not correct to state that there has been a \$3.6 million cut for Family Violence Prevention Legal Services. Of the 14 Family Violence Prevention Legal Services across Australia, 13 have had funding maintained and the remaining provider, received an additional \$8.3 million in funding to expand its service to a further nine communities.

You may also be interested in additional funding that has been provided to the sector. The Family Violence Legal Service Aboriginal Corporation (SA) has been provided with an additional \$60,000 to provide family violence workshops to support the introduction of the Cashless Debit Card Trial in Ceduna.

Funding of \$732,024 has also been provided to maintain the peak body for the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services sector, the Family Violence Prevention Legal Services Secretariat, and a further \$600,000 over three years to support engagement with the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Abuse.

I am also pleased to update you on funding that the Commonwealth has also announced to address domestic violence. The Women's Safety Package announced by the Prime Minister in September last year provided over \$100 million for a range of activities to keep all women, including Indigenous women, safe from violence, including \$21 million for activities specifically targeting Indigenous families. This is on top of the Government's existing commitment through the Indigenous Advancement Strategy to tackle the drivers of violence in Indigenous communities.

I welcome your contribution in this important area and I would be happy to arrange a briefing on these matters for you if you would like anything else clarified.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nigel Scullion', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

NIGEL SCULLION
12 October 2016