

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SENATE ESTIMATES SESSION

Supplementary Budget Estimates 18-22 November 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet

Outcome/Program: 1.1 Prime Minister and Cabinet

Topic: Tiwi Island

Senator: Senator Nova Peris

Question reference number: 343

Type of Question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 17 January 2014

Number of pages:

Question:

Is the Minister aware of the \$50 Million investment on the Tiwi Islands by the infrastructure building company Teras Australia?

Is the minister aware of any matters that may be affecting this investment?

Is the Minister aware that Teras Australia has trained more than 30 Tiwi Islanders to operate in the marine based industries?

Is the Minister aware of a timber harvesting project on the Tiwi Islands?

Is the Minister aware that Indigenous Tiwi Islanders are paid less than imported backpacker labor?

What is the justification for paying Aboriginal people who are working on their own land being paid less than backpackers?

Is the Minister aware that many members of the Tiwi Land Council are unhappy with the management of the Tiwi Land Council?

Has the Minister personally heard of any criticism of Tiwi Land Council?

Does the Minister know whether or not the CEO of the Tiwi Land Council formally holds the correct forms of delegated authority, including financial authority, from the Tiwi Land Council?

Answer:

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs, Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion, is aware of commercial development projects on the Tiwi Islands, including Teras Australia's marine supply base and the timber harvesting project. These projects have been underway for some time and commenced under previous federal governments. Questions in relation to pay rates for workers in these developments ought to be referred to the Fair Work Commission.

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

SENATE ESTIMATES SESSION

Supplementary Budget Estimates 18-22 November 2013

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

The Minister for Indigenous Affairs has heard criticism of the Tiwi Land Council over the years. He has also received positive feedback.

The *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* establishes Land Councils as independent statutory authorities and provisions are also made for Land Councils to delegate their powers and functions including to staff members. There is no role for the Minister in decisions by the Land Councils about the delegation of their powers and he does not have any knowledge of the delegations to the Chief Executive Officer of the Tiwi Land Council.