



Australian Government
Director of National Parks

Senator Doug Cameron
Chair
Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Cameron

On 28 May 2013 I appeared as a witness before the Senate Environment and Communications Legislation Committee Estimates Hearing.

During the hearing Senator Birmingham asked

“Are there any other impacts in relation to Christmas Island being felt as a result of the increased level of human traffic across the island?”

In response I said:

“Through the department's enterprise agreement, we provide rental subsidies for staff on the island. That has been an increasing cost for us.”

I wish to correct this answer. Through the department's enterprise agreement we are able provide rental subsidies for staff on the island. There has been a small increase in the rental subsidy costs for my agency.

During the hearing the following exchange occurred:

Senator BIRMINGHAM: *So several hundred dollars a week for each of the 25.*

Mr Cochrane: *A significant number of our staff—probably at least half of them—are locals; local residents.*

Senator BIRMINGHAM: *So there is not a short-term rental issue there, but there are still about a dozen—*

Mr Cochrane: *Probably close to a dozen would be, if you like, ex-pats.*

Senator BIRMINGHAM: *for whom you are facing increased costs—*

Mr Cochrane: *Rental subsidies.*

Senator BIRMINGHAM: *Costs that run into tens of thousands of dollars or more annually.*

Mr Cochrane: *Yes*

I wish to correct these answers. The cost to our agency increases by the number of staff we are supporting. Currently we are providing assistance to one staff member at a rate of \$52 per week.

I apologise for the errors in my answers and trust this further information will be of assistance to the Committee.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter Cochrane". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Peter Cochrane
Director of National Parks
26 June 2013