

**Senate Standing Committee on Finance and Public Administration**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

**Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio**

**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

**Additional Budget Estimates Hearings 2006-2007, 12-13 February 2007**

**Question: PM65**

**Outcome 1, Output 3.1**

**Topic: Papua New Guinea – Kokoda Track**

**Hansard Page: Direct on Notice**



**Senator CHRIS EVANS asked:**

- a) When did the Department first become aware that Frontier Resources had an exploration licence and an intention to mine areas that incorporate the Kokoda Track?
- b) What contact has the Department had with Frontier Resources over the issue?
- c) What contact has the Department had with Papua New Guinea over this issue?
- d) When was the decision taken to send a delegation to Papua New Guinea in regards to this issue?
- e) What was the outcome of this delegation?
- f) Were any reports made – if so can we please have a copy?
- g) What was the cost of this delegation?
- h) Who went on this delegation?
- i) Did the Department establish an IDC on this issue? If yes when was it established and who are its members?
- j) How often does the IDC meet and report on these matters?

**Answers:**

- a) The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (PM&C) first became aware of the exploration licence granted to Frontier Resources which incorporated parts of the Kokoda Track on 14 July 2006.
- b) PM&C has been in telephone and email contact with Frontier Resources and has met the chairman of Frontier Resources, Mr Bob McNeil, at a meeting chaired by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- c) A representative from PM&C, together with officials from other departments, met PNG Government officials during a delegation visit on 25, 26 and 27 September 2006.
- d) The Prime Minister asked on 1 September 2006 that a delegation visit Port Moresby to pursue this issue.

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**

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**Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet**

Additional Estimates Hearings 2004-2005, 14 February 2005

- e) The delegation provided a report to the Prime Minister on 29 September 2006. Since the delegation's visit there has been a heightened awareness of issues relating to the protection of the Track among relevant authorities in PNG and in Australia. The delegation's work continues through an interdepartmental committee process and through a further, scheduled visit to PNG.
- f) A report was prepared by PM&C for the Prime Minister on 29 September 2006. It would not be appropriate for PM&C to provide its advice on this matter to the committee.
- g) The total cost incurred by PM&C for the visit was AUD\$4775.18. Questions on the costs incurred by other delegation members should be directed to their agencies.
- h) The delegation was led by Mr Hugh Borrowman, First Assistant Secretary, International Division, Department of Prime Minister & Cabinet, and included: Major General Paul Stevens AO (Retd), Director, Office of Australian War Graves, Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr John Moremon, Historian, Commemorations Group Department of Veterans Affairs; Dr Greg Terrill, Assistant Secretary, Heritage Strategy Branch, Heritage Division, Department of Environment and Heritage; Mr David Binns, Assistant Secretary, Papua New Guinea Branch, Pacific Division, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade; and Mr Aden McKay, Principal Geologist, Minerals Advice and Assessment, Geoscience Australia.
- i) Yes. An interdepartmental committee was convened on 8 September 2006. The committee is chaired by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet and at 8 March 2007 included the Departments of Defence, Environment and Water Resources, Foreign Affairs and Trade, Industry Tourism and Resources and Veterans' Affairs, and AusAID, Geoscience Australia, and the Office of Australian War Graves.
- j) The IDC has met six times. Individual agencies are responsible for reporting to their Ministers as appropriate.