

FINANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION COMMITTEE

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE – ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES – 21-22 FEBRUARY 2011

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL AUSTRALIA, REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Q No.	Program: Division or Agency	Senator	Broad Topic	Question	Proof Hansard Page & Hearing Date or Written Q	Date Rec'd	Date Tabled
1.	1.1	JOYCE	Local Government Reform Fund	<p>Senator JOYCE—Have you sent them the money?</p> <p>Ms Fleming—Yes. Some of the funds have been committed to the states for some of the projects.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—Have you received any acquittal statement?</p> <p>Ms Fleming—No. To my knowledge, we have not received any acquittal statements at this stage.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—When do you think they are going to turn up?</p> <p>Ms Fleming—They appear at the timelines at the end of the projects. My understanding is that none of the projects has been completed. I would be happy to take that on notice and give you a more thorough response to the question.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—Mr Hanney just told me that you pay on proportion of contract, so that would mean that to determine that you would have an acquittal statement.</p> <p>Ms Fleming—The way the funding agreement normally works is that there is a series of milestone payments and then at the end of the financial year there is an acquittal statement provided that indicates that all of the expenditure has been paid in accordance with the expenditure expected to be paid.</p>	F&PA 90 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
2.	1.1	JOYCE	Intergovernme ntal Agreement on Cost Shifting	<p>Senator JOYCE The intergovernmental agreement on cost shifting is due for review before 12 February 2011. What arrangements have been put in place for the review process to take place?</p> <p>Ms Foster—I might ask the officer who is dealing with that to come forward. We might need to take that on notice and get you some information. Within one of our teams we have people working on that review. I just do not have the details to hand.</p>	F&PA 91 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
3.	1.1	JOYCE	Intergovernme ntal Agreement on Cost Shifting	<p>Senator JOYCE—That is fine. Just take that one on notice. Are there any plans for an internal or public inquiry into the renewal of the intergovernmental agreement on cost shifting? You obviously will be taking that one on notice as well.</p>	F&PA 91 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
4.	1.1	ADAMS	RDA	<p>Mr Hanney—The RDA chairs have been here before. We have also been going out to each of the states and territories to meet with the RDA chairs or RDA committees again just to have the discussion with them to think about next steps.</p> <p>Senator ADAMS—What is it costing for that little exercise? Would you be able to</p>	F&PA 108 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	

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				take that on notice? I know the chairs and the deputies have been once. Mr Hanney —This is just the chairs. We can take on notice to get the cost of that.			
5.	1.1	ADAMS	Nominations for RDAs	Senator ADAMS —The reason I am asking about these nominations is I have had some very astute, highprofile community people from the Great Southern coming to see me and saying: ‘We’ve applied. We’ve not been notified..... Once again, being a senator for the whole state, people are coming to me and saying: ‘What on earth is going on? Why are we not getting an answer?’	F&PA 108 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
6.	1.1	ADAMS	RDA – Great Southern Region	Senator ADAMS —There are three people missing from this particular board. I wonder how effective it is. As I said, they were saying that the budget really pays just for the executive officer, a support staff person and the rent. My next question is: why has the committee never allocated any funds towards projects in the Great Southern region? Mr Hanney —The guidance given to all the RDAs is to identify projects. In the first instance they were all asked to prepare a plan and with that plan they have all worked closely with their local governments or with their commissions where they exist.	F&PA 108-109’ (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
7.	1.1	JOYCE / MACDONALD / FIFEILD	RDA Volunteer letter	Senator JOYCE —So, how did this happen? How did we have something that is completely non-compliant with the unlawful work discrimination process and it has come out with a Regional Development Australia header on it? There it is. It came to my office. Why would it ask for a prescribed ethnicity? Ms Beauchamp —Can I take the issue on board and take it on notice? I have just been presented with it. You have heard from us that these are not employees—they are volunteers—and I think that says here that they are volunteers. We will take this on notice and provide you with a full answer to the question you are raising..... Senator IAN MACDONALD —Skill gaps I can understand; representative gaps, as Senator Joyce points out, representative of the ethnicity, age or gender would hardly seem to be appropriate. Surely they would be looking for the best qualified person, which may well incorporate those people but not be particularly related to that. Would you agree? Ms Beauchamp —As I said earlier, we will take this on board and have a closer look at it. I am not trying to be unhelpful but I do want to have a look into this a bit more..... Senator FIFEILD —I accept the minister has decided to take on notice the question of whether he thinks that it is poor to lump people together in this fashion. I accept that the minister has done that.	F&PA 117, 118 and 119 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	

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8.	1.1	JOYCE to SHERRY	RDA Volunteer letter	<p>Senator JOYCE—Is there an exemption for discrimination for volunteers?</p> <p>Ms Beauchamp—Sorry, Senator?</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—No, it is for the minister. Is there an exemption from—</p> <p>Senator Sherry—I do not know.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—discrimination for volunteers?</p> <p>Senator Sherry—I do not know. I am not familiar with the provisions. I do not know. I will have to take it on notice.....</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—It sounds absolutely absurd that I have to do this, but can you take on notice whether equal opportunity laws apply to the engagement of volunteers? You might be able to answer it now, but if you cannot, you can take it on notice.</p> <p>Senator Sherry—We are more than happy to answer that question and will provide you with an answer on notice.</p>	F&PA 118 and 121 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
9.	1.1	JOYCE	RDA Volunteer letter	<p>Senator JOYCE—Did they, in error, put the Australian Commonwealth government monogram in the bottom left-hand corner of this document? Are they not entitled to?</p> <p>Ms Beauchamp—I said I would take this issue on notice and I will follow up, too, on that question as part of that</p>	F&PA 120, 121 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
10.	1.1	MACDONALD	CRC	<p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—I should know this and perhaps it is not correctly in your portfolio, but can you tell me about the CRC for remote economic participation? When was that established?</p> <p>Ms Fleming—I cannot tell you the detail but I would be happy to take it on notice. I believe it has been operating for, it is my understanding, about six years, but I do not specifically have all of the details of its particular operations.</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—Does it have another name, do you know?</p> <p>Ms Fleming—It used to be Desert Knowledge.</p>	F&PA 128 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
11.	1.1	MACDONALD	ONA: Gilbert and Flinders Rivers	<p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—On notice, can you let me know what your department knows or is doing in relation to the Gilbert River Green Hills dam proposal? Can you also, on notice, find out if the minister has made some comments and, if so, where I would see those? If I cannot, you could perhaps get him to repeat them to me.</p> <p>Senator Sherry—I am not sure that we could get him to repeat it, but we will find if we can get a transcript for you or copies of the media releases or clips. We will take that on notice.</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—Perhaps, if he made a comment and had minders</p>	F&PA 131 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	

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				with him, they may have taken a transcript of it which he may have.			
12.	1.1	MACDONALD	East Kimberly Project	<p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—On notice, can you give the committee a paragraph about the \$44 million of projects that are not yet tendered?</p> <p>Mr Hanney—They are tendered, but have not yet started.</p> <p>Senator IAN MACDONALD—Are there a smaller number that have not yet been tendered?</p> <p>Ms Fleming—Yes.</p> <p>Mr Hanney—There is \$11.7 million at the planning stage.</p> <p>Ms Fleming—We are happy to take that on notice and provide some details.</p>	F&PA 133 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
13.	1.1	JOYCE	Regional Development Policy Centre	A Regional Development Policy Centre was promised as part of the Regional Package as a result of the 2010 Election. Can you please provide an update as to when the Regional Development Policy Centre will be established?	Written	15/04/11	
14.	1.1	JOYCE	myregion.com.au	<p>How is the work on myregion.com.au progressing? When is it likely to be operational?</p> <p>How much does the Department expect it to cost to establish this website, including the costs of the financial spatial accounting data?</p>	Written	15/04/11	
15.	1.2	JOYCE	Cycling tracks	<p>Senator JOYCE—Have they had any discussions with local government about where all these cycling tracks are going to go?</p> <p>Ms Beauchamp—I would have to take that one on notice. I am not too sure what consultation we have had.</p> <p>Senator JOYCE—Have you had any discussion whatsoever or has anything come across your table, Ms Beauchamp, about a new direction in cycling for this nation?</p> <p>Ms Beauchamp—It may have come across a number of officers in the department. I would have to take that on notice.</p>	F&PA 91 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
16.	1.2	LUDLAM	National Bike Paths program	<p>Senator LUDLAM—If I asked you what you are currently spending on cycling infrastructure, there would be no point asking for a breakdown of spending by city, town or region because it is zero?</p> <p>Ms Beauchamp—In relation to Ms Foster's comment around the National Bike Paths Program, as part of the stimulus package, we could provide a breakdown of the 166 projects that the government announced funding for.</p> <p>Senator LUDLAM—Yes, but that will be retrospective. There is nothing in your forward estimates?</p> <p>Ms Beauchamp—That is correct. Most of those dollars have been committed and we are in the process of finalising that program.</p>	F&PA 92 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	

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17.	1.2	JOYCE	RLCIP	Senator JOYCE —...What provision is there for funding for the national community infrastructure shortfall, which has been estimated by the PricewaterhouseCoopers report into local government on financial sustainability at \$14.5 billion? Ms Beauchamp —We will have to take that one on notice.	F&PA 99 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
18.	1.2	JOYCE	Election Commitments	Please provide a list of all election commitments that your department is responsible for implementing on a project by project basis? - Please include a short description of project, the Commonwealth contribution and the program which is providing the funds to meet the commitment	Written	15/04/11	
19.	1.2	JOYCE	RLCIP	How many projects are being funded under the Community Infrastructure Program?	Written	15/04/11	
20.	CORP	JOYCE	Moore Stephens Consultancy	Senator JOYCE —With Moore Stephens as an example, did they bill you on an hourly basis or did they bill you on a— Ms Beauchamp —I did not manage the exact billing arrangements. I am not sure on what basis they billed. I would have to take that on notice. ... Senator JOYCE —You have every right and entitlement to get an hourly billing off them. Did you ask for it? Ms Beauchamp —As I said, I did not manage the contract. I would have to take on notice the billing arrangements that were put in place under the contract.	F&PA 98 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
21.	CORP	JOYCE	Moore Stephens Consultancy	Senator JOYCE —Did they give you a quote and then pay on the quote? Ms Beauchamp —I would have to take that on notice.	F&PA 98 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
22.	CORP	JOYCE	Tenders for Consultancies	Senator JOYCE —When you were determining Moore, Morrison and Workplace Research, how did you determine that tender? Ms Beauchamp —I would have to take some of that on notice. Obviously we did things in accordance with the government procurement guidelines. In relation to Morrison Consulting, which I do know about, they do provide assurance to me as secretary of the department around the financial management arrangements. I did look at direct sourcing that company, given that the services were provided to the Prime Minister and Cabinet portfolio as an independent auditor and sought out this person's assistance with that function.	F&PA 98 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
23.	CORP	JOYCE	Morrison Consulting	Ms Beauchamp —The principal of the company sits on their audit committee. Senator JOYCE —For how long have they been there? Ms Beauchamp —I would have to take that on notice, sorry. I would have to ask the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.	F&PA 98 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	

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24.	CORP	JOYCE	Establishment of the Department	What is the additional cost to the Government over the forward estimates of establishing the Department of Regional Australia? (a) What are these additional costs funding? (b) Can you provide a breakdown of this amount against exactly what it is being spent on?	Written	15/04/11	
25.	CORP	JOYCE	Artwork	Can you please tell us what the total cost of the artwork is in Minister Crean's office? Please provide a description of each artwork and its value?	Written	15/04/11	
26.	WA Govt	ADAMS	Royalties for Regions	Senator ADAMS —I have a question once more pertaining to Western Australia. Why is money from Royalties for Regions being used for projects that should be funded by the relevant departments? Are you aware of any duplication in that respect where Royalties for Regions is putting funding into something that you really should be doing? Ms Beauchamp —The Royalties for Regions program is a Western Australian initiative Senator ADAMS —I know. That is why I said it is specifically Western Australian. That is right. But as far as any—we will call it—buck-passing, I guess, that Royalties for Regions are paying for projects that really the federal government are responsible for?..... Ms Beauchamp —That is a Western Australian government initiative and I am not too sure where all that money is going, unless it is where we have partnered or the Commonwealth has partnered— Senator ADAMS —That is what I am asking. Is it the combination of the two? If you could just take that on notice. Ms Beauchamp —Okay. We will see what we can provide.	F&PA 109-110 (22/2/11)	15/04/11	
27.	1.2	NASH	Local Community Infrastructure – airport related projects	1) How much of the \$1bn committed to local community infrastructure since 2008 (as outlined in the white paper) has been allocated to councils for airport-related projects? 2) Which airports were funded?	Written (transferred from the Dept of Infrastructure 10/03/2011)	15/04/11	