

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(276) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin (L &C 38) asked:

What are the two research projects?

Answer:

The number of research projects is an estimate of the number that may be funded under the Indigenous Women's Development Program and the Indigenous Women's Program in 2005-06. The actual projects have not yet been finalised.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(277) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin (L&C 38) asked:

Provide a list of the women's groups that are funded through the Indigenous Women's Program.

Answer:

The women's groups which received funding from the Indigenous Women's Program in 2004-05 are:

Bawinanga Aboriginal Corp - Maningrida Women's Centre
Bundiyarra Aboriginal Community/Carnamah Resource Centre
Hope Vale Aboriginal Council/Women's Resource Centre
Joorook Ngarni Aboriginal Corporation/Jardamu Resource Centre
Kalano Community Association/Women's Resource Centre
Mabunji Aboriginal Resource/Blimberrma Women's Resource Centre
Marninwarntikura Fitzroy Women/Community Workshops
Ngaanyatjarra Pitjantjara Yankunytjatjara Women's Council
Ramingining Community Council Inc - Women's Centre
Tiwi Island Local Government - women's programs. There are a number of women's centres on the Tiwi Islands that operate programs with the funding provided.
Women's Karadi Aboriginal Corporation/Women's Resource Centre
Yantjarrwu Outstation Resource/Women's Issues
Yartawarli Aboriginal Corporation/Indigenous Women
Yantjarrwu - Woodycupaldya Women's Centre
Larrakia Nation
Kullarri Indigenous Women's Aboriginal Corporation/Regional Women's Centre
Alawa Aboriginal Corporation/Women's Centre
Mungoorbada Aboriginal Corporation/Women's Centre
Lajamanu Community Government Council/Women's Centre
Ngaliwurru-Wuli Association/Women's Centres
Gurungu Council Aboriginal Corporation/Gurungu Women's Centre
Goreta Aboriginal Corporation/Women's Advisory Group
Maruwayura Aboriginal Corporation/Women's Centre
Paupiyala Tjarutja Aboriginal Corporation/Women's Centre
Robinvale Murray Rover CDEP Co-Op Ltd/Robinvale Women's Group
Aboriginal & Islanders Development and Recreation. Women's Association/Women's Centre
Wirringa Baiya Aboriginal Women's Legal Centre.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(278) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 38-39) asked:

1. When did Operation Hoodoo start?
2. What was Operation Hoodoo?
3. What was its cost?
4. Has it concluded and if so, on what date?
5. Have any other investigations been launched to replace this particular operation?
6. What was its purpose?
7. Did any prosecutions arise from it?

Answer:

1. The first action by WalterTurnbull occurred on 8 October 2002.
2. Operation Hoodoo was the name given to the examination of the records of Bidjara Aboriginal Housing & Land Company Limited and of Indigenous Housing and Construction Co Pty Limited (In Liquidation) (see *Hansard* 27 May 2004 page 98)
3. \$383,084.49 (see *Hansard* 27 May 2004 page 99)
4. The last action by WalterTurnbull occurred on 10 September 2004.
5. No.
6. To undertake an examination of the records of Bidjara Aboriginal Housing & Land Company Limited and of Indigenous Housing and Construction Co Pty Limited (In Liquidation).
7. Enquiries are continuing.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(279) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 40) asked:

Provide details of Mr Brizzolara's sentence.

Answer:

Ronald James Brizzolara appeared for sentence in the Supreme Court of the Northern Territory before his Honour Justice Mildren on 28 January 2005. He was charged with and convicted of 6 offences against section 134.2 (1) of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* in relation to defrauding Centrelink. The Court, in passing sentence on him for those offences, took into account as well 5 offences against section 24(2) of the *Financial Transactions Reports Act 1988* and one offence against section 134.2(1) of the *Criminal Code Act 1995* in relation to defrauding the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (using a false identity) in respect of which he also admitted his guilt (pursuant to section 16BA of the *Crimes Act 1914*).

His Honour Justice Mildren's Remarks in relation to sentence included:

The prisoner has pleaded guilty to four counts of obtaining a financial advantage by deception and two counts of attempting to obtain a financial advantage by deception contrary to the provisions of s 134.2(1) of the Criminal Code (Cth).

In addition, the prisoner has asked me to take into account five counts of operating an account with a cash dealer under a false name, contrary to s 24(2) of the Financial Transactions Reports Act 1988 (Cth), and a further count of obtaining financial advantage by deception contrary to s 134.2(1) of the Criminal Code. I record that I have taken those matters into account today and have signed and dated the relevant certificate.

Having regard to the fact that the prisoner has pleaded guilty at an early stage and has spent 189 days in custody already, I think it is appropriate that the sentence of imprisonment which I am about to impose be suspended forthwith upon the prisoner entering into a home detention order.

The prisoner is convicted on each of the six counts. I impose an aggregate sentence of 18 months' imprisonment, backdated to 23 July 2004 to take into account time spent in custody. The sentence is to be suspended forthwith upon the prisoner entering into a home detention order for a period of three months subject to the following terms and conditions.

1) Upon discharge from the court the prisoner has to report immediately to the Community Corrections courts officer.

(2) The prisoner is to reside at 6 Clarke Street, Alice Springs, and shall not leave that place without prior approval of the Director of Correctional Services or an authorised surveillance officer (and any residence subsequently approved by the Director of Correctional Services, will replace this address as a residence for the purposes of this order).

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(280) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 40) asked:

What was the cost of running the investigations unit last year.

Answer:

For the 2003-04 financial year, \$1,491,899.22.

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BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(281) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 40) asked:

What was the cost of running the investigations office in Brisbane?

Answer:

For the 2004-05 financial year, to 21 June 2005, \$421,821.00

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BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(282) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 40) asked:

There was a whole series of proposals that were election commitments with regard to the ABA – investing in the Indigenous art industry across Northern Territory. Has that been funded in this last budget?

Answer:

No. Funding is to be drawn from the Aboriginals Benefit Account.

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BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(283) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 41) asked:

In relation to the ABA, two million dollars to support Indigenous involvement in aquaculture in Darwin – has that happened?

Answer:

No funds have been allocated for this purpose at present. Two applications have been received. OIPC has arranged for viability assessments to be undertaken in relation to both applications. The applications were also considered by the Aboriginals Benefit Account Advisory Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2005.

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BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(284) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 41) asked:

The Daly River, Wadeye and the Northern Arnhem Land viability assessment for economic benefit of using ABA funding to provide Indigenous people with a financial stake in the Northern Territory gas pipeline. Was that work undertaken? Could you assist me by providing information as to what the estimated cost of the viability assessment is and whether or not it has been decided to go ahead with that assessment? Who undertook the study?

Answer:

The viability assessment has commenced and is being undertaken by KPMG Corporate Finance (Australia) Pty Ltd. The estimated cost of the assessment is between \$40,000 and \$80,000.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(285) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 41) asked:

On Groote Eylandt, there was funding of \$2 million to support Indigenous involvement in the aquaculture industry. Has that been undertaken?

Answer:

No funds have been allocated for this purpose at present. One application has been received. OIPC has arranged for a viability assessment to be undertaken. The application was also considered by the Aboriginals Benefit Account Advisory Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2005.

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BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(286) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 41) asked:

In Alice Springs, there was \$2 million to support the development of Indigenous horticultural projects. Has that been undertaken?

Answer:

No funds have been allocated for this purpose at present. One application has been received. OIPC has arranged for a viability assessment to be undertaken. The application was also considered by the Aboriginals Benefit Account Advisory Committee at its meeting on 19 May 2005.

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BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(287) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 41-42) asked:

(1) In Tennant Creek there was a study on the viability of a joint venture in rubbish recycling and in the Katherine region there was something on investing in the tourism industry. Could you advise me on whether or not the ABA advisory body has considered the project and how much funding will be involved?

(2) In the Tiwi Islands there was funding for a comprehensive study on the viability of further Indigenous investment in plantation timber. Can you advise what the cost of that assessment is, whether a decision has been taken to go ahead with the viability of that assessment, whether the assessment has actually commenced and who will be undertaking it?

(3) In Nhulunbuy there is the development of a housing construction and housing rental business program, exploring other expansions to the Alcoa mine. Again there are a series of projects, and I ask whether or not you could provide the funding level that has been proposed for that, whether the ABA advisory committee considered these projects, what funding has been agreed to and,

(4) What other activities are proposed to take advantage of Alcoa's expansion.

(5) In fact, could I have the list of all the projects funded from the ABA in 2003-04 and 2004-05? I would like to know the dates on which any of the particular projects you are listing in that 2003-04 and 2004-05 schedule were considered by the ABA advisory committee.

Answer:

(1) Tennant Creek and Katherine

The Department was advised that Collex Pty Ltd and Indigenous Business Australia are undertaking the study of the viability of a joint venture in rubbish recycling in consultation with Julalakari Council in Tennant Creek. Accordingly it is not expected at this stage that there will be any call on ABA funds for this purpose and it has not been necessary to put anything before the ABA Advisory Committee.

No application has been received in relation to the Katherine region and, therefore, the ABA Advisory Committee has not considered any project for this region.

(2) Tiwi Islands

The proposed study on the viability of further investment in the timber industry on the Tiwi Islands has not yet commenced.

(3) Housing construction and rental business program

Two applications were received for the development of a housing construction and rental business programme to take advantage of the proposed expansion of Alcan's (not Alcoa) mine at Nhulunbuy. The Department has arranged for viability assessments to be conducted on both applications and the ABA Advisory Committee gave preliminary consideration to the projects on 19 May 2005. No funds have therefore yet been allocated for the proposed projects.

(4) Other activities

Other activities in relation to Alcan's possible expansion are still being developed.

(5) Funding proposals approved by the Minister

Listed below are all the projects considered by the ABA Advisory Committee and approved by the Minister under section 64(4) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* and funded from the Aboriginals Benefit Account in 2003-04 and 2004-05.

2003-04

A total of 16 funding proposals was approved by the Minister in 2003-04, aggregating to \$3,731,000.

Name	Purpose	Amount \$	Submitted to ABA Advisory Committee
Centrefarm Aboriginal Horticulture	Indigenous horticulture in Central Australia	850,000	February 2003
Naiyu Nambiyu Community Govt Council	Mechanical workshop and training centre	310,000	February 2003
Tiwi Islands Training and Employment Board	Training Centre	150,000	February 2003
Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation	Salt Water Park – landscaping and plant sales	140,000	February 2003
Tangentyere Council – Indigenous Landscapes	Organic recycling	100,000	February 2003
Anindilyakwa Land Council	Ceremonial activities	75,000	February 2003

Central Land Council	Ceremonial activities	300,000	*
Tiwi Land Council	Funeral fund	100,000	February 2003
Julalikari Council Aboriginal Corporation	Repatriation of sacred objects	75,000	February 2003
Anindiliyakwa Land Council	Groote Eylandt and Bickerton Island youth program	200,000	February 2003
Northern Land Council	Land and sea management program	763,000	February 2003
Central Land Council	Outstation roads and erosion program	250,000	February 2003
Central Land Council	Yuendumu Ranger Program	68,000	*
Central Land Council	Lajamanu Ranger Program	96,000	February 2003
Central Land Council	Ranger program (library equipment)	90,000	*
Tangentyere Council	Land care and environmental program	164,000	February 2003

*Not submitted to a meeting of the ABA Advisory Committee as it was urgent and needed to be resolved before its next scheduled meeting. However, the proposal was submitted to the Chairperson of the Committee for advice before being submitted to the Minister

2004-05

A total of ten funding proposals was approved by the Minister in 2004-05, aggregating to \$10,535,421.

Name	Purpose	Amount \$	Submitted to ABA Advisory Committee
Port Melville Pty Ltd	Construction of wharf	4,295,000	July 2004

Central Land Council	Construction of office building	3,000,000	July 2004
Anindilyakwa Land Council	Purchase of interest in office complex	2,000,000	July 2004
Northern Aboriginal Investment Corporation Pty Ltd	Additional equity in Alice Springs to Darwin Railway construction	488,887	*
Central Land Council	Aitite Cattle Corporation – small scale pastoral activity	60,000	February 2003 and July 2004
Central Land Council	Lincartan 4WD Bush Tucker Tours – small scale tourism activity	98,400	July 2004
Julalikari-Nyinkka Nyunyu Cultural Centre	Cultural activities	60,000	July 2004
Arkanta Aboriginal Corporation	Tourist campground	88,000	February 2003 and July 2004
Northern Land Council	Variation to land and sea management program	45,000	*
Northern Land Council	Ceremonial activities	400,134	*

*Not submitted to a meeting of the ABA Advisory Committee as it was urgent and needed to be resolved before its next scheduled meeting. However, the proposal was submitted to the Chairperson of the Committee for advice before being submitted to the Minister.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(288) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 42) asked:

In relation to the ABA advisory committee, can you tell me the meeting schedule for the 2004-05 period?

Answer:

Two meetings of the Aboriginals Benefit Account Advisory Committee were held in 2004-05, the dates being 14 July 2004 and 19 May 2005.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(289) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Carr (L&C 42) asked:

In relation to the avenues through which Aboriginal organisations may be able to put forward proposals for funding to the ABA, is that spelled out somewhere? Is it on the web site or in the guidelines?

It has been put to me that there is no application process. It is all ad hoc; it is all about who you know. Would that be right?

Answer:

The procedures for considering funding proposals that have been developed in consultation with the ABA Advisory Committee are set out below. Applications are made for funding through the four Northern Territory Land Councils or another body considered appropriate by the ABA Secretariat. The process reflects the legislative requirements and is aimed at achieving outcomes for Northern Territory Aboriginal people from the projects that are funded.

Procedures for the Administration of Section 64(4) Payments from the Aboriginals Benefit Account

The Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) was established in 1977 for the benefit of Aboriginal people living in the Northern Territory under the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (the ALRA) which also established the Land Councils.

In 1999, the ABA was re-established as a special account for the purposes of the *Financial Management and Accountability Act 1997* (FMA). The principles outlined below support the overarching legislative framework of the ALRA and the FMA for the payment of funds for s64(4) purposes from the ABA.

The key principle in the ALRA, reflected in subsection 64(4), is that funds in the ABA are made available for the benefit of Aboriginal people in the Northern Territory and subsection 64(4) provides that the Minister can direct that payments be made out of the ABA for that purpose. The key principles in the FMA are that funds are used efficiently, effectively and ethically including in a transparent and accountable manner. It should be noted also that the ABA funds are treated as special public money (not program funds) and the relevant Chief Executive Instructions (CEIs) apply.

To give effect to these principles, the following framework for administering payments from the ABA for subsection 64(4) purposes has been adopted:

- Written applications for funding are submitted to the Minister or the ABA Secretariat through one of the Land Councils, or another body that the ABA Secretariat considers can demonstrate a sound administrative capacity to achieve the objectives of the payment and to account for the funds in accordance with best practice.
 - In order to facilitate more strategic and substantial projects with the potential to improve the circumstances or provide returns for a region or community, rather than servicing smaller requests from community groups and individuals for funds, a public call for applications is not being used in the process for determining funding at this time.
 - Priority is given to projects that promote economic development, assist traditional owners to manage their land and assist with ceremonial and funeral expenses.
- The ABA Secretariat conducts an initial assessment of the merits of each incoming proposal and advises the ABA Advisory Committee at the next available meeting of incoming proposals.
- Where the ABA Secretariat considers that a proposal has merit, a comprehensive assessment is carried out. Where proposals seek funding to support a business, the Secretariat arranges for a viability assessment to be conducted by an appropriately qualified assessor.
- Once a proposal has been assessed for viability, the ABA Secretariat provides to the ABA Advisory Committee a submission on each project to be recommended for funding for the Committee's consideration and advice to the Minister.
 - Where the timing of a proposal does not allow referral to the ABA Advisory Committee at a scheduled meeting, the proposal is referred to the ABA Advisory Committee Chairperson before forwarding to the Minister.
 - The ABA Advisory Committee may develop criteria as a basis for their advice to the Minister in relation to projects, to address issues including sustainability of the projects and whether there is any duplication.
- Under the ALRA, the Minister determines the projects to be funded and the amount of funding, including any amounts to cover expenses in administering the grant.
 - The objective of funding decisions is focussed on achieving outcomes for the benefit of as many Aboriginal people as possible. To maximise the opportunities for achieving outcomes, and to avoid duplication, the ABA Secretariat consults Australian and Northern Territory agencies in relation to a funding proposal and seeks a co-ordinated approach.

Projects funded and the amount of funding is published annually in the ABA Annual Report that is tabled in the Parliament. The Minister may also issue a press release announcing projects that are funded.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(291) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin (L&C 45) asked:

I have a question about Minjilang store, the Croker Island store that was demolished during the cyclone. My understanding is that \$1 Million has been committed to rebuild the store and that that money had been committed prior to the cyclone occurring. Can you tell me if these funds were from ATSIC or ATSI? Have the funds been released for the rebuilding of the store?

Answer:

Funding was being considered by ATSI under the Business Development Programme prior to the introduction of the Government's reforms.

With the transfer of responsibility for the Business Development Programme funding will be provided by Indigenous Business Australia (IBA).

IBA advise that construction has begun and that the \$1 million has not yet been released as Arnhem Land Progress Association (ALPA) are yet to reach their agreed expenditure for this project (currently spent approximately \$350,000 of \$500,000 contribution).

IBA further advises that the funds are committed and that, when they are required by ALPA, they will be released.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(292) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin (L&C 46) asked:

The social justice report from last year makes reference to the fact that in December 2004 the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the second International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, which commenced on 1 January this year. ATSIC was formerly the coordinator of any activities associated with that decade in Australia. Can you advise me who will coordinate the activities for this second decade? Is it going to be the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination (OIPC) or a contractor? Will there be a particular organisation or body you will contract or will there be a public process undertaken? I also did not find any funds for this in the PBS that are actually earmarked to be provided this coming year. If you could tell me what output it is and the amount of money that has been set aside in the PBS for 2005-06, and any forward estimates over the coming years.

Answer:

Under the Australian Government's new arrangements for the administration of Indigenous Affairs, OIPC is the coordinating agency for Indigenous Affairs. Any necessary coordination of activities associated with the Second International Decade for the World's Indigenous People at the Australian Government level will be undertaken by this Office. Funding for any such activities will be met from within the existing resources of agencies responsible for the relevant issues.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(293) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

The Social Justice Report for 2004 makes several recommendations which pertain to the new arrangements for the administration of Indigenous Affairs.

(1) Recommendation 3 is that OIPC conduct a comprehensive information campaign for Indigenous communities and people explaining the structures established by the new arrangements and the processes for engaging with Indigenous people. This information to be disseminated in forms having regard to literacy levels and ESL.

Will OIPC conduct such an information campaign as recommended?

If so, what plans have been made to date for so doing and what funding is allocated for this communication? Where is this funding found in the PBS?

(2) Recommendation 4 is to once again include as mandatory in selection criteria for APS jobs relating to the new arrangements (in particular in the OIPC) the two identified criteria – a demonstrated knowledge and understanding of Indigenous cultures; and an ability to communicate effectively with Indigenous people.

(a) Why were these criteria dropped?

(b) Will acceptance and implementation of this recommendation be supported?

(c) Is there any requirement of mainstream departments to implement it for positions working with Indigenous Programs?

(d) What cross cultural training is provided for new staff in departments now managing Indigenous Programs?

(e) What funding is available for training? Is there a breakdown by type and client?

Answer:

(1) OIPC has been progressively implementing an information campaign to inform Indigenous organisations and communities about the new arrangements. To date this has included:

- Senator Vanstone wrote to Indigenous organisations immediately after the new arrangements were announced (April 2004) and later wrote another letter

- outlining the role of the NIC (January 2005);
- a flyer from Minister Vanstone to Indigenous organisations and communities when the new arrangements came into effect;
 - large numbers of booklets and brochures, and compiling presentations, on the new arrangements and Shared Responsibility Agreements, were produced for wide distribution, especially to leaders and staff of Indigenous organisations and communities;
 - comprehensive information through web sites;
 - ICC managers and staff have spent a large proportion of their time since 1 July 2004 discussing the new arrangements with Indigenous communities in their regions, and how they can be involved;
 - a fact sheet to all organisations applying for Indigenous-specific funding under the new arrangements for 2005-06;
 - Indigenous print and electronic media have carried items on the new arrangements;
 - OIPC is currently trialling a recently-devised computer animation presentation tool for conveying key messages, which enables communities themselves to take part in developing their own stories and messages in ways that can be readily understood, including in their languages;
 - a whole-of-government cross-cultural communications strategy is being finalised to guide future communications with Indigenous people and communities; and
 - as communications forms part of corporate expenditure, it is not separately identified in the PBS – corporate costs are attributed across the different output areas of the organisation.

(2) (a) Service-wide policy relating to recruitment of APS staff is the responsibility of the Australian Public Service Commission. We understand that the identified criteria referred to in the Social Justice Report 2004 have their origins in the outcomes of a study undertaken by the Public Service and Merit Protection Commission (PSMPC) in 1996. Following the passage of the *Public Service Act 1999* the guidelines and mandatory selection criteria resulting from the PSMPC exercise were categorised as “for reference purposes only”.

OIPC applies staff selection processes that are fair, equitable and based on merit and encourages applications for its positions from all sectors of the Australian community. Where appropriate to the position, OIPC includes specific selection criteria which require applicants to possess an understanding of and an ability to communicate with diverse groups of the Australian community, including Indigenous peoples.

These staff selection and recruitment principles are incorporated within the OIPC Certified Agreement, which was recently endorsed by OIPC staff and the CPSU.

(b) OIPC utilises appropriate selection criteria for each position based on the skills and capabilities required for undertaking the duties of that position.

(c) Staffing policies are the responsibility of each agency and decisions must be

taken in line with the Public Service Act 1999.

(d) Cultural awareness training has been provided to a range of staff across various organisational units in OIPC. Planning of further opportunities is currently underway. Training schedules in other agencies are their responsibility.

(e) The bulk of funds provided for training of OIPC staff are devolved to each organisational unit as part of general departmental funds. The amount applied to training varies depending on need and is allocated by managers from their total administrative budget.

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IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(294) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

The PBS, (P90) under Output 3.1.1 Support Partnership Development with Indigenous Communities shows an amount of \$57.634m. On P92 this Output group components are listed and include operating the ICC network. Can you give a breakdown of the costs of these components - how much will the ICC Network cost? Is there a breakdown of these costs?

Answer:

The \$57.634million of departmental costs allocated in *Output 3.1.1 – Support Partnership Development with Indigenous Communities*, has a major component of \$40.823m which relates directly to the ongoing operations of ICCs, including ICC staffing and infrastructure costs. The broad breakup of the \$40.823m is \$17.266m in staffing costs, \$9.146m in accommodation costs and \$14.411m in other administrative costs.

Leadership Development, which includes support and implementation of the Indigenous Women's Development Program totals \$3.912m. The remaining funding is used for costs associated with National Office support for SRA management, ICC operations and progressing the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) trials. Not all components on P92 are costed individually as they form part of a single work unit's combined output.

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(295) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

What are the processes now in place for establishing regional need? Who takes the lead role?

Answer:

Regional need for the bulk of mainstream and Indigenous-specific service draws on previous assessments and needs-based planning approaches (i.e. as part of the operational arrangements in place for the existing programs managed by the relevant Commonwealth agency). Progressively, these will be reviewed in the context of the new whole-of-government arrangements.

As Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) are negotiated to address the priorities identified by a community, both the Office of Indigenous Policy Coordination and the agencies concerned will have regard to issues of regional need.

Regional Partnership Agreements (RPAs) will also play a role. These will be partnership documents between government and Indigenous groups or networks from a region that set out the joint governance arrangements and regional priorities. RPAs could include new approaches to assessing regional need but these will need to be aligned or reconciled with any broader needs-based planning arrangements affecting government expenditure in the region.

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(296) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

What legal obligations are there on either side or any party to these agreements to actually fulfill their part of the agreement? What happens if any party fails to meet their part of the agreement?

Answer:

Shared Responsibility Agreements (SRAs) are partnership documents and don't purport to establish legally-binding contracts. Implementation is based on trust and if a situation arose where a party failed to meet its obligations under the SRA, the SRA would, as necessary, be revisited and re-negotiated.

SRAs include mechanisms to ensure feedback between the parties on implementation. This ensures early warning of any problems, a process to refine the milestones as required and provides support to reduce the likelihood of any party failing to meet their obligations.

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(297) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

Most recently we see Kalaluk Community, in Darwin is to get \$350,000 towards a mud crab farm – where do these funds come from (Infrastructure? Business program? CDEP?)?

Answer:

This funding is provided from the Shared Responsibility Agreement Implementation Assistance Program and is complemented with support from the CDEP Programme and funding from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Northern Territory Government.

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(298) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

Has OIPC or any of the ICC's reported having any complaints about the new arrangements, or funding problems due to the new arrangements? What indeed is the complaints procedure these days and how have communities been informed of it?

Answer:

As part of the new arrangements, contracted funding for a number of programs previously administered by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Services was transferred to mainstream agencies. The ICC network coordinates the application, assessment and contracting process across the agencies for the majority of these programs.

Some concerns have been received by June 2005, relating to specific program funding decisions taken by individual funding agencies. Funding decisions take account of the performance and capacity of the funded organisation, that services are aligned to meet community needs and seek to ensure value for money, accountability and the delivery of quality services on the ground.

Where a complaint relates to a specific program or funding decision, it is managed by the responsible funding agency, in line with that agency's complaints management procedures. Where a complaint relates to the overall process or programs administered by OIPC, it is managed at the ICC level in accordance with OIPC client feedback guidelines. All formal feedback to applicants on funding decisions for 2005-06 will include the details of the relevant agency contact officer.

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(299) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

What arrangements have been made to ensure that Torres Strait Islanders living on the mainland have effective participation in decision making? Could you outline what funding there is in the PBS for these people?

Answer:

The Budget measure: *Shared Responsibility Agreements and community engagement - Implementation assistance* contains provision to fund initiatives associated with Torres Strait Islander community organisations and groups, similar to the funding provided under the previous ATSIC-ATSIS Torres Strait Islander on the Mainland program. The primary activity under this program was support for the National Secretariat of Torres Strait Islander Organisations Limited (NSTSIOL), based in Townsville. This body advocates for the protection and maintenance of culture, language and heritage, provides secretariat services and corporate governance assistance for member organisations, and develops strategic plans on the engagement of Torres Strait Islander people and community organisations on the mainland. The National Secretariat also conducts conferences and workshops designed to bring people together to discuss issues, priorities and aspirations.

Discussions are continuing with the National Secretariat on funding for 2005-06, subsequent to a workshop held in June 2005, where the NSTSIOL membership considered their objectives and governance arrangements in the context of the new arrangements in Indigenous affairs.

Where new Indigenous representative arrangements emerge, Torres Strait Islanders will have the opportunity to be involved in the governance of these bodies.

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 27 May 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(300) Output 3.1: Indigenous Policy

Senator Crossin asked:

1. Does OIPC have any particular recruitment strategy in place at present to attract Indigenous staff?
2. Do you know if the mainstream departments have such strategies to attract Indigenous staff into those programs involving Indigenous service delivery?

Answer:

1. Approximately 32% of OIPC staff are Indigenous.

OIPC is an active partner in the Australian Public Service Commission (APSC) Indigenous Employment Strategy project. It is envisaged that OIPC's future recruitment strategy will be informed by the outcome of that work. This initiative has been expanded by the Government's announcement on 15 August 2005 of \$6.4million in funding for Indigenous employment strategies within the public sector.

2. While departments are responsible for developing their own strategies in relation to Indigenous staffing, to ensure a whole of government focus on Indigenous employment, then ATSIIS provided 3 staff, including one SES, to the Australian Public Service Commission, specifically to work on a whole of government strategy on Indigenous employment.

The new *APS Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy*, forms part of the Government's \$6.4million Indigenous employment initiative. A key feature of the strategy is to support access by Indigenous staff to mainstream areas of departments.