

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Transport and Regional Services

Department of Transport and Regional Services

Consideration of Additional Budget Estimates February 2005

Question No.: PROT 01

Topic: Outstanding Financial Commitments for Regional Partnerships

Hansard Page: p. 34 (Friday, 18/2/05)

Output: Programmes Group – Regional and Territories

Senator O'Brien asked:

Does the Department have any outstanding financial commitments under the nine programs amalgamated to form Regional Partnerships on 1 July 2003?

Can we get a list on those outstanding commitments, please?

How much funding will be required?

Answer:

A figure of \$18 million was provided as a response to this question at the Additional Estimates Hearing (page 47 of Hansard).

The precise figure of \$18.024 million as at 14 February 2005 relates to contracted commitment for seven of the nine programmes Senator O'Brien refers to. There are no contracted commitments for the other two programmes (the Bert Hinkler Hall of Aviation Museum and the Weipa Electricity Generation Compensation Package).

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Department of Transport and Regional Services

Consideration of Additional Budget Estimates February 2005

Question No.: PROT 02

Topic: Regional Partnerships Programme

Hansard Page: p. 36, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes Group (Regional & Territories)

Senator O'Brien asked:

When did these full groups of projects change in status from election commitments likely to use Regional Partnerships as a mechanism to confirmed funding commitments? Is there a date you can give us?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 03

Topic: Bank@Post

Hansard Page: p.37, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

I would appreciate it if you could give us an understanding of how you arrive at the cost of \$700,000 for that process.

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 04

Topic: Bank@Post

Hansard Page: p. 37, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Can you give us the breakdown of the costing of the \$1.5 million? How has that been broken up between various parts of the costs of implementation?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 05

Topic: Icon Projects

Hansard Page: p. 43, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Were any of those projects the subject of an application and, if so, was there an assessment process? Had an assessment process commenced for any of them?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Department of Transport and Regional Services

Consideration of Additional Budget Estimates February 2005

Question No.: PROT 06

Topic: Regional Partnerships

Hansard Page: p. 45, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

With regard to a particular project, you would ask whether they thought it was unfair to support one of their competitors. Are there particular cases where this might not be appropriate?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 07

Topic: Lakes Creek Meat Works

Hansard Page: p. 47, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

- (1) When did the Department provide a recommendation to the Minister?
- (2) Can you tell me when you received advice which enabled you to put it on the web site?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 08

Topic: Lakes Creek Meat Works

Hansard Page: p. 47, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

Did the application provide the full details of the ownership and management structure; and a business plan? Also, let me know whether all materials were provided at the time the application was lodged?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 09

Topic: Lakes Creek Meat Works

Hansard Page: p. 48, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

This was the third injection of funding to go into this plant last year. This money was part of the process. What contribution was committed by the Proponent from its own funds?

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 10

Topic: Lakes Creek Meat Works

Hansard Page: p. 49, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

- (1) Is it an unmet demand?
- (2) Is this exclusively an export meatworks?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Consideration of Additional Budget Estimates February 2005

Question No.: PROT 11

Topic: Lakes Creek Meat Works

Hansard Page: p. 49, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

Do you know what the actual catchment for cattle sourced by Lakes Creek is? That is, I want to know how far north, south and west the plant is buying cattle. Can you tell us now or on notice how many other meatworks are in this catchment?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 12

Topic: Primary Energy

Hansard Page: pp. 50-51, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

In terms of the progress of this project (Primary Energy), is the due diligence completed? If so, when was it completed?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 13

Topic: Primary Energy

Hansard Page: p. 51, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

Is it the case that at the time that Primary Energy's application was lodged and assessed, the company had just one Director, Mr Matthew Kelley?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 14

Topic: Primary Energy

Hansard Page: p. 53, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

The Department has provided advice to the Senate Finance and Public Administration References Committee Inquiry into Regional Projects that the \$1.2 million grant to Primary Energy Ltd comprises 72.02 per cent of project funds. Is this advice correct? Mr Kiernan's letter that Minister Campbell referred to refers to project capital expenditure totaling \$100 million. I cannot make \$1.2 million 72 per cent of that, so how do you come to your 72.02 per cent?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 15

Topic: Regional Partnerships

Hansard Page: p. 55, Friday 18/2/05

Output: Programmes (Regional & Territories) Group

Senator O'Brien asked:

Mrs Kelly, in her Statement of 8 December 2005, made it very clear that she blamed Mr Cerasani for her having to sign these letters after she was promoted to the Ministry. Does the Department, on behalf of Mr Cerasani, accept responsibility for the late distribution of the letters at the centre of the political controversy late last year?

Answer:

The response is yet to be submitted.

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Question No.: PROT 16

Topic: Public Housing

Hansard Page: Not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

Some years ago, tenants of public housing were invited to register interest in actually purchasing their homes. They were asked to pay \$150 in order to register their interest. Since then, they seem to have been told nothing. Is there a scheme, or any proposal for a scheme under which public housing can be purchased?

Answer:

In April 2003, a Rental Sales Scheme commenced in the Indian Ocean Territories whereby eligible tenants are able to purchase the property they rent from the Australian Government. The Register of Interest by eligible tenants included payment of a \$150 fee. This fee is refundable if the individual property cannot be offered for sale to the tenant. Significant strata titling issues on Christmas Island have delayed sales, however it is expected that the first offers will be made by mid-2005. Following the implementation of the Rental Sales Scheme, a Community Bulletin was issued in November 2003. Three houses on Cocos (Keeling) Islands have been sold to eligible tenants and settlement occurred in mid-2004.

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Question No.: PROT 17

Topic: Christmas Island Immigration Reception and Processing Centre

Hansard Page: Not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

With the ongoing construction of the CI Detention Centre, are there any clauses in, or proposed for the contracts that would give on-island residents (especially the Chinese or Malays) any priority of employment (provided they have the required job skills)? If so, please supply a copy of that clause.

Answer:

The Department of Transport and Regional Services has not entered into any contracts related to the construction of the Christmas Island Immigration Reception and Processing Centre and has no contracts planned. The construction of the Centre is the responsibility of the Department of Finance and Administration and questions relating to their contract provisions should be directed to that Department.

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Question No.: PROT 18

Topic: Hovercraft Proposal

Hansard Page: not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

Can you give an update on situation with the hovercraft proposal?

Answer:

The hovercraft proponent is working towards meeting milestones as set out in a preliminary contract signed with the Department. One such milestone is gaining environmental approval under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The proponent has recently re-submitted its Public Environment Report to the Department of the Environment and Heritage seeking approval to publish the Report and therefore progress environmental approval. He will then address other contract pre-conditions, including financial capacity and demonstration of access to a suitable craft.

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Question No.: PROT 19

Topic: Rumah Baru Project

Hansard Page: not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

Can you provide an update on the Rumah Baru project?

Answer:

Tenders for the construction of the Rumah Baru project were significantly in excess of the funds available to the Department, even after reducing the scope of works.

Western Stevedores, the Indian Ocean Territories Port Managers, have submitted an innovative proposal for an alternative freight handling system. The proposal, for new barges and low profile jetty with crane and hard stand, is expected to cost between \$6m and \$7m with greater benefits to safety and efficiency than the original Rumah Baru proposal. This facility would be constructed at the current freight site adjacent to the West Island Jetty.

The Department is currently investigating the proposal in more detail pending a decision regarding the environmental approval of the hovercraft, which will remove the need for the passenger component of the Rumah Baru proposal.

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Question No.: PROT 20

Topic: Home Island Power Station

Hansard Page: Not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

Also an update on progress on the new Home Island power station and wind turbines?

Answer:

The construction of the new Home Island power station, including wind-farm, is now complete. The power station underwent manual testing in early February and was switched on to automatic operation on 14 February 2005.

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Question No.: PROT 21

Topic: Cocos and CI Phone Systems

Hansard Page: Not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

Are there plans to upgrade the phone system on Cocos as has been done on Christmas Island?

Answer:

The mobile phone network on the Cocos (Keeling) Islands is administered by a private organisation, the Christmas Island Internet Administration, on behalf of Verisign Corporation, who manage the .cc internet top level domain. Unlike the mobile network on Christmas Island, Telstra has no responsibility for the network on Cocos.

As with Christmas Island, any plans to upgrade the system would be a decision of the network operator.

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Question No.: PROT 22

Topic: Quarantined Elephants

Hansard Page: Not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

There were plans to quarantine several elephants *en route* to Taronga, at the Cocos Q Station – is this still expected to happen? What work, if any, has been done at the Quarantine Station to prepare for this?

Answer:

In mid-January 2005, the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service entered an agreement with a consortium of Australasian Zoos (Taronga, Melbourne and Auckland) for the purpose of leasing the Quarantine Station to quarantine nine elephants from Thailand.

It is anticipated that the elephants will commence quarantine on island in mid-2005 for a period of three months.

To date, a number of works have been completed in upgrading the former Quarantine Station in preparation for the quarantine of nine elephants.

In summary, works completed includes the refurbishment and fit-out of the four stand-alone residential houses and single men's quarters, new fencing (including electric), connection to vacuum sewage system, reticulation of water, and a general clean-up of areas to be used for the elephant proposal.

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Question No.: PROT 23

Topic: Building Access for Cocos

Hansard Page: Not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

I have been told that some of the buildings on Cocos, such as the bank, have steps access which is making it hard for some of the elderly people to access the building. What laws apply to building access on Cocos and who would have the responsibility for funding any change needed to meet these requirements?

Answer:

The provisions of the *Town Planning and Development Act 1928*, *Local Government Act 1995*, the *Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1960* and various regulations and codes apply on Cocos (Keeling) Islands. These pieces of legislation regulate the construction and alteration of buildings. Under this legislation, there is no retrospective requirement to upgrade access arrangements.

The Commonwealth *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* also applies on Cocos (Keeling) Islands. Complaints under the Act are made to the Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission and can only be made by or on behalf of a person or persons aggrieved by the act of discrimination concerned. Should the building require any alteration in regard to access, the building owner is responsible for meeting these standards. The building you refer to is not a Commonwealth responsibility.

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Question No.: PROT 24

Topic: Mammography Services

Hansard Page: Not applicable – post hearing written question

Output: Programmes Group (Regional and Territories)

Senator Crossin asked:

Within the processes going on with the IOT Health service delivery – why is there at present no provision for on-island mammography services? While some women (mainly those there on finite Government contracts) do have access to fares off the island and may be able to get mammograms done whilst away, many other women DO NOT. What is being done for them?

Answer:

The Indian Ocean Territories Health Service (IOTHS) provides a broad range of services on island and provides access to other services on the mainland where this is clinically indicated. There is no mammography service within the IOTHS because it has not been identified to date as a need.

The cost of a mammography unit would be between \$138,000 and \$258,000, depending upon whether digital technology was used. This does not include operating and maintenance costs or salary and on-costs for a mammographer and a radiologist on-site to report the films and to determine whether to perform fine needle aspirations or core biopsies. As both mammographers and radiologists are highly specialised clinicians whose skills and services would be vastly underutilised in this setting, these personnel would need to be flown in on a visiting basis.

On the mainland, mammography screening is provided in metropolitan areas and mobile mammography units provide services to some remote areas. Residents in remote areas on the mainland either travel to metropolitan areas for screening or to the nearest location of the mobile unit. Due to the size and sensitivity of mammography units, I am advised that it is not possible to extend the mobile service to the IOTS.

Initial breast screening services are available in the form of breast examinations performed by the doctors on-island. In the event that a patient presents with a lump, the doctor can perform an initial further investigation. In addition to, or instead, the patient may have a diagnostic ultrasound performed by the visiting radiography service. This service visits four times each year from Fremantle Hospital, which also

provides a coordination service for women undertaking mammography. A gynaecologist also visits twice per year.

Where it is clinically indicated or where a woman requests mammography and meets the criteria, the woman is provided with access to mammography on the mainland using the Patient Assisted Travel Scheme (PATS).

Health promotion is also offered to the community to coincide with WA Health Promotion calendar. A session was presented for all women and young girls in the community during Breast Cancer Awareness month in October 2004.