

Senate Standing Committee on Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 01

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Appointment of Deputy Chairs of ACCs by Minister

Hansard Page: 83 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Ms Gosling—Also, Senator, in terms of working with the executive officers of the ACCs, they have been aware since that time and the Regional Services Division both through the national office and regional offices have been working through the detail of what needed to happen in terms of their own constitutional requirements to give effect to that decision.

Senator O'BRIEN—So ACCs were instructed to amend their constitutions?

Ms Gosling—In some cases that was necessary, yes—bulk of cases probably. Some ACCs may not have had requirement, for example, for a deputy chair. Again, it is sort of slightly different in each case.

Senator O'BRIEN—Is it possible to have copies of the correspondence between the Department or the Minister to the ACCs about this constitutional issue?

Ms Gosling—I can take that on notice, Senator. As I said, we actually have regular ongoing communication with the ACC executive officers, so some of it has actually been in discussions orally and in terms of information sessions we held during September and October with those ACCs. Some of it has actually been done orally.

Answer:

Samples of the standard letters sent to ACCs on 12 October 2006 and to ACC Chairs on 21/22 December 2006, including the request that ACCs amend their constitutions to provide for the Ministerial appointment or nomination of the Deputy Chairs, are attached:

- Attachment A – Letter to all ACCs except Queensland
- Attachment B – Letter to Queensland ACCs *noting the Queensland Incorporation Act (1981)*
- Attachment C – Letter to all Chairs except Queensland
- Attachment D – Letter to Queensland Chairs *Nominating them for Appointment*

[REGS 01 attachments A – D]

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Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 02

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Appointment of Deputy Chairs of ACCs by Minister

Hansard Page: 84

Senator O'Brien asked

Have all constitutions now been amended so that the Minister appoints the deputy chair? Perhaps you could tell me which ones have not. Perhaps you can tell me those who are awaiting approval and those who fall into another category.

Answer:

Thirty seven of the fifty-six ACC constitutions have been amended to provide for the Minister to appoint or nominate (in the case of Queensland) the Deputy Chair. These amendments have also been approved by the ACC Committees and the relevant State and Territory regulatory bodies.

A further fourteen ACC constitutions have been amended and approved by their ACC Committees but are yet to be approved by their respective regulatory bodies:

GROW Sydney ACC
Illawarra ACC
Gold Coast and Regions ACC
Greater Brisbane ACC
North Queensland ACC
Ipswich and Region ACC
Mackay Region ACC
Flinders ACC
Barossa Riverland ACC
Central Highlands ACC
Central Murray ACC
Gippsland ACC
Great Southern ACC
South West ACC

The five Melbourne metropolitan ACCs subject to boundary changes will be amending their constitutions as part of the transition to three Melbourne ACCs:

South East Development ACC
Northern Melbourne – *to be amalgamated with Melbourne's West*
Melbourne's West
Melbourne East
Melbourne Development Board – *not applicable as this ACC is being abolished.*

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Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 03

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Residence of ACC Deputy Chairs

Hansard Page: 85-86 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Do you know if the Deputy Chair resides in the ACC region?

Ms Gosling—I would have to take that on notice. I do not have that information.

Senator O'BRIEN—If you would, please. Was it a requirement that Chairs and Deputy Chairs reside in the region they serve?

Ms Gosling—Obviously in most cases that is the situation. There may be a small number I think in Melbourne; for example, with the chairs appointed to 31 December 2006 there is a chair who did not quite reside in the region. I think there may be a handful of cases where people with knowledge of the region who may reside outside the region could be appointed. It is not a requirement but in the vast majority of cases that is the situation.

Senator O'BRIEN—Thank you. Could you on notice provide us with details of Chairs and Deputy Chairs that do not reside in the region of the ACC to which they have been appointed?

Ms Gosling—Yes.

Answer:

There are three Chairs who do not reside in the region of the ACC to which they have been appointed:

Geelong ACC

Northern Melbourne ACC

South East Development ACC, Melbourne

There are four Deputy Chairs who do not reside in the region of the ACC to which they have been appointed:

Illawarra ACC

Melbourne West ACC

Melbourne Development Board

South East Development ACC, Melbourne

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Question: REGS 04

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Bert Hinkler Hall of Aviation

Hansard Page: 91-92 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Are there any other sources of funding for this project?

Ms McNally—I do not have that information with me.

Senator O'BRIEN—Could you take that on notice, please.

Ms McNally—Yes.

Answer:

Yes – from the Queensland Government and Bundaberg City Council as follows:

| | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Queensland Government | \$485,000 (GST excl) |
| Bundaberg City Council | \$990,000 (GST excl). |

Since the Funding Agreement was executed for this project, the Queensland Government announced in June 2006 a further \$1.5 million in funding for the Bert Hinkler Hall of Aviation in Bundaberg. This is in addition to the \$485,000 in funding already provided by the Queensland Government under the Millennium Arts Regional Program.

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Question: REGS 05

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Dalby Showgrounds

Hansard Page: 92 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—What is the value of the project?

Ms McNally—It is \$2 million in terms of the Regional Partnerships contribution.

Senator O'BRIEN—Are there other contributions that you have been advised of?

Ms McNally—We will take that on notice.

Senator O'BRIEN—Thank you.

Answer:

For the Dalby Wambo Events Centre Covered Arena project contributions as notified to the Department are:

- *Regional Partnerships* \$2,000,000 (Election Commitment)
- Wambo City Council \$200,000
(Council resolution of 18 August 2005)
- Dalby Town Council \$1,000,000
(Council resolution of 14 December 2005)

In addition, on 17 February 2006, Dalby Council advised that pledged contributions of \$50,000 each from Simplicity Australia and Engine Australia are were available for the project and that in the vicinity of \$100,000 will be made available for the project from the Show Society.

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Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 06

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Stirling Library History and Business Centre

Hansard Page: 94 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

- a) What is the status of an application for funds to assist the Adelaide Hills Council to add a history and business centre to the Stirling library?
- b) When was the application first received?

Answer:

- a) The application was not approved for funding.
- b) The application was first received on 16 October, 2006.

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Additional Estimates February 2007

Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 07

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Kingscote Community Hall

Hansard Page: 95 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—The plans for the upgrade show that the kitchen facilities are located off the council chambers and are not accessible from the hall. Is that something that the Department has inquired into - if this is part of the community hall?

Ms McNally—We will have to take that on notice, Senator.

Senator O'BRIEN—Good. Thank you.

Answer:

The kitchen facilities are part of the community hall. The Department is satisfied that access to the kitchen is in accordance with the requirements of the project.

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Question: REGS 08

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Kingscote Community Hall

Hansard Page: 96 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—I see. Does the Department have a breakdown in costs with an indication of where *Regional Partnerships* moneys have been spent on this project?

Ms McNally—We will have to take that on notice.

Answer:

As provided for in the Funding Agreement for this project, *Regional Partnerships* funding of \$ 385,000 (GST-inclusive) will contribute to the project by contributing to the cost of Consultants and Contractors to upgrade the Community Hall. As at 1 March 2007, a total of \$352,000 has been paid to the Kangaroo Island Council for the achievement of the following Milestones:

- Building tender process undertaken and tender awarded. Building and refurbishment plans finalised.
- Site preparation completed and refurbishment of hall commenced, including kitchen upgrade, amenities and disabled toilets.

A final payment of \$33,000 is scheduled to be made in May 2007 once the third milestone is achieved which is the completion of the upgrade and refurbishment of the hall. This will include the completion of all disabled access requirements, fire protection facilities and electrical upgrade.

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Question: REGS 09

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Kingscote Community Hall

Hansard Page: 96 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Does the Department have the latest plans for the project?

Ms McNally—If I could take that on notice, Senator. We have received progress reports on the project and I will check those to see if there are plans included in those progress reports.

Answer:

The Department is unaware of any major changes being made to the original plans, which were provided to the Department on 20 October 2005.

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Question: REGS 10

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Egg Processing and Layer Plant

Hansard Page: 96-97 (15/02/07)

Senator Ferris asked:

Senator FERRIS—Has a financial assessment been done on the project?

Ms McNally—I would have to take that on notice.

Dr Dolman—I do not think we have that information.

Senator FERRIS—Okay. Without wanting to hold the Committee up any further, if you could take on notice that I have asked questions about it and if some answers could be given as a composite answer I would appreciate that very much. Thanks, Chair, for your indulgence.

Answer:

Yes. Walter Turnbull were engaged by the Department of Transport and Regional Services.

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Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 11

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Gunnedah Grains to Ethanol project

Hansard Page: 97 (15/02/2007)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Primary Energy's Gunnedah grains to ethanol project: has the final payment been made to the proponent? It was due in March 2006 and was dependent on a final milestone report being provided.

Ms Page—No, that payment has not been made. There has been no change in that project, I think, since we last spoke.

Senator O'BRIEN—Could I, on notice, ask for a description of the milestones actually achieved and the funds allocated to each milestone.

Answer:

In accordance with the Funding Agreement, the activity milestones actually achieved and the funds allocated to each milestone are:

| Milestone | Activity Milestone Description | Date of Milestone | Payments (GST Inc) | Actual Date of Payments |
|------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| | Initial Payment to commence tasks for the Activity | | \$426,800 | 29/09/2004 |
| 1 | Plant Design & Specifications to date & Ongoing Work | 31 /12/2004 | \$342,100 | 27/01/2005 |
| | Planning NSW/EIS/Planning Focus Expenditure | | | |
| | Production Life Cycle Analysis | | | |
| | Project Legal Fees | | | |
| | Project Management/ Project Development | | | |
| | Office Expenditure | | | |
| | Travel | | | |
| 2 | Progress in respect of: | 31/03/2005 | \$235,400 | 11/05/2005 |
| | Plant design & Specifications to date & Ongoing Work | | | |
| | Project Legal Fees | | | |
| | Project Management/Project Development | | | |
| | Office Expenditure | | | |
| | Travel | | | |
| | Promotional Activities | | | |
| | Tax Structuring Advice | | | |
| | Project Accounting | | | |

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| Milestone | Activity Milestone Description | Date of Milestone | Payments (GST Inc) | Actual Date of Payments |
|------------------|--|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 3 | Further progress on: | 30/07/2005 | \$155,100 | 26/08/2005 |
| | Project Legal Fees | | | |
| | Project Management/Project Development | | | |
| | Office Expenditure | | | |
| | Travel | | | |
| | Tax Structuring Advice | | | |
| | Project Accounting | | | |
| | Third Party Consulting Engineering | | | |
| 4* | Project Management/Project Development | 30/11/2005 | \$50,600 | |
| 5 | Completion of Activity | 30/06/2007 | | |
| | Total Funds | | \$1,210,000 | |

* The Department is actively working with the recipient to meet the requirements of Milestone 4 which includes obtaining an Environmental Impact Statement approval from the NSW Government. The final payment of \$50,600 will be paid in arrears upon completion of the activity and once a final report and audit is received. The payment is now due on 1 September 2007.

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Question: REGS 12

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: ACC Members – Possible Conflict of Interest

Hansard Page: 98 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Could you tell me when Mr Kevin Humphries resigned as Chair of the New England North West ACC?

Ms Gosling—I would have to take that on notice.

Senator O'BRIEN—Okay. Perhaps on notice you will need to tell me: was the Department aware that he was a Director of a Moree-based company, Mack Fuels, and that he was involved in a Memorandum of Understanding with the Council in Moree to construct an ethanol plant?

Ms Gosling—I think the Department would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Mr Humphries resigned from the New England North West ACC on 26 October 2005 after having stood down from this position in August 2005.

The Department became aware of Mr Humphries directorship of Mack fuels via an article in the Moree Champion dated 23 February 2007. The Department is not aware of any Memorandum of Understanding with the Council in Moree.

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Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 13

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: ACC Members – Possible Conflict of Interest

Hansard Page: 98 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Is the Department aware of allegations that Matthew Kelley, the Primary Energy proponent, was also at one stage on the board of directors of Mack fuels?

Ms McNally—No, but we can check that.

Answer:

The Department is not aware of any connection between Matthew Kelly and Mack fuels.

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Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 14

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Tweed Heads Dental Clinic

Hansard Page: 99-100, (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—The Minister, in a press release on 13 December, said he was fast-tracking the Government's consideration to fund a Tweed Heads dental training clinic. How has he fast-tracked the proposal?

Senator JOYCE—That is pork-barrelling in one of those Labor electorates!

Ms McNally—We will have to take that on notice. We do not have specific information on that.

Senator O'BRIEN—No specific information, Ms McNally?

Ms McNally—I do not have it with me, Senator.

Answer:

No application has yet been received for this project.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 15

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Year of the Outback

Hansard Page: 102 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—I meant in previous years. How much has been allocated to the Year of the Outback in previous years?

Ms McNally—I will have to take that on notice.

Senator JOYCE—But it goes to people in the outback?

Senator O'BRIEN—I hope so.

Ms McNally—That is the aim.

Senator O'BRIEN—Could you take that question on notice, just to make sure, so that Senator Joyce can be sure it does.

Answer:

DOTARS has funded \$3,800,000 (GST-exclusive) from June 2000 to October 2002.

| Financial Year | Amount |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1999-2000 | \$60,000 |
| 1999-2000 | \$1,400,000 |
| 2001-2002 | \$600,000 |
| | \$1,200,000 |
| 2002-2003 | \$600,000 |
| TOTAL | \$3,860,000 |

The current project, Year of the Outback 2010 – Planning for Four-Yearly Cycle, will create opportunities for outback individuals, communities and organisations through the delivery of special projects such as Outback Global, Outback Equinox – Youth Muster, Outback Safety Education Campaign and Outback Youth Careers Programme

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Question: REGS 16

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Rural Medical Infrastructure Fund

Hansard Page: 103 (15/02/07)

Senator O'Brien asked:

Senator O'BRIEN—Have any been approved in the last six weeks?

Dr Dolman—No.

Senator O'BRIEN—If they are not there, will you let us know?

Ms McNally—We will make sure, Senator

Answer:

No Rural Medical Infrastructure Fund projects were approved in the six weeks prior to the hearings.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 17

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Bank@Post Service Installations

Hansard Page:

Senator O'Brien asked:

Where are the 20 *Bank@Post* services that were intended to operate but have not been installed?

Answer:

266 sites were offered inclusion to *Bank@Post*. There are currently 246 sites operational as 12 already had electronic banking facilities; four sites did not wish to be a part of the programme; and four sites have subsequently closed.

With the availability of places in the programme, the Australian Government has agreed to extend *Bank@Post* coverage to 21 Rural Transaction Centres (RTCs) which conduct at least 2,500 eligible transactions per year.

Once formalised, this proposal will bring these 21 RTCs into line with existing funding commitments under *Bank@Post*, raising the number of sites participating to 267.

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**THE 20 SITES OF THE ORIGINAL 266 THAT DID NOT TAKE UP THE
BANK@POST OFFER**

Sites that had EPOS installed prior to the Bank@Post programme commencing

| | |
|--------------------------|-----|
| ARIAH PARK | NSW |
| CAPTAINS FLAT | NSW |
| TELEGRAPH POINT | NSW |
| TINTENBAR | NSW |
| GUNUNA | QLD |
| INJUNE | QLD |
| NEWSTEAD | QLD |
| HAWTHORN NORTH LPO | VIC |
| LEXTON | VIC |
| RAINBOW | VIC |
| CITY BEACH BEECROFT PARK | WA |
| HYDEN | WA |

Sites that closed

| | |
|--------------------|-----|
| SYLVESTER LPO | VIC |
| HEIDELBERG RGH LPO | VIC |
| NULLAWARE LPO | VIC |
| GRAFTON WEST LPO | NSW |

Sites that declined the offer to participate in the programme

| | |
|----------------------|-----|
| KENDALL LPO | NSW |
| BREMER BAY LPO | WA |
| STUART TOWN LPO | NSW |
| LORD HOWE ISLAND LPO | NSW |

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Question: REGS 18

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Projects in the Baradine District

Hansard Page: 104 (15/02/07)

Senator Joyce asked:

Senator JOYCE—Are there any projects in the Baradine district?

Dr Dolman—In Queensland?

Senator JOYCE—No, in New South Wales, to make up for the State Labor Government's closure of the timber industry and putting everybody out of a job.

Ms McNally—We will have to take that on notice, Senator.

Senator JOYCE—Thanks for that.

Answer:

No.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

Transport and Regional Services

Question: REGS 19

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Appointments of Area Consultative Committee (ACC) Chairs

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

- a) Have all Members and Senators been provided with a letter to inform them of the outcome of the recent Ministerial appointments of ACC Chairs and Deputy Chairs to the ACC relevant to their electorate?
- b) If not, when will Members and Senators be provided with a letter?

Answer:

- a) Yes. All members and Senators were sent a letter dated 20 February 2007 informing them of recent developments in the Area Consultative Committee (ACC) network, including appointment of ACC Chairs and Deputy Chairs.
- b) Not applicable.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Question: REGS 20

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Area Consultative Committee Constitutions

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

Does the Mackay ACC Constitution, or any ACC Constitution, specify that the appointment of an ACC Chair who is not supported by the Board will result in a cut of funding to that ACC?

Answer:

No, not to the Department's knowledge.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2007

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Question: REGS 21

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Central Queensland Science and Technology Precinct

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

- (a) Was the Mackay ACC consulted before the announcement was made in the Howard Government 2004 election campaign that if re-elected the Government would establish an \$8 million Central Queensland Science & Technology Precinct?
- (b) Was the Mackay ACC consulted before a \$200,000 grant was approved for this project by the Ministerial Panel on 30 November 2006?
- (c) What advice has the Mackay ACC provided on this project and when was it provided?
- (d) May a copy of any advice provided by the ACC on this project?
- (e) Why is this project currently not listed on the 'Regional' section of the DOTARS website, under 'Approved Projects'?
- (f) Is a funding agreement in place for this project?
- (g) What will the \$200,000 already approved for this project be used to deliver?
- (h) Have any payments been made to the proponent?
- (i) Have key milestones and time lines been established to deliver this project?
- (j) Has a business plan for this project been complete?
- (k) Who provided the business plan?
- (l) How was the provider of the business plan selected?
- (m) If it is complete, may a copy of the business plan be provided?
- (n) Is there a Project Manager in place at the University to oversee the project's implementation?
- (o) Is there a Steering Committee in place to oversee the project's implementation?
- (p) Has there been any consultation with the local community on this project?

Answer:

- (a) Central Queensland University submitted an application under the *Regional Partnerships* programme in July 2004 to fund the Science and Technology Precinct. The Mackay ACC was consulted by the University before the project was submitted. The application was withdrawn due to the election commitment announcement.
- (b) There was contact between the Mackay ACC Executive Officer and the Department of Transport and Regional Services (the Department) before the feasibility study was approved.

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- (c) The Executive Officer of the Mackay Region ACC has been involved in discussions with the Department and the proponent since the Election Commitment was announced. The ACC provided formal comments on the project on 18 December 2006.
- (d) The Government has decided not to release the views of ACCs or other bodies and individuals which are provided to the Minister for Transport and Regional Services in the course of considering the merits of individual projects. To do so would reduce the ability of ACCs to provide a frank assessment of the priority of individual projects.
- (e) This was an oversight and the Department is in the process of rectifying this.
- (f) A funding agreement for up to \$200,000 of *Regional Partnerships* funding for a business plan was signed on 14 February 2006.
- (g) These funds have been used to provide a business plan for the Central Queensland Science and Technology Precinct.
- (h) Payments totalling \$163, 576 have been made to the Central Queensland University in accordance with the funding agreement.
- (i) Key milestones and timelines were included in the funding agreement for the business plan project. They were: the appointment of a consultant (after tendering process); a progress report that demonstrates appropriate progress of the business plan and completion of a satisfactory business plan.
- (j) Yes.
- (k) The business plan was provided to the Department by the Central Queensland University. It was prepared by Root Projects Australia Pty Ltd.
- (l) Root Projects Australia Pty Ltd was selected using a tender process run by the University.
- (m) While the business plan has been completed it is currently under consideration by the Ministers.
- (n) The project contact officer at the Central Queensland University specified in the funding agreement is Professor Clift.
- (o) There is no formal steering committee in place for the Central Queensland University Science and Technology project.
- (p) Community consultation was undertaken as a part of the business planning for the project.

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Question: REGS 22

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Responses to February 2007 Supplementary Hearings Questions

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

May the following be provided in relation to the Mackay City Council's application for Regional Partnerships funds to establish a Mackay Riverside Aquatic Park?

- a copy of the Council's application;
- a copy of any Mackay ACC advice on the application received by the Department; and
- a copy of correspondence sent to the applicant, Mackay City Council, informing them of the reasons the application was not successful?

Answer:

It is not in the interests of the applicant that details of their application be made publicly available.

To release, ACC advice would reduce the ability of ACCs to provide a frank assessment of the priority of individual projects.

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Question: REGS 23

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Hinkler Hall of Aviation, Bundaberg

Hansard Page: Written

Senator O'Brien asked:

- (a) At the time this project was committed in the 2004 election campaign, was it made clear the project was dependent on Queensland Government funding?
- (b) At the time the funding agreement was made, was this dependent on the input of funding from the Queensland Government?
- (c) How has the Queensland Government been approached for funding?

Answer:

- (a) The Queensland Government had confirmed a contribution of \$485,000 under the Millennium Arts Regional Program, prior to the announcement of the 2004 election commitment.
- (b) Yes. The funding agreement required a \$485,000 funding contribution from the Queensland Government.
- (c) The Bundaberg City Council made representations to the Queensland Government seeking funding contributions. The Council was advised on 15 July 2004 that the Queensland Government would provide \$485,000 from the Millennium Arts Regional Program. A further \$1.5 million in funding was announced in June 2006.

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Question: REGS 24

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Tamworth Wheels on Meals

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

- a) Are other sources of funding being provided in addition to the \$561,000 being provided in Regional Partnerships funds for the Tamworth Meals on Wheels service as announced by the Minister on 27 November 2006?
- b) Has this project been assessed for value-for-money using the criteria outlined on page 11 of the Regional Partnerships guidelines, July 2006?

Answer:

- a) Yes. Partnership contributions total \$1,272,687 (GST exclusive). Funding partners include NSW State Government, Lions Club International, Tamworth Lions Club, Tamworth Regional Council, Peel Valley Lions Club, Joblink Plus, Zonta Club, John Carr Architect, McKenzie Technology and Design and from a private organisation who provided its contribution in-confidence.
- b) Yes.

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Question: REGS 25

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Sustainable Regions Assessment Times

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

What is the average assessment time for applications for Sustainable Regions funding?

Answer:

Following consideration of an expression of interest, the Sustainable Region Advisory Committee (SRAC) may invite a full application.

The application goes through six steps:

- 1) Application is received by the SRAC;
- 2) Application is assessed by the SRAC;
- 3) The SRAC decides whether to recommend the application for funding, subject to a project viability assessment, or not to recommend the application;
- 4) The SRAC provides a recommendation to the Minister;
- 5) The Department provides advice to the Minister on the SRAC recommendation;
and
- 6) The Minister makes a decision.

The average time in the current Sustainable Regions from the receipt and assessment of the application to the recommendation of the application by the SRAC is 4.6 months.

The average time from the receipt of the SRAC recommendation by the Minister, the provision of the Department's advice to the Minister and the Minister's decision is 1.5 months.

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Question: REGS 26

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Year of the Outback

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

- (a) Is there a funding agreement in place in relation to the \$480,000 provided for the *Year of the Outback*?
- (b) Are there agreed milestones and if so, what are they and what are there timeframes?
- (c) How much of the \$480,000 will be spent on salaries?
- (d) Are other sources of funding provided for the project?

Answer:

- (a) Yes. A funding agreement for \$480,000 (GST-exclusive) was signed on 9 January 2007.
- (b) See answer below.

Milestone One

- Branding finalised for the new quadrennium – incorporating ‘*Outback Calling*’ and *Year of the Outback*;
- Update and consolidation begun on electronic and printed communications systems featuring new branding;
- Update begun on Media Database;
- Auditing and updating begun on Newsletter Database;
- Consolidation and re-branding for ongoing process begun on National Outback Events Calendar;
- Completion and ongoing operation of the Management/Strategic Plan including the consolidation and continued operation of Australian Outback Development Consortium (project development) etc; and
- Sponsorship Procurement process undertaken and ongoing.

Expected Completion Date - 31 March 2007

Milestone Two

- Completion of initial *Outback Youth Infront, Their Voice – Australia's Future* project and the launch of the Office Report;
- Initial consolidation of networks and promotion;
- Meetings, conferences and planning held and continuing to be held;
- Dissemination of media releases;

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- Rural Press features (pending progress and relevant announcements to be made); and
- Launch of *Outback Australia Calling* campaign.

Expected Completion Date - 31 May 2007

Milestone Three

- Australian Outback Development Consortium/*Queensland Country Life Investment and Informational Expedition* moved to finalisation stage;
- Special projects continued: planning and consolidation;
- Continuation of sponsorship procurement process;
- Rural Press features continued; and
- Outback Global progressed.

Expected Completion Date - 30 June 2007

- (c) None of the funding is allocated to salaries.
- (d) The Ray White Rural contribution is \$2,500 per month from October 2006 – May 2007.

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Question: REGS 27

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Area Consultative Committees One-off Payments

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

- (a) Which ACCs received a one-off payment in 2006?
- (b) How much did each ACC receive in a one-off payment?
- (c) Are there conditions on how ACCs must spend their one- payment?

Answer:

- (a) 51 ACCs out of the total of 56 received a one-off payment in 2006. The Melbourne Development Board, Melbourne East ACC, Melbourne's West ACC, Northern Melbourne ACC and the South East Development (Melbourne) ACC, did not receive a one-off payment, pending the outcome of the Boundary Review.
- (b) Remote ACCs received \$85,000, rural ACCs \$77,500 and metropolitan ACCs \$60,000 (all GST-inclusive).
- (c) Yes, the funds were provided specifically for training and capacity building, marketing and office equipment and travel costs. Metropolitan ACCs did not receive funding for travel costs. One-off funds are to be spent by 30 June 2007.

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Question: REGS 28

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Melbourne ACCs

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

- a) Have all MPs in Melbourne electorates been informed of the changes to Melbourne ACCs?
- b) What consideration has been given to the staffing and resourcing of the new model?
- c) Have any appointments been made to the new Boards of the Melbourne ACCs?

Answer:

- a) Yes. All Members and Senators were sent a letter dated 20 February 2007 informing them of changes resulting from the Area Consultative Committee (ACC) Boundary Review which included a summary of changes to ACCs from 1 July 2007.
- b) Discussions with the ACCs regarding operational funding for 2007-2008 commenced in January 2007. Detailed budgets are expected to be provided to the Department by the end of March 2007.
- c) No. The term of appointment of the current chairs ends on 30 June 2007. The Minister for Transport and Regional Services wrote to all Victorian MPs and Senators on 27 February 2007 seeking nominations for the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair of the three continuing Melbourne ACCs. Nominations close on 20 March 2007.

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Question: REGS 29

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Textile, Clothing and Footwear Post-2005 Package

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

Is DOTARS responsible for promoting this program? If so, what is being done to promote the package?

Answer:

The Department of Transport and Regional Services (DOTARS) provides administrative support for the community assistance element of the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear (TCF) Structural Adjustment Package through the *Regional Partnerships* programme.

The community assistance element of the TCF Structural Adjustment Package is available to regional and metropolitan centres and communities which have been impacted by industry closures. DOTARS, with assistance from the Area Consultative Committee (ACC) network, will work with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources to advise and assist communities who may be eligible for funding under this initiative.

DOTARS provides information to the public about the community assistance element of the TCF Structural Adjustment Package in the *Regional Partnerships* Guidelines, July 2006, and on its website <<http://www.regionalpartnerships.gov.au>>.

The ACC network provides assistance to applicants to apply for a grant.

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Question: REGS 30

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Regional Partnerships

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

How many applications for Regional Partnerships have been lodged in each ACC region since 1 November 2006?

Answer:

The number of applications lodged with the *Regional Partnerships* programme from each ACC, from 1 November 2006 to 2 March 2007, is as follows:

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|----|
| ACC Tasmania | 2 | Melbourne's West ACC | 2 |
| Adelaide Metropolitan ACC | 3 | Mid North Coast NSW ACC | 4 |
| Albury/Wodonga ACC | 4 | Mid West Gascoyne ACC | 4 |
| Barossa Riverland Mid North ACC | 3 | Moreton Bay Coast & Country ACC | 2 |
| Capital Region ACC | 2 | New England North West ACC | 2 |
| Central Coast of NSW ACC | 5 | North East Victoria ACC | 6 |
| Central Murray ACC | 3 | North Queensland ACC | 5 |
| Central NSW ACC | 3 | Northern Melbourne ACC | 1 |
| Central Queensland ACC | 3 | Northern Rivers (NSW) ACC | 11 |
| Central Victoria ACC | 2 | Northern Territory ACC | 1 |
| Far North Queensland ACC | 2 | Orana ACC | 6 |
| Flinders Region ACC | 5 | Outback NSW ACC | 2 |
| Geelong ACC | 4 | Peel ACC | 5 |
| Gippsland ACC | 2 | Perth ACC | 4 |
| Gold Coast and Region ACC | 6 | Pilbara ACC | 1 |
| Goldfields Esperance ACC | 1 | Riverina ACC | 3 |
| Great Southern Western Australia ACC | 1 | Shoalhaven ACC | 3 |
| Greater Brisbane ACC | 3 | South Central ACC | 2 |
| Greater Green Triangle ACC | 4 | South East Development Melbourne | 0 |
| GROW Sydney ACC | 3 | South East NSW ACC | 5 |
| Hunter ACC | 9 | Southern Inland Queensland ACC | 2 |
| Illawarra ACC | 1 | Sunraysia ACC | 0 |
| Ipswich and Regional ACC | 4 | Sunshine Coast ACC | 1 |
| Kimberley ACC | 3 | Torres/NPA ACC | 2 |
| Limestone Coast ACC | 4 | Victoria Central Highlands ACC | 0 |
| Mackay Region ACC | 2 | Western Australia's South West ACC | 8 |
| Melbourne Development Board | 1 | Wheatbelt Area ACC | 0 |
| Melbourne East ACC | 3 | Wide Bay Burnett | 4 |

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Question: REGS 31

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Regional Partnerships Programme

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

For the Regional Partnerships programme, which sits under Output 2, provide expense/revenue and cash estimates that are not obligated or forward committed for Administered and Departmental payments for each of:

- (a) 2005-06 (outcome versus final budget estimate); and
- (b) current forward estimates for 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Answer:

DEPARTMENTAL

The Regional Partnerships programme is one of a range of programmes managed within the Regional Services output.

- (a) In 2005-06, the price of the Regional Services output was \$40.092 million.
- (b) For 2006-07 the price of the Regional Services output is \$38.5 million.

Departmental budgets for the Regional Services Division beyond this period have not been determined.

ADMINISTERED

| | (a) | | (b) | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Final Estimates 2005-06 \$000 | Actual 2005-06 \$000 | Budget 2006-07 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2007-08 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2008-09 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2009-10 \$000 |
| Regional Partnerships (*) | 84,725(**) | 83,710(**) | 77,150 | 68,717 | 62,647 | 62,727 |
| Amount committed through funding agreements as at 05 March 2007 | - | - | 62,204 | 18,227 | 778 | 40 |
| Amount not yet obligated through funding agreements | - | - | 14,946 | 50,490 | 61,869 | 62,687 |

(*)As published in the 2006-07 Portfolio Budget Statements and 2006-07 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.

(**) 2005-06 includes Area Consultative Committees.

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Question: REGS 32

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Sustainable Regions Programme

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

For the Sustainable Regions programme, which sits under Output 2, provide expense/revenue and cash estimates that are not obligated or forward committed for Administered and Departmental payments for each of:

- (a) 2005-06 (outcome versus final budget estimate); and
- (b) current forward estimates for 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Answer:

DEPARTMENTAL

The Sustainable Regions programme is one of a range of programmes managed within the Regional Services output.

- (c) In 2005-06, the price of the Regional Services output was \$40.092 million.
- (d) For 2006-07, the price of the Regional Services output is \$38.5 million.
Departmental budgets for the Regional Services Division beyond this period have not been determined.

ADMINISTERED

| | (a) | | (b) | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Final Estimates 2005-06 \$000 | Actual 2005-06 \$000 | Budget 2006-07 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2007-08 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2008-09 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2009-10 \$000 |
| | Sustainable Regions | 31,050(**) | 36,779(*) | 22,554(*) | 13,200(*) | 0 |
| Amount committed through funding agreements as at 05 March 2007 | - | 0 | 6,855 | 2,771 | 0 | 0 |
| Amount not yet obligated through funding agreements | - | 0 | 16,187 | 10,429 | 0 | 0 |

(*) As published in the 2006-07 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.

(**) As published in the 2006/07 Portfolio Budget Statements.

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Question: REGS 33

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Area Consultative Committees Network

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

For the Area Consultative Committees network, which sits under Output 2, provide expense/revenue and cash estimates that are not obligated or forward committed for Administered and Departmental payments for each of:

- (a) 2005-06 (outcome versus final budget estimate) and
- (b) current forward estimates for 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Answer:

DEPARTMENTAL

The Area Consultative Committee Network is one of a range of programmes managed within the Regional Services output.

- (e) In 2005-06, the price of the Regional Services output was \$40.092 million.
- (f) For 2006-07 the price of the Regional Services output is \$38.5 million.

Departmental budgets for the Regional Services Division beyond this period have not been determined.

ADMINISTERED

| | (a) * | | (b) | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Final Estimates 2005-06 \$000 | Actual 2005-06 \$000 | Budget 2006-07 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2007-08 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2008-09 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2009-10 \$000 |
| Area Consultative Committees | 0 | 0 | 16,964 | 17,459 | 17,860 | 18,271 |
| Amount committed through funding agreements as at 05 March 2007 | 0 | 0 | 16,651 | 16,442 | 16,804 | 0 |
| Amount not yet obligated through funding agreements | 0 | 0 | 313 | 1,017 | 1,056 | 0 |

* Included in the Regional Partnerships Programme in 2005-2006.

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Question: REGS 34

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

For the Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme, which sits under Output 2, provide expense/revenue and cash estimates that are not obligated or forward committed for administered and departmental payments for each of:

- (a) 2005-06 (outcome versus final budget estimate); and
- (b) current forward estimates for 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Answer:

DEPARTMENTAL

- (a) The Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme is one of a range of programmes managed within the Regional Services output. In 2005-06, the price of the Regional Services output was \$40.092 million.
- (b) For 2006-07, the price of the Regional Services output is \$38.5 million.

ADMINISTERED

| | (a) | | (b) | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Final Estimates 2005-06 \$000 | Actual 2005-06 \$000 | Budget 2006-07 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2007-08 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2008-09 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2009-10 \$000 |
| | Remote Air Services Subsidy Scheme (RASS) | 3,158(*) | 3,153(*) | 3,980 | 4,407 | 4,509 |
| Amount committed through funding agreements as at 05 March 2007 | - | - | 3,153** | 1,333** | 0 | 0 |
| Amount not yet obligated through funding agreements | - | - | 827 | 3,074 | 4,509 | 4,612 |

(*) *As published in the 2006-07 Portfolio Budget Statements and 2006-07 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.*

(**) *The funding agreements also allow for additional subsidies for fuel costs. As these are contingent upon the price of aviation fuel, these cannot be calculated in advance.*

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Question: REGS 35

Division/Agency: Regional Services

Topic: Regional and Rural Research and Development Grants

Hansard Page: Written Question

Senator O'Brien asked:

For the Regional and Rural Research and Development Grants, which sits under Output 2, provide expense/revenue and cash estimates that are not obligated or forward committed for Administered and Departmental payments for each of:

- (a) 2005-06 (outcome versus final budget estimate); and
- (b) current forward estimates for 2006-07, 2007-08, 2008-09 and 2009-10.

Answer:

DEPARTMENTAL

The Regional and Rural Research and Development Grants is one of a range of programmes managed within the Regional Services output.

(a) In 2005-06, the price of the Regional Services output was \$40.092 million.

(b) For 2006-07 the price of the Regional Services output is \$38.5 million.

Departmental budgets for the Regional Services Division beyond this period have not been determined.

ADMINISTERED

| | (a) | | (b) | | | |
|---|--|----------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Final Estimates 2005-06 \$000 | Actual 2005-06 \$000 | Budget 2006-07 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2007-08 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2008-09 \$000 | Forward Estimates 2009-10 \$000 |
| Regional and Rural Research and Development Grants | 228(**) | 183(**) | 228 | 228 | 228 | 228 |
| Amount committed through funding agreements as at 05 March 2007 | - | - | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Amount not yet obligated through funding agreements | - | - | 204 | 228 | 228 | 228 |

(*)As published in the 2006-07 Portfolio Budget Statements and 2006-07 Portfolio Additional Estimates Statements.