



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AND CITY SERVICES  
SUZANNE ORR MLA (CHAIR), CANDICE BURCH MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), JAMES MILLIGAN MLA

**Inquiry into referred 2017–18 Annual and Financial Reports**  
**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**  
**13 November 2018**

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Asked by JAMES MILLIGAN MLA:

In relation to: Aboriginal tree relocation: cost; consultation with community

**MR MILLIGAN:** Thank you, Chair. I have got a question in relation to the relocation of the Aboriginal Cultural Tree that was relocated back in May of this year from the outward bound property and relocated to Namadgi. Just wondering, what consultation was undertaken with regards to the relocation of this Aboriginal Cultural tree?

**Mr Walker:** We worked extensively with the traditional custodians and the RAO's around the removal—the translocation of that tree to Namadgi. So we worked hand in glove with that, and that was led by our heritage team and our parks and conservation team and our Murrumbong Rangers to, I guess, undertake that relocation.

**MR MILLIGAN:** The local Aboriginal community—you said you consulted with that, was that with particular families, or was that through the elected body, or was that with the community directly themselves?

**Mr Walker:** So there was engagement directly with the traditional custodians, and likewise in the discussions as Mr Ponton indicated, we meet regularly with Jacob Key on the elected body. So we have a range of different levels of consultation associated with these activities, and we certainly had representation onsite at the process of relocation—relocating the tree.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Did the elected body take any part in consultation? Did they take it to the community?

**Mr Walker:** I would have—I have to take that on notice as to whether—how the elected body was involved, but—

**MR MILLIGAN:** Yes.

**Mr Walker:** —recognising Jacob's involvement in that—as a—

**MR MILLIGAN:** Yes.

**Mr Walker:** —representative there, Jacob was part of that consultation process.

**MR MILLIGAN:** And what was the cost associated with this relocation?

**Mr Walker:** I will take that on notice, thank you.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Thank you chair.

**Mr Walker:** As you would appreciate, relocating a tree, a scar tree is a significant activity, and there was a lot of work done by an archaeologist in how to lift effectively a dead tree from the ground onto the back of a truck, take it to Namadgi where it was then placed back down into a designed area. So I think the costs are relative. I think the importance here is how do we ensure the protections of culturally significant sites? And the fact that, you know, it was relocated to that particular property, we have now placed it in a space where both the traditional custodians can respect and celebrate that particular tree. And it looks like Fiona is going to add some more to that.

**Ms Moore:** I know the figure.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Yes? Okay.

**Ms Moore:** 76,000.

**MR MILLIGAN:** 76,000.

**Mr Walker:** Thank you.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Going back to the traditional custodians that you consulted with, we have a number of different families here, coming from different mobs. Did you consult with both the families or was it just a, you know, Ngunnawal Elder's council or was it with a house family or Bow family? So when you said, "Traditional Custodians," who was it that you consulted with?

**Mr Walker:** The specific details of the level of, you know, was it the Bows or the houses or—

**MR MILLIGAN:** Yes.

**Mr Walker:** —those areas—unless, Fiona, you are able to assist with that, happy to take that on notice.

**MR MILLIGAN:** Okay.

**Mr Walker:** But I can assure you there was direct conversations and consultations with a number of parties, including the elected body, including representative from the—representing the Aboriginal organisations, and whether it was the houses or the bows I—

**MR MILLIGAN:** Yes.

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**Mr Walker:** —would have to clarify. Or both.

**MINISTER GENTLEMAN:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:—

The proposal to move the Aboriginal canoe tree from the Outward Bound facility at Tharwa had its origins in Aboriginal community consultation, being initially requested by Representative Aboriginal Organisations (RAOs); and all stages of the project have involved consultation with Aboriginal stakeholders.

Under the *Heritage Act 2004* (the Act), RAOs were declared by the Minister in 2006 and have a formal role in the management of Aboriginal places and objects. Declared RAOs are:

- Buru Ngunawal Aboriginal Corporation;
- King Brown Tribal Group;
- Little Gudgenby River Tribal Council; and
- Ngarigu Currawong Clan.

From July 2015, with the ACT Government's decision to fund the project, RAOs have been consulted about all aspects of the project, including the physical lifting and movement of the cultural tree, conservation works to maintain its physical form, the location and the interpretive installation at the Namadgi Visitor's Centre. Throughout this process, RAO input has been provided during on site meetings and in response to documents provided for review.

From July 2015, the ACT Government has also consulted with the United Ngunnawal Elders Council (UNEC) and the ACT Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elected Body (ATSIEB) throughout the course of the project, reflecting the important advisory roles of these parties to the ACT Government. While information was provided to both UNEC and ATSIEB, it is noted that neither party attended on-site meetings or provided input in response to documents provided for review.

The importance of the project is reflected in its budget, with \$76,000 originally allocated in the 2016-2017 Capital Works program – and a further \$13,277 allocated in subsequent budgets.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Transport and City Services

Signature:



Date: 23/11/18

By the Minister for the Environment and Heritage, Mick Gentleman MLA

