



Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022 **ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE**

Asked by Mr Ed Cocks MLA on 1 November 2022: Ms Rebecca Vassarotti MLA took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: Hansard [uncorrected] proof transcript 1 November 2022, Page 17

In relation to: Heritage Grants - Barriers for Indigenous people

MR COCKS: Sorry, minister. And I am really glad that over the past two years—I am happy to work with that timeframe. And I am happy if you take it on notice what analysis you have around the barriers to indigenous people, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, participating in these programs.

Ms Vassarotti: Okay. They are the same as the barriers for first nations people across the board around—particularly around grants process. There is not—there has not been specific analysis over the last two years. So I am not sure that we could take it on notice in—that we have and what—what we can provide is a review of the heritage grants. There is an annual review that happens there.

Mr Burkevics: There is an annual review which looks at community feedback, the applications process, and so on. And I think yes, as minister indicated, it is always a priority to ensure that people are aware of the grants program and are supported through the process.

And so that exists year after year. I do not think you would sort of set a timeframe around it. It is just one of the challenges that if opportunities are available for people to apply, you want to ensure that you attract diverse and innovative applications to ensure the selection process is absolutely worthwhile.

MR COCKS: I am happy with that. Yes.

Rebecca Vassarotti MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The ACT Heritage Grants Program was internally reviewed prior to the launch of the 2022-23 Grant round. The review focused on streamlining the application and acquittal process for applicants, while upholding probity and accountability requirements.

Notable changes to simplify and streamline the application and acquittal process for applicants include:

- The application form and grant guidelines are reviewed annually to improve the application process.
 - The online application Smartform will move to SmartyGrants in 2022. A hard copy is available on request.
 - The draft 2022 Guidelines and application form have been simplified with the information requested considered necessary for assessment.
 - A list of relevant industry consultant organisations, hourly rates and website links is included in the grant guidelines. However, for conservation works, applicants are required to source quotes as works, trades and costs will vary significantly. This protects the applicant by ensuring there are no unforeseen costs resulting in incomplete projects.
- Assessment and decisions on funded projects:
 - The heritage grants will continue to be assessed by a panel of ACT Heritage staff, experts in their relevant fields.
 - Proposed changes include the decision to fund projects and emergency grants being undertaken by EPSDD Executive.
- Deed of Grant and reporting
 - The Deed of Grant template is an ACT Government requirement for all grants. The template is reviewed annually and approved by the ACT Government Solicitor's Office.
 - The Final and Progress Report templates have been reviewed and reduced by approximately 40%.
 - The Final Report requires:
 - copies of invoices over \$500;
 - a statutory declaration for projects under \$50,000, or a certified financial statement for those over \$50,000, the cost of which can be included in the funding sought;
 - photographic evidence or copies of product (e.g. publication) may be required, or a site inspection for conservation works; and
 - for larger Heritage Grants, a photograph or video is not considered appropriate to demonstrate expenditure for acquittal and confirm accountability of ACT Government monies. However, ACT Heritage will further consider this option for smaller grants in future rounds

In addition, the *ACT Heritage Grants Program Guidelines for Applications 2022-23* is available at: https://www.environment.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1950799/2022-ACT-Heritage-Grants-Program-Guidelines-for-Applications.pdf

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment, Climate Change and Biodiversity

Signature: 

Date: 10/11/2022

By the Minister for the Environment, Rebecca Vassarotti MLA