



STANDING COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND BIODIVERSITY
Dr Marisa Paterson MLA (Chair), Ms Jo Clay MLA (Deputy Chair), Ms Leanne Castley MLA

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2020-2021
ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE
3 March 2022

Asked by Leanne Castley MLA on 3 March 2022: David Pryce, Deputy Director-General, Access Canberra took on notice the following question(s):

[Ref: Hansard Uncorrected Proof Transcript 3 March 2022, Pages 103-104]

In relation to:

THE CHAIR: Right. And how much budgetary funding does the EPA receive, and can you let me know what it has been like over the last five years?

Mr Pryce: We can probably take it on notice, would be the easiest way to do that. Because the appropriation is given to Access Canberra as a whole and then we fund across the agency, as such. So we probably have to answer some of that on notice, Ms Castley.

Ms Cheyne: Yes. Ms Castley, I recall this was an area of interest for you in the budget estimates hearings as well. So in terms of, you know, appropriation and staffing, I think it has largely stayed consistent.

Mr Pryce: Correct.

Ms Cheyne: And Mr Pryce has just confirmed that for me. We will just see if that question on notice—try and answer that question. It might not have gone back those five years, but if we have got the data on what the teams looked like over that five-year period year after year, we can provide that to you on notice.

MS CASTLEY: Thank you. I am also keen to know the staff allocation over those five years as well, if we can, just to see if it has increased at all, and, minister, if you feel that you are sufficiently staffed to do the job of the EPA.

Ms Cheyne: Yes, Ms Castley. But I think they are, as we were touching on with Ms Clay before, just an opportunity to review the policy settings, and from what flows from the review of the policy settings, where we should be targeting our efforts. You know, and I think that has just been a quite considerable change over decades, but also in the last little while as well, that we do have a very good regulatory function, we do have those quite strong environmental protection authorisations.

But I think what is being seen at a national and perhaps even international level is some of that—I believe it is called point source pollution, you know, like where something is coming out of a distinct or a discrete point of something, like out of a sewer or out of a pipe or something somewhere. That has been maintained pretty well, but general behaviour, where we cannot

identify where the particular point is, might be a little bit different or harder for us to identify, but might be causing more of our environmental issues.

So I think they are just some of the things that we are alive to, and certainly I understand that other jurisdictions are alive to that as well. But, again, the policy settings are led by Minister Vassarotti. So I think at the moment, as where we are at, I think the resourcing is functioning effectively, but if there is a flow through from that from any change to the policy settings, then that would be an opportunity to review the resources.

MS CASTLEY: Thank you. Thank you, Chair.

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

The funding provided to the EPA for staffing for the last five financial years is identified in the table below, along with the staffing number. Non staffing costs for EPA are not tracked separately to the broader Access Canberra budget.

	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Budget	\$1,476,389	\$1,689,812	\$1,714,676	\$1,758,771	\$1,805,541
Staffing - Headcount	17	17	17	17	17

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

Signature: 

Date: 16/3/22

By the Minister for Business and Better Regulation, Tara Cheyne MLA