



Inquiry into annual and financial reports 2024–25

Answer to question taken on notice

Asked by: Jo Clay MLA

Addressed to: Tara Cheyne MLA, Minister for City and Government Services

In relation to: Federally funded indigenous rangers and cultural advisors

Hearing: 12 November 2025

Uncorrected Proof Transcript pp 45-46

Transcript provided: 21 November 2025

Answer Due: 28 November 2025

THE CHAIR: So I think, obviously, other states and territories have managed to meet those criteria. You may not be able to answer off the top of your head, but I would love to know what it is that meant that the ACT was not able to access those resources. It is certainly consistent with the work we would like to do here. Can you look that up and provide details or provide any information now as to why every other state and territory managed to leverage that money and we did not?

Mr Burkevics: Before taking a notice, I am wondering, minister if Head of Parks, Ms Watts has any further information to add to that one.

Ms Watts: Thank you, Mr Burkevics. My name is Michaela Watts. I am the Executive Branch Manager of the ACT Parks and Conservation Service. And thank you, Ms Clay. We will have to take that question on notice just so we can fully determine what parameters applied to that funding so thank you.

Ms Cheyne: Would you mind just saying the program name again?

THE CHAIR: I am happy to, it is the Indigenous ranger program, and it had \$335 million available for 1,000 new rangers and we gather there—every other state and territory managed to bid for this program, and it sounds like we did not lodge a bid. So the question is why did we not lodge a bid, what was it that we were unable to meet there or the answer might be we did not know about it, whatever the answer is.

THE CHAIR: Yes. That would be great.

Ms Cheyne: Yes, great. Yes, good question. We will get back to you.

Tara Cheyne MLA, Minister for City and Government Services: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

The ACT Government did not apply for funding under the Commonwealth's Indigenous Rangers Program (IRP).

The IRP is awarded to support local representative First Nations organisations. Those organisations can partner with Government (if a local incorporated body does not exist) to provide a grant submission and meet the criteria of managing country using traditional custodian objectives, usually in the management of an Indigenous Protected Area (IPA). No such organisation or structures are present in the ACT.

As an alternative, the City and Environment Directorate partnered with the Birrigai School to submit a successful Junior Rangers Grant Proposal, which has slightly different criteria. One component of the junior rangers grant will build First Nations capacity in the following areas through supporting students in attaining:

- Certificate III in Conservation and Ecosystem Management (20 students), or
- Certificate III in Outdoor Leadership (15 students).

These outcomes will provide pathways to First Nation's individuals working within Government or the land management/tourism industry.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Environment and Planning

Signature: 

By the Minister for City and Government Services, Tara Cheyne MLA

Date: 25/11/25