

## SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2010-2011

### Questions on Notice

## Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

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*A Natural resource management program for ACT schools*

MEREDITH HUNTER : To ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Ref: Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services,  
Budget paper no. 4, (pp367-398)

In relation to *Understanding the Land through the Eyes of the Ngunnawal People - A Natural Resource Management Program for ACT Schools* –

1. What was the process of involvement across the Department of Education and Training and the Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water to introduce the *Understanding the Land through the Eyes of the Ngunnawal People - A Natural Resource Management Program for ACT Schools*<sup>1</sup> program into ACT schools and was the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs involved in this process?
2. Will the Office be involved in monitoring the implementation and/or success of the program?

**Chief Minister Stanhope: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–**

1. The Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water was responsible for developing the *Understanding the Land through the Eyes of the Ngunnawal People - A Natural Resource Management Program for ACT Schools*. The Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs was involved in connecting the Department of Environment, Climate Change, Energy and Water with the members of the United Ngunnawal Elders Council.
2. Each Department is responsible for monitoring and evaluating their respective programs.

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<sup>1</sup> Media Release by Mr Corbell - <http://www.chiefminister.act.gov.au/media.php?v=9555>

*QTON - Total funding across agencies for ATSI programs/ Portion of staff funds to the Office of ATSI Affairs*

Asked by Mr Hanson on Thursday 27 May 2010: Mr Stanhope took on notice the following question:

Ref: Hansard Transcript 27 May 2010 – page 63

In relation to :

What is the Indigenous specific funding across ACT Government?

**Chief Minister Stanhope: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–**

- In 2008-09 the ACT Government funded 76 Indigenous specific services with a total expenditure of approximately \$17.7 million. Of this expenditure 43 per cent supported safe and supportive communities; 34 per cent supported early child development, education and training; 14 per cent supported health; six per cent aimed to strengthen home environments; two percent supported economic participation and one per cent supported governance and leadership.
- However, this expenditure on targeted programs represents only part of total expenditure. Any assessment of total expenditure on support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people would not be accurate unless it includes an estimation of the total investment in both targeted and mainstream support programs and services.
- Considerable expenditure on services to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people occurs through their access to mainstream programs. A project to estimate total national expenditure on support for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians is currently being undertaken by the Productivity Commission under the auspices of the Heads of Treasury and the Council of Australian Governments.
- The Productivity Commission is using a nationally consistent approach, comparable across jurisdictions to determine the mainstream expenditure on services that are used by and support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. The apportioned expenditure on these services is currently being finalised and is not as yet available for public release. This amount is being determined for all States and Territories based on information on actual usage by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians. This expenditure will be significantly higher than that invested in targeted programs.

*QTON - Breakdown of administration funds*

Asked by Mr Smyth on Thursday 27 May 2010: Mr Manikis took on notice the following question:

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 27 May 2010 – page 66

In relation to :

What is the break up of costs of the \$242,000 administration component for the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

**Chief Minister Stanhope: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–**

The largest components of the 2010–11 administrative budget for the Office for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs are for costs associated with the Indigenous Elected Body (\$120,000) and the United Ngunnawal Elders Council (\$26,000). The remainder relates to general administrative costs for the Office.

*QTON - Billabong Lease*

Asked by Mr Smyth on Thursday 27 May 2010: Mr Stanhope took on notice the following question:

Ref: Hansard Transcript 27 May 2010 – page 70

In relation to :

What is the progress of the Billabong lease?

**Chief Minister Stanhope: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–**

Billabong Aboriginal Corporation currently occupies Block 1420 in the District of Belconnen.

Block 1420 is within the non urban NUZ3 hills, ridges and buffer zone of the Territory Plan.

The existing uses carried out by the Billabong Aboriginal Corporation are inconsistent with the Territory Plan but ACT Planning and Land Authority is undertaking amendments to the Territory Plan to remedy this. The amendment is anticipated to commence in mid to late July 2010.

The Billabong Aboriginal Corporation has been in contact with LAPS who are preparing a direct sale application.

*QTON - Proportion of salaries of CE and DCE as per ATSI work*

Asked by Mr Smyth on Thursday 27 May 2010: Ms Lambert took on notice the following question:

[Ref: Hansard Transcript 27 May 2010 – page 65-66

In relation to:

What is the proportion of salaries of the DHCS Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive as per their work on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander issues?

**Chief Minister Stanhope: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–**

The exercise of calculating the proportion of salaries that is directed toward services to Indigenous people is very complex at both the indirect and direct level.

Both the whole of government policy area, the Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, and the service area for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and young people are located in the Department. Within the client population of the Department Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, adults and children, are overrepresented as they are a vulnerable group within our society.

In December 2007, COAG committed to reporting transparently on expenditure on services to Indigenous Australians. The ACT along with other jurisdictions is preparing the first data report expected to be delivered to Heads of Treasuries by mid-2010. Total funding towards 'closing the gap' is not aggregated by the ACT Government.

*Close the gap*

Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA: To ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

In relation to Close the Gap:

1. When did the ACT Government commit to the “Close the Gap” initiative?
2. What policy changes does the ACT Government now commit to as part of the close the gap initiative and when will they be delivered? Do any appear in the 2010-11 Budget?
3. For all items outlined in the close the gap statement of intent, what is the “gap” between indigenous and non-indigenous ACT residents?
4. Having agreed and committed to closing the gap, when does the ACT Government expect the gap to be bridged between indigenous and non-indigenous ACT residents in terms of the outcomes listed in part 3 above?
5. How much funding in total does the ACT Government commit to closing the gap?
6. Will there be an increase in indigenous specific policy or program officers across Government to implement the closing the gap reforms? Please detail.

**Chief Minister Stanhope: The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–**

1. The Chief Minister endorsed the National Indigenous Reform Agreement on 29 November 2008 and the revised version of the Agreement at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting on 2 July 2009.
2. The ACT Government, along with other jurisdictions, has signed a number of Indigenous-specific and mainstream National Partnership Agreements in the areas of health, early childhood, education, youth attainment, and economic participation, which will contribute directly to the ‘Closing the Gap’ initiative and will be delivered within the general timeframes set by the COAG. Most of these partnerships, along with other initiatives funded under previous budgets, are being implemented by relevant ACT Government agencies.

The 2010-11 Budget papers contain several Indigenous specific initiatives that have been funded under National Partnership Agreements. In addition, the ACT Government is leveraging funding received from the Commonwealth under mainstream National Partnership Agreements in areas such as homelessness, health and education, to achieve ‘Closing the Gap’ outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Canberrans.

3. The ACT has one of the smallest Indigenous populations (proportionally and numerically) of all jurisdictions – 4282 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people making up 1.3% of the total ACT population.

The ACT ‘gaps’ which are recognised as valid baseline data for future performance reporting of the targets for the National Indigenous Reform Agreement are:

- *Proportion of low birth weight babies*: The gap in the proportion of babies with low birth weight born to Indigenous and non-Indigenous mothers in the ACT is close to the national average (6 percentage points compared to 7 percentage points);
  - *Literacy and numeracy outcomes*: The ACT had lower gaps in performance than the national average for all National Assessment Program–Literacy and Numeracy measures (10 percentage points for Year 3 reading and 8 percentage points for Year 3 numeracy);
  - *Year 12 attainment*: There was a gap of 34 percentage points between the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous young people (20-24) in the ACT who had attained Year 12 or equivalent. This was close to the national gap (36 percentage points); and
  - *Working age population with or working towards Certificate III or above*: The gap in the proportion of Indigenous and non-Indigenous people with or working towards a Certificate III or above was lower than the national average (18 percentage points compared to 25 percentage points).
4. The ACT Government, along with other jurisdictions, is aiming to achieve generational change. The majority of the timeframe targets that form the Closing the Gap objective are to be achieved between 5 and 10 years from November 2008. Each of the specific targets set by the Council of Australian Governments specify time frames for example halving the gap in under-five child mortality rates within a decade or halve gaps in employment outcomes in within 10 years. The National Indigenous Reform Agreement sets out *national* progress trajectories for achieving these targets and identifies appropriate jurisdictional indicator data sources. All governments are working towards finalising specific jurisdictional benchmarks and trajectories to achieve the ‘closing the gap’ targets.
- The COAG Reform Council (CRC) is responsible for assessing and publicly reporting governments’ performance against the COAG targets. CRC reporting commenced with the release of the *National Indigenous Reform Agreement: Baseline performance report for 2008-09* on 30 April 2010.
5. In December 2007, COAG committed to reporting transparently on expenditure on services to Indigenous Australians. The ACT along with other jurisdictions is preparing the first data report expected to be delivered to Heads of Treasuries by mid-2010. Total funding towards ‘closing the gap’ is not aggregated by the ACT Government.
6. The ACT Government expects all relevant functional areas of ACT government agencies to work towards implementing ‘close the gap’ measures to achieve parity or better outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders. The Office of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs in the Department of Disability, Housing and Community Services is responsible for driving the whole of government effort in this regard.



*Welcome to country ceremonies*

Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA: To ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

In relation to welcome to country ceremonies:

1. How much in total has the ACT Government spent on such ceremonies in this financial year to date and how much was spent in the previous financial year?
  - a. How many ceremonies were funded for both years?
2. What guidelines does the ACT Government adhere to in relation to welcome to country ceremonies?
3. Which clan groups were engaged by ACT Government to conduct welcome to country ceremonies, and breakdown the proportion of ceremonies conducted by each?

**Chief Minister Stanhope: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–**

In relation to welcome to country ceremonies:

1. This information is not collected.
  - a. This information is not collected.
2. The ACT Government has developed formal protocols which are observed by all ACT Government officials and agencies. These protocols were formally issued on 6 August 2009 through a media release and a copy of the protocols can be found at the following link:  
[http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/matsia/atsia/welcome\\_to\\_country](http://www.dhcs.act.gov.au/matsia/atsia/welcome_to_country).
3. The ACT Government acknowledges the Ngunnawal people as the traditional custodians of the ACT and surrounding areas. Information on the number of ceremonies conducted throughout the ACT is not collected.

*Independent facilitator to assist the IEB*

Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA: To ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs

Reference: 2009-10 Budget BP3 p83 and ACT Labor 2008 Election commitment

In relation to funding allocated in the 2009-10 budget for the purpose of engaging an independent facilitator to assist the Indigenous Elected Body (IEB):

1. Has an independent facilitator been engaged to assist the IEB?
2. Who is the independent facilitator, how was the independent facilitator engaged, what are the terms of the independent facilitators contract and what is the total cost of the independent facilitator?
3. What tangible outcomes is the independent facilitator engaged to deliver, when are they due, and what has the independent facilitator delivered since being engaged?
4. Will the independent facilitator be engaged for the entire four years outlined in the 2009-10 Budget?

**Chief Minister Stanhope : The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–**

1. Yes.
2. The current independent facilitator is the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre. The process included submissions being invited from seven organisations. A total of \$208,000 has been set aside over the next four years for a facilitator for the Elected Body.
3. The tangible outcomes to be delivered and contained in the contract for the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre include:
  - assist with development of the Elected Body Strategic Plan and facilitate the process;
  - assist with the drafting of a strategic plan;
  - assist with development of policy and position papers;
  - assist with at least two community forums each year related to service delivery to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander population of the ACT and prepare reports on outcomes;
  - conduct a series of workshops with the Elected Body;
  - review governance arrangements for the Elected Body;
  - provide personal development to members of the Elected Body; and
  - prepare individual development plans.

To date, the Australian Indigenous Leadership Centre has delivered assistance for the Elected Body to conduct several community forums, developed a framework for the strategic plan for the Elected Body, and provided governance and personal development support for several individual Elected Body members.

4. An independent facilitator commenced early this year following extensive consultation with the Elected Body as to the scope of the role to be undertaken by the facilitator. It is expected that a facilitator position for the Elected Body will be ongoing over the next three years.

*Statement*

Jeremy Hanson CSC MLA: To ask the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs:

[Ref: Disability, Housing and Community Services, Budget Paper 4, page number 374, Output 3.2 and Estimates Committee Hansard, 27 May 2010, pp P1429 – P1430]

In relation to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander affairs:

1. (a) What was meant by the statement: ‘it has to be said that not everything that Billabong proposes or would wish to pursue is supported by government’; (b) What matters have been proposed by Billabong and have not been supported by the ACT Government; (c) Why have these matters not been supported by the ACT Government.
  
2. (a) What is meant by the statement: ‘there are other collaborations that Billabong from time to time has sought that have not been supported by either this Government or the Commonwealth Government; (b) What collaborations have been sought by Billabong that have not been supported by the ACT Government; (c) What collaborations have been sought by Billabong that have not been supported by the Commonwealth Government.

**Minster Burch : The answer to the Member’s question is as follows:–**

**1 and 2:** The Billabong Aboriginal Corporation occupies Block 1420 Belconnen District.

The Department of Disability Housing and Community Services had advised me that the Billabong Aboriginal Corporation has informally canvassed ideas for enhanced service delivery at the site over a number of years.

I understand that the ideas put forward by the Billabong Corporation were subject to discussion with various officials at the time and were not supported.