



**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY**  
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

**SELECT COMMITTEE ON ESTIMATES 2024-2025**

Ms Nicole Lawder MLA (Chair), Ms Suzanne Orr MLA (Deputy Chair),  
Miss Laura Nuttall MLA

**ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE  
DURING PUBLIC HEARINGS**

Asked by: Ms Nicole Lawder MLA

Addressed to: Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management

Redirected to: N/A

Reference: Uncorrected Hansard Transcript [Page 55-56]

In relation to: implementation of recommendations from two committee reports

Hearing Date: 31/07/2024

QTON lodgement date: 31/07/2024

Answer Due Date: 06/08/2024

**THE CHAIR:** Mr Burkevics, just before in your answer you talked about environmental volunteerism. In 2022 and 2023 the Legislative Assembly had two, I guess, relevant inquiries. The first was into environmental volunteerism, and the second inquiry into grants management. It seems that some organisations have suggested to me that the recommendations have not been adopted by respective directorates in relation to grants management leading to inefficiencies for both volunteers and program managers. Can you explain or do you have an update on the recommendations and the government response and progress against them?

**Mr Burkevics:** Without specific detail on the recommendations and the government response that that may be of interest or concern to volunteer groups, I am limited.

However, what I can say as I know that from EPSTD perspective and with our colleagues at TCCS, we recognise the need to eliminate any unnecessary administrative overhead in the volunteer groups being able to apply for grants, acquit grants, manage grants and those conversations are ongoing.

We have a standing volunteer management committee within EPSTD that involves TCCS officials as well. With the objective of streamlining all of those volunteer coordination and administrative overheads. So I would be most interested if there is any recommendations that apply to EPSTD matters that we could support.

**THE CHAIR:** Perhaps you just take that on notice to go and have a look and come back with an update on what the government said about how they would respond and then progress—you know, if they agree to particular recommendations. What is the progress against that.

**Mr Rutledge:** In our annual report we would do—as a matter of course we would look at previous inquiries recommendations. I think for this one the government did agree or agree in principle to all the 22 recommendations and since they have come through as we've seen an increase in the EPSTD portfolio of \$1.6 million of additional funding to support environmental volunteerism, which we have been talking about earlier.

I think in the next annual report you'll see an update against those committees recommendations, but I think—

**THE CHAIR:** Might be a bit late for me.

**MS VASSAROTTI:** I suppose—yes, I think there is a slight hesitation in terms of it is a whole government report and so in terms of providing a progress report the ability for us to do that within the three business days is a little bit challenging.

The reflection I would make on that inquiry, I think that was a very impactful inquiry. I think it was a really helpful and useful inquiry and certainly is an inquiry that we—that certainly in the engagement that I have with the directorate we actually engage on the recommendations of that inquiry regularly.

I think the provision of funding to support the veterinary services is an example of that. In relation to the grants administration process, there has been a piece of work that's been done particularly around the environmental grants process which actually preceded the inquiry.

Actually when I took on the portfolio I did request that the directors had a look at the administrative process because I had heard very similar things to what you spoke to just before, Ms Lawder, just about the cumbersome nature of it and the fact that—I think at the time it was—was it 40 pages? It was a very long document.

**Minister Vassarotti MLA:** The answer to the Member's question is as follows:

#### **2022 Inquiry into Environmental Volunteerism**

The ACT Government has agreed or agreed in principle to all 22 inquiry recommendations.

Eight recommendations have been addressed, including recommendations 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 11, 13 and 20.

The remaining 14 recommendations are in progress, with six of these having on-going implementation actions. An example of an on-going implementation action is recommendation 12, *that the ACT Government ensure clear and specific recognition of volunteer expertise and contributions to ACT Government plans and programs in government publications.*

#### **2022 Inquiry into Grants Management**

A whole of ACT Government response was provided to this inquiry's recommendations:

[https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0008/2273840/PAC-17-Inquiry-into-Grants-Management-25-Government-response-tabled-on-August-2023.pdf](https://www.parliament.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/2273840/PAC-17-Inquiry-into-Grants-Management-25-Government-response-tabled-on-August-2023.pdf)

The Chief Minister, Treasury and Economic Development Directorate (CMTEDD) led the response to this inquiry and is therefore the appropriate directorate to provide an update on progress against recommendations.

EPSDD will continue to review grant programs and administration within the portfolio to remove unnecessary administrative burdens on applicants.

Approved for circulation to the Select Committee on Estimates 2024-2025

Signature: 

Date: 5/8/2024

By the Minister for the Environment, Parks and Land Management, Rebecca Vassarotti