

PDI Questions on Notice from hearing on 12 December 2016

Question 1 - Resource assessment and Cronulla staff

CONTEXT

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: So Mosman and Port Stephens. How many of those staff are still with Fisheries?

Dr ALLAN: Across the board it is approximately half. I think we lost five resource assessment people. It depends on how you cut it.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I am asking specifically about these areas though?

Mr HANSEN: We might take the specific numbers on notice.

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: I would be very happy if you would take on notice the number of staff and the number of scientists in the stock assessment area. I would also be interested, possibly on notice, in just how many of the 16 wild fisheries scientists are still with the agency.

Dr ALLAN: We will take that on notice because the tasks people do usually are not just about the resource assessment; they do a range of tasks

ANSWER

There are 27 full time equivalent staff in the Fisheries Resource Assessment Unit in DPI Fisheries. This is made up of 12 scientists and 15 technical staff.

8 scientists from the Cronulla Wild Fisheries Unit remain with the Department of Primary Industries. Additional staff were recruited after the closure of the Cronulla office. A short term reduction in the group's capacity was resolved and improved through the recruitment of staff with broad experience in the field of fisheries resource assessment.

Question 2 - \$16 million costing

CONTEXT

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I refer to the \$16 million in funding. The Committee has received submissions stating that that is not enough. How was that figure arrived at? What was the rationale behind determining that that was required?

Dr ALLAN: I am not aware of the exact analysis; that predated me.

The Hon. MICK VEITCH: I am happy for you to take the question on notice.

Dr ALLAN: I will

ANSWER

The \$16 million package is an election commitment of the Government and is made up of:

- \$20,000 for fishing business buy outs, and
- subsidies to active fishers who buy and sell shares in the subsidised share trading market.

The \$20,000 fishing business buy out figure was costed based on recent “average values” for fishing businesses with no shares, determined through early reports, including the Stevens 2007 report that was attached to the Department’s submission, and re-affirmed through advice from the Structural Adjustment Review Committee.

The \$16 million package will be fully utilised and is sufficient for delivering the Adjustment Subsidy Program. The \$16 million figure has been verified by experts including by Sevaly Sen from the Structural Adjustment Review Committee on day 2 of the inquiry hearings 14 December 2016.

Question 3 - Price of shares

CONTEXT

The CHAIR: In discussing whether the \$16 million was enough you made the point that since then a lot of share trading has taken place and therefore the number of people who want to be in the buyout scheme is reduced. Do you have any data about the relative value of the shares that are traded? I have some anecdotal information that one fisherman valued them at about \$750 a share. When that \$16 million was calculated, my memory tells me that the value per share was far less than that. I do not expect an answer now, but when answering the question on notice please elucidate with regard to the reduction in the number of businesses that will trade to indicate what you believe the rough market price will be.

Mr HANSEN: Certainly. However, I will flag a limitation in that there is no legal requirement to report the price.

The CHAIR: I understand that.

Mr HANSEN: That means the prices we are told will sometimes reflect internal transfer pricing, ambition rather than reality—

The CHAIR: Correct.

Mr HANSEN: —and sometimes they will be an accurate reflection of the price at which someone has been prepared to buy or sell.

The CHAIR: At the end of the day, the Government will stand in the marketplace as a market disrupter; you will have to do that with the mechanisms. The Committee would like a rough estimate, and we would probably keep that information confidential because we do not want to influence the market. Perhaps you can take that into account when you answer that question.

Dr ALLAN: We could provide an indicative share price.

The CHAIR: That is all the Committee needs to know, and it will be kept confidential.

Dr ALLAN: There will be those caveats.

The CHAIR: I understand that.

ANSWER

The response to this question was provided by the Minister for Primary Industries, Lands and Water in-camera on 19 December.

Question 4 - Social impact assessment

CONTEXT

The Hon. JOHN GRAHAM: Is there any plan from the agency to respond to the call from the UTS research team to conduct a social impact assessment on the reforms?

Mr HANSEN: I will have to take that on notice

ANSWER

The NSW Government is considering the recommendations of the *Social and Economic Evaluation of NSW Coastal Professional Wild-Catch Fisheries* and is scoping whether it is feasible to undertake a Social Impact Assessment of the reforms in 2017.