

Responses to the Questions on Notice from the Department of Aboriginal Affairs to General purpose Standing Committee No. 2 from the hearing on 25 September 2006

Would you take it on notice to consider the idea of making opportunities available to more Aboriginal girls? Is that something you would consider looking at or taking an interest in?

The Director General responds to this by saying:
Yes. *We are interested in the whole area of education.*

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs will continue to work with both the Department of Education and Training and the Aboriginal Educational Consultative Group to improve education outcomes for all Aboriginal people.

Each year scholarships of \$1000.00 are awarded to encourage increase retention rates among Aboriginal students. How do they work?

100 scholarships of \$1,000 are provided to students in Years 9 and 10 to facilitate their retention in later years of schooling, or those participating in VET courses. These are be provided on the basis of:

- Financial hardship; or
- To encourage students participating in VET courses.

60 scholarships of \$1000 recognise achievements by Aboriginal students in Years 11 or 12, and encourage further efforts to excel in their schooling. These are allocated on the basis of:

- Academic achievement;
- Facilitating retention; or
- Sporting, artistic or cultural achievement.

The decision to award a scholarship will be made by principals in collaboration with their school community.

Can you tell us please in respect to each local Aboriginal land council that has had administrators appointed in the past three financial years the name of the local Aboriginal land council, the reason for the appointment of the administrator, the term of the appointment of the administrator, the proposed remuneration and, in terms of remuneration, what was originally sought and has there been any variation, who is the administrator and, if applicable, the professional firms with which they were involved as partner or an employee.....

Please see the attached spreadsheet for requested information.

...and details of all fees and disbursements paid to each administrator? Could we have a breakdown of that for each financial year?

Any additional costs, out of pocket expenses or subsequent remuneration are negotiated between the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council

(NSWALC) and the administrator. The Department does not have access to this information. Consequently the information has been sought from NSWALC.

Also could you indicate where those fees and disbursements were authorised by, whether they were paid or authorised by the local Aboriginal land council or by the members, which would be the administrator I guess in that issue?

Any additional costs, out of pocket expenses or subsequent remuneration are negotiated between NSWALC and the administrator. The Department does not have access to this information. Consequently the information has been sought from NSWALC.

Could you also then identify what action has been taken to recover fees and what the outcome of that is as well?

Recovery of costs, if at all applicable is a matter between NSWALC and the Local Aboriginal Land Council. The Department has sought this information from NSWALC.

Details on the expenses, disbursements, such as accommodation and travel relating to administrators.

This information is not held by the Department and information is being sought from the NSWALC.

Is the Department aware of the extent of the legal fees that have been incurred as a result of this case by both the administrator presumably and by Darkinjung Pty Limited?

.... could you confirm whether the administrator had budgeted \$90,000 for legal fees, or whether it is in excess of that amount?

This information is not held by the Department and has been sought from the parties.

Can you provide details of the sum that they (Mr Steve Merritt and Ms Marcia Ella-Duncan) received ?

The Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Tribunal is an independent body established under the provision of the *Statutory and Other Offices Remuneration Act 1975*. to determine compensation for SES officers whose contracts have been terminated.

The total amount the Tribunal determined for each terminated SES Officer was :

Ms Marcia Ella – Duncan : \$108,660.00

Mr Steve Merritt : \$108,660.00

This was funded through a one off Treasury funding supplementation.

Mr Merritt was appointed without advertisement, without an interview panel and without other applicants applying for the position. Is that correct?

This information is not held by the Department and is currently being sought from the administrator.

On what date did the administrator of the NSW Aboriginal Land Council abolish the eastern zone office?

The NSWALC Eastern Zone office was amalgamated with NSWALC's Network Services on 11 September 2006.

Can we find out at the same time whether a review of the operations of the eastern zone was conducted?

The Department has requested information on this matter from NSWALC.

What is one of the milestones (of Two Ways Together)?

The *Two Ways Together* Report (2005) provides data on the wellbeing of Aboriginal people in NSW across the seven *Two Ways Together* priority areas. It includes Indicators against which future progress will be measured, in each of the *Two Ways Together* priority areas: health, housing, education, justice, families and young people, culture and heritage, and economic development.

Over the ten year life of *Two Ways Together* (2003-2012), the success of government action in each of the priority areas will be measured biannually against these indicators. The next *Two Ways Together* Report will be released in 2007.

Two Ways Together includes targets and milestones in each of the seven priority areas. An example of a target or milestone under education is:

- The elimination of the gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Government school students in reading, writing and numeracy achievement at Years 3, 5 And 7.