

PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2008

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT

MONDAY 13 OCTOBER 2008

QUESTIONS

AND

ANSWERS

Robyn Parker (Chair)—

CHAIR: My understanding is that the ACDP is for smaller properties than that—smaller houses—as we discussed before, but you could let us know? That is obviously a significant property. I would have thought that the local Aboriginal land council or the New South Wales Aboriginal Land Council would more usually purchase acquisitions of that nature. Can you give us a year-by-year financial statement for the ACDP since it commenced and up to June 2008?

Mr PAUL LYNCH: Do you mean year-by-year expenditure?

CHAIR: Yes.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: We will take it on notice.

ANSWER:

The ACDP is a \$240 million program addressing housing and associated environmental health issues. The program targets the high level of identified need in housing, water and sewerage and general community strengthening and development.

The program is intended to

- ensure community consultation, involvement and self-determination through the establishment of Community Working Parties;
- provide sustainable solutions that are appropriate and affordable for community well being;
- target a number of selected communities, rather than a wide scale program across the state;
- provide opportunities for progressive community development;
- focus on skills development in property management, land management and the management of building and maintenance works; and
- include a training and employment strategy within communities to enhance sustainability and self governance.

It has done this through a range of sub-programs – the 22 Priority Communities program, the Housing for Health Program and the Water and Sewerage Program.

The year by year expenditures for the ACDP from its commencement in 1998 to 30 June 2008 is represented in **Table 1** below. The Program is due for completion in June 2010, and as at 30 June 2008 the total expenditure is \$211M.

Table 1: ACDP Expenditure year by year to June 2008

Year	Total ACDP expenditure (\$000)
1998/99	3,465
1999/00	7,581
2000/01	8,223
2001/02	16,638
2002/03	24,995
2003/04	32,794
2004/05	37,109
2005/06	35,974
2006/07	27,393
2007/08	17,007
TOTAL	211,179

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Dr Gordon Moyes—

Reverend the Hon. Dr GORDON MOYES: I am happy for any of you to answer this question. You remember the dreadful riots in Redfern sometime ago. I chaired an inquiry of this particular committee not long after. It was a period of time when there were no garbage collections in the Block area. Sydney City Council hygiene department did not collect garbage. I requested Minister Milton Orkopoulos and Frank Sartor, Redfern Waterloo redevelopment Minister to join with me and other politicians in actually shovelling the garbage in the streets of Redfern, which we did the following week: we had people like Sylvia Hale from the Greens, Patricia Forsythe from the Liberals and so on and we went down and cleaned up the streets. The Ministers did not attend because they had not consulted their diaries, of course. However, the director general of your department indicated that your department would "ensure total a hygienic cleanup of the Block twice each year". My question is: How often has that happened since that commitment? My second question is: When will we see some work commencing on the 48 promised new houses planned for the Block area in Redfern?

Mr PAUL LYNCH: The second of those questions I suspect is well outside my jurisdiction. So, I am not in a position to help with that. But the first part of it we are a little bit flummoxed by because none of us knows anything about that alleged commitment. However, we will take it on notice and see what we can find out.

ANSWER:

The Department of Aboriginal Affairs has no record of a commitment to ensure a clean up of The Block twice each year.

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Robyn Parker (Chair)—

CHAIR: Can you also explain something that seems to me like a discrepancy? The 2007 Auditor-General's report on the Department of Aboriginal Affairs said that at 30 June 2007, \$198 million of the ACDP funds had been expended, and the Director-General of Aboriginal Affairs said at the Standing Committee inquiry into Overcoming Indigenous Disadvantage in New South Wales that only \$184 million had been expended on the program to the end of November 2007.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: The Director General is not here because of a family commitment in Perth. We might take that on notice. A \$6 million discrepancy, is that it?

ANSWER:

I understand that the figure of \$198M as reported in the Auditor General's report on the ACDP included an amount of \$5.0M for the *Two Ways Together* "Housing for Health" program and that the Director General in her comments to the Standing Committee Inquiry reported a figure that included neither the Department's client resource costs or *Two Ways Together* "Housing For Health" funding.

You will appreciate that the ACDP is a complicated program made up of a number of separate sub-programs including the 22 Priority Communities, the Water and Sewerage Infrastructure work and the Housing for Health program. Each of these has a significant impact on the total figure.

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PARLIAMENT OF NEW SOUTH WALES
LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

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AND
ANSWERS**

Ian Cohen—

Mr IAN COHEN: Perhaps I will ask them to try again. Minister, I have to admit there are a couple of local issues that apply to indigenous people in my area whom I know personally. It is interesting that a group of people involved actively with the Bundjalung community in the Far North of New South Wales have a very modest funding arrangement to organise Aboriginal funerals. One of their desired projects is to be able to transport deceased Bundjalung people back to their homeland. They call the service the Deadbeats, and it was very popular in the community; but of course they need some funding.

I wonder if you are aware of that. It is a low-key initiative involving one vehicle and bringing those people back to their country by organising an indigenous burial service. That got some support from the local funeral industry, but I was wondering whether your department is aware of that. Have you considered supporting it by making modest funding arrangements, such as an Aboriginal-run funeral service? Would it be within the department's mandate to assist in establishing services to repatriate deceased people back to Bundjalung country?

Mr PAUL LYNCH: I must say that that particular proposal is not one that I have heard of before, although I understand the sensitivities around it and I am aware of those. Are you aware of that?

Ms PEARSE: No, Minister.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: It does not ring any bells with the executive director either. We might take that on notice.

ANSWER:

I am advised that as part of the Aborigines Assistance Fund the Department of Aboriginal Affairs has limited funds available for the provision of small grants to assist Aboriginal people with funeral expenses when no other source of funding is available.

In 2007-08 the Department granted \$31,500 to assist with funeral expenses.

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Robyn Parker (Chair)—

CHAIR:

1. I understand that under the ACDP program your department apparently purchased a property in the Brewarrina area in June 2005 for \$985,000. Can you explain what that purchase was?
2. Can you give us an indication of what sort of property that is?
3. What was the purpose of the property?
4. Is it part of a business venture?
5. Does it fall within the parameters of the ACDP?

ANSWER:

(1-5) The Aboriginal Community Development Program (ACDP) is a \$240 million housing and infrastructure established to build and /or spot purchase new and replacement houses, repair housing and to address environmental health issues through the capital upgrade of water and sewerage systems.

In 2005, six 2 bedroom Elders Units were built at Lot 14 -15 Wilson Street, Brewarrina as part of the ACDP. These units were built in response to housing needs that were identified by the Brewarrina Community Working Party, and were not part of any business venture. They were built using Aboriginal apprentices at a cost of approximately \$1,003,584.32, including Development Application fees. The property is currently being managed by Ngemba Housing.

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Melinda Pavey—

The Hon. MELINDA PAVEY: Is the Department of Aboriginal Affairs concerned about equality of access for young Aboriginal people to get their drivers licence? Having a licence impacts all young people, but young Aboriginal people, in particular, have difficulty accessing cars to achieve the required 120 hours of training to get a P-plate. Has the department investigated the impact of this on Aboriginal communities and, in particular, the flow-on effect of being able to achieve successful employment outcomes?

Mr PAUL LYNCH: Some work has been done, but I will take that question on notice. An even more fundamental problem is people who have unpaid fines and the impact of that. One of the first places I went to as a Minister was Bourke. I talked to people at the council, which has implemented a sensible scheme to link people with employment providers. Once they are employed, they can pay off their fines, which will then allow them to regain their licence. Sensible schemes like that have been implemented in many places.

The Western Sydney Job Compact provided \$10,836 in June 2008 to support the Keeping Aboriginal Youths Safe Project, which focused on young people gaining the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a drivers licence. A number of logistics companies approached in the development of the Sydney-based Job Compacts highlighted the importance of having a drivers licence, so the project is very useful to the job compacts initiatives. That tends to be in the Mount Druitt area. The Roads and Traffic Authority is also doing a number of things.

The Hon. CHRISTINE ROBERTSON: Please take the question on notice.

Mr PAUL LYNCH: We will see whether more information can be provided.

ANSWER:

The difficulty in obtaining drivers licences for many Aboriginal people, and the impact this can have on their employment prospects, has been raised by a number of Aboriginal communities during consultations conducted by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as part of the establishment of Job Compacts across NSW. Following these consultations, the NSW Government has acted to address the issue. For example, in June 2008, funding to support the Keeping Aboriginal Youths Safe Project, which assists young people to gain the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain a drivers licence, was provided by the Department of Aboriginal Affairs as part of the Western Sydney Job Compact.

The Roads and Traffic Authority (RTA) has an Aboriginal Action Plan 2006-2010, which includes strategies to address barriers in obtaining drivers licences.

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