

**Legislative Council**  
**General Purpose Standing Committee No.2**  
**Budget Estimates 2012-2013**

**CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITIES**  
**ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE DURING THE HEARING**

**QUESTION 1 (pages 12 & 13 of transcript)**

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** Minister, under the State Plan you are accountable for goal 26, which is supporting Aboriginal culture, country and identity, including increasing the number of culturally significant objects and places protected. How many new culturally significant objects and places have been protected since you have been Minister?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** As the Hon. Helen Westwood is aware, Aboriginal culture and heritage primarily rests with the Hon. Robyn Parker, Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage. As the Hon. Helen Westwood is also aware, that Aboriginal heritage is, in my view, repugantly contained within the flora and fauna legislation—the national parks legislation, which everyone in this room thinks is a disgrace. It is just insane that in 2012 important things of cultural heritage for Aboriginal people is contained in flora and fauna legislation.

We have a working group because we as a government realise the repugnant nature of this and we have made a commitment. In honouring our commitment we have established a working group so that we will have a standalone piece of legislation. We will consider the recommendations of the working group at the end of the year and, hopefully, some further determinations in March next year. In relation to the member's specific question, as I have said, that question should be more appropriately directed to the Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage. I will pass the question on to Jason Ardler who may have some more detail for you.

**Mr ARDLER:** I do not have the specific numbers in terms of places protected under the National Parks and Wildlife Act. However, I would inform those who may not be already aware that this year there were three very significant former children's homes protected under the New South Wales Heritage Act and recognised as being of State significance. While that is not the National Parks and Wildlife Act, it is the protection of three very significant places of Aboriginal cultural and heritage significance that have been protected this year.

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** Perhaps that question can be taken on notice, thank you. Minister, I am sure that you are aware that Mr Clayton Barr, member for Cessnock, wrote to you about the distress caused to Aboriginal groups at West Wallsend by plans for a development within 20 metres of the butterfly caves in that area. I am sure the Minister also knows that that West Wallsend site is an Aboriginal women's site. What is the Minister doing to support Aboriginal groups who are fighting to protect these culturally significant butterfly caves?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Again that question is primarily in relation to cultural heritage and that is really the responsibility of the Minister for the Environment, and Minister for Heritage. I will defer to Jason Ardler who may be able to provide more information.

**Mr ARDLER:** No, I do not have any further information on that.

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** As the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs are you not aware of this issue?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** If the member has a look at the administrative orders that were set out in March last year, which are pretty instructive to all of us in the room, the legislation that I am charged with administering is the Aboriginal Land Rights Act. Issues relating to Aboriginal heritage fall under the responsibility of Minister Parker. So the member may want to save—

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** But does not the Minister have a role as an advocate for the Aboriginal community in the Government? Is the Minister not the voice of the Aboriginal community in the Government?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** —that question for Minister Parker. I am happy to take the question on notice and ask Minister Parker for the member if she wishes.

**ANSWER:**

This question falls within the portfolio responsibilities of the Minister for the Environment and Minister for Heritage, and should be referred to the Hon Robyn Parker MP.

## **QUESTION 2 (page 14 of transcript)**

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** If I could move to the issue of food supply in Wilcannia? That was a real issue following Minister Roberts' visit and intervention there—much-publicised. We understand that the State Government has put funding into a market garden in Wilcannia. Could you tell the Committee how much money was put into this project?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** I will defer that question to Jason Ardler.

**Mr ARDLER:** As I understand it, it was funding that was provided by Fair Trading or by Aboriginal Affairs and it is my understanding that \$45,000 was provided to Centacare to do a feasibility study on the establishment of a co-op in Wilcannia.

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** Do you know that the market garden is dead? How has that happened? They are not even going to get a carrot out of it this year it seems. Funding of \$45,000 and it is not going to produce as much as a carrot.

**Mr ARDLER:** We might be speaking about different things. My understanding is that \$45,000 has been provided for a feasibility study into a co-op.

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** What has happened to the market garden that was funded?

**Mr ARDLER:** That I do not know.

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** Could you take that on notice? There is also the issue of the community project officer for Wilcannia. I understand that that position has not been filled for some time.

**Mr ARDLER:** We are in the process of recruiting that position now.

**The Hon. HELEN WESTWOOD:** How long has it been vacant?

**Mr ARDLER:** I would have to take that on notice as well. It is some months.

## **ANSWER:**

### **Market garden**

Wilcannia Local Aboriginal Land Council (LALC) advises that there is a Commonwealth funded (Community Development and Employment Project) community garden at Wilcannia.

The NSW Government has not provided funding for this project.

### **Vacant position**

In June 2012, Aboriginal Affairs allocated the salary costs of a 0.5 full-time equivalent Community Program Office position to the Maari Ma Health Aboriginal Corporation to employ a Wilcannia community member to provide secretariat support to the Wilcannia Community Working Party. A community member was employed in July 2012 with funding provided until June 2013.

**QUESTION 3 (page 18 of transcript)**

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** Are you aware of any pilot programs in the Kempsey area relating to the establishment of the cooperative initiative, which will encourage education, jobs, Aboriginal culture, farm stays and training. If so, can you update the Committee on this and what support the Government is giving to this potential pilot project or, if not, can you take it on notice?

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Thank you, there are a lot of programs out there and, to be honest—

**The Hon. PAUL GREEN:** It is left-field.

**Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO:** Yes, but I am happy to take it on notice. I may have come across it, but I see so many of them—

**ANSWER:**

The Aboriginal Christian Co-Operative Concept Plan was presented to Minister Dominello by the Hon Paul Green MLC during the Budget Estimates Hearing.

The project is not currently receiving NSW Government funding. This proposal was previously considered by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs and we have been advised it was not viable.