



The Hon Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Assistant Minister for Education

Legislative Council
Parliament of New South Wales
General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2
Budget Estimates 2014-15

Dear Secretariat

Please find attached documents relating to the Budget Estimates Committee hearing for the Portfolio of Citizenship & Communities, Veterans' Affairs & Aboriginal Affairs conducted by the General Purpose Standing Committee No. 2 on 18 August 2014.

Please find attached:

- answers to questions on notice taken during the hearing
- answers to supplementary questions provided in writing following and;
- a list of duplicate supplementary questions received

To the best of my knowledge the answers tendered here with are true and accurate statements.

Yours sincerely

Victor Dominello MP
Minister for Citizenship and Communities
Minister for Aboriginal Affairs
Minister for Veterans' Affairs
Assistant Minister for Education

10/09/2014

BUDGET ESTIMATES 2014-2015
QUESTIONS ON NOTICE TAKEN DURING THE HEARING
CITIZENSHIP AND COMMUNITIES, ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS, VETERANS' AFFAIRS

QUESTION 1 – PAGE 10 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: We note that sometime ago there was a racial attack on a Ukrainian Catholic church in Lidcombe. Do you know if the Government offered to assist that church in its repairs?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: At the time I was very vocal about that, as I am vocal about any racist attack. As I said, it is one of the great scourges of humanity. At the time we publicly condemned it but I will have to take that on notice as to whether the Government offered any assistance.

ANSWER

Following the racist attack on the Ukrainian Catholic Church in Lidcombe, the then Chair of the Community Relations Commission, Vic Alhadeff, attended the Sunday morning service at the church and offered prayer, support and counsel to Father Simon Ckuj & members of the congregation.

QUESTION 2 – PAGE 10 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: Does the Government give anything to help councils resource the removal of such attacks?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will have to take that on notice.

ANSWER

The NSW Government has a range of programs to help councils and the community combat graffiti.

These include:

- Graffiti Removal Day - enables communities all over NSW to nominate graffiti-damaged sites and be involved in their clean up.
- Volunteer Graffiti Removal Program - provide up to \$5,000 for community groups to remove graffiti from their local area (the funds are used to pay for equipment costs, such as protective clothing, trailers and paint)
- Graffiti Hotspots program - \$2.3 million was allocated to local councils over a three-year period for projects that rejuvenated public spaces that been repeatedly targeted by graffiti vandals. Many of the projects are nearing completion.
- Graffiti Removal Hotline - Anyone in NSW can report graffiti by contacting the hotline on 1800 707 125
- Detag program - teaches offenders about the impact of graffiti and encourages them to engage in more productive activities.

QUESTION 3 – PAGE 22 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Minister, did you receive clarification about how \$0.9 million just sort of disappeared?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will take that on notice.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: This is not an insignificant amount of money in what is not a large portfolio budget, is it? We are talking about \$0.9 million.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will take it on notice.

ANSWER

There has been no reduction in the State's budget commitment to Aboriginal Affairs in 2014/15.

A total of \$18.4 million in funding is allocated to support the operations of Aboriginal Affairs in 2014/15, including \$2.4 million from a total \$5.1 million allocated for the agency's work in continuing the implementation of the NSW Government's Plan for Aboriginal Affairs - OCHRE – Opportunity, Choice, Healing, Responsibility, Empowerment.

The NSW Government has committed \$5.1 million across government to implement OCHRE, including \$2.4 million from within aboriginal affairs and \$739,000 to establish an aboriginal deputy ombudsman who will monitor the delivery of OCHRE.

The investment in OCHRE has increased by \$400,000 on last year's funding, and will support the revitalisation of Aboriginal languages, support Aboriginal students to stay in school & find meaningful employment, and empower local communities to have a greater say over the programs and services available to them.

The 2014/15 budget for Aboriginal Affairs has increased \$2.1 million between 2013-14 and 2014-15.

QUESTION 4 – PAGE 23 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Do we know what areas these particular people were employed in? It is quite a significant reduction in full-time equivalent [FTE] over this period of time. Do we have any tabulation of where these people were employed or any sort of list of the areas they were employed in?

Mr ARDLER: I would have to take that question on notice.

ANSWER

The reduction in the number of employees shown in Budget Paper Number 3 between 2011-12 and 2014-15 is due to the cessation of Commonwealth funded temporary positions and the Partnership Communities Program.

QUESTION 5 – PAGE 23 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. ERNEST WONG: How long did it take to get those three accords?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: That occurred over the past six or eight months. Mr Ardler might have the details in relation to the specific dates. Otherwise I can go from memory.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Just take it on notice.

ANSWER

Mr Dominello did not agree to take this question on notice.

QUESTION 6 – PAGE 25 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Could you give me an explanation about where I am wrong in these figures: the budget figures for last year, the budget figures for this year showing a negative \$2.5 million?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: As Mr Ardler explained, there was a reduction in relation to the Council of Australian Governments [COAG] partnership moneys coming to a conclusion. There were additional funds provided - I think it was \$3.23 million ERC - to make sure that the moneys were funded for the initiatives as part of the OCHRE strategy. We will take on notice that \$0.9 million figure.

ANSWER

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QUESTION 7 – PAGE 25 OF TRANSCRIPT

Ms JAN BARHAM: Minister, I follow on with the OCHRE budgetary allocation. I note that there is \$2.4 million: \$739,000 going to the deputy ombudsman, which is very much a positive thing. As to the balance, the \$1.66 million, what specific projects or programs are allocated to that funding?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Obviously in relation to the OCHRE strategy we got the local decision-making, the opportunity hubs and the cultural languages. Again from the top of my head, I think it is about \$4.4 million of the estimates in relation to the five language nests, being the Wiradjuri, Barkindjii, Bundjalung, Gamilaraa and Gumbaynggirr language nests. I will have to get the precise details in relation to the breakup of the local decision-making and the opportunity hubs. Do you have that in front of you, Mr Ardler, in terms of those precise figures?

Mr ARDLER: We will have to take that on notice.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I can get back to you on that.

Ms JAN BARHAM: It is just a clarification of that \$2.4 million and then there is the \$4.6 million from last year, which has been reduced to \$4.4 million this year in terms of the total allocation. Could we have more clarification?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will take that on notice.

ANSWER

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QUESTION 8 – PAGE 26 OF TRANSCRIPT

Ms JAN BARHAM: I agree, and I think it is important. We have all relied on the Office of the Ombudsman to provide valuable reporting and accountability back to Parliament. That is why I have been asking for about 15 months now when are we going to get a response to the Ombudsman's report on child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities. I think I have been bounced around a bit. No-one seems to be claiming responsibility for delivering a Government response to that. I have been to you, I have been to Minister Goward, I have been to Minister Upton. I put something in Parliament the other day and got refused on formal business. This issue is unresolved; 15 months, no report. When are we going to get a response from Government to a very important report, I think with 93 recommendations to Government about protecting Aboriginal children? Are you are going to follow up for me?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will follow that up.

ANSWER

Questions relating to the Government's response to the Ombudsman's report on child sexual assault in Aboriginal communities should be directed to the Minister for Family & Community Services, The Hon. Gabrielle Upton MP.

QUESTION 9 – PAGE 27 OF TRANSCRIPT

Ms JAN BARHAM: I want to ask about the economic program for which you called submissions in relation to the economic development framework. I think the submissions closed last month. Do you know how many submissions you received?

Mr ARDLER: I would have to take that on notice, but quite a few.

ANSWER

Aboriginal Affairs commenced the first round of consultation on developing the Aboriginal Economic Development Framework with NSW Aboriginal peak bodies and NSW Government agencies in late 2013.

In June 2014, as part of the second round of consultations, Aboriginal Affairs sought the views of Aboriginal Land Councils, Local Decision Making boards, industry bodies, and Aboriginal and mainstream non-government organisations. The agency also met with Aboriginal peak bodies, including the NSW Aboriginal Land Council, to seek their advice on the Framework.

There was a total of 21 written submissions received by Aboriginal Affairs from individuals and organisations.

QUESTION 10 – PAGE 27 OF TRANSCRIPT

Ms JAN BARHAM: I am interested to follow up with Arts and Tourism to see how they are tracking in their programs. Minister, I think you know that I was successful in having my motion passed, calling for a lowering of the seniors card age for Aboriginal people.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Yes.

Ms JAN BARHAM: Have you been able to have any input into that, or are you aware of whether there has been any move to progress that? Costing done by the Council of Social Service of New South Wales [NCOSS] puts it at only \$2 million a year to provide additional access.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will take that on notice and ask Minister Ajaka in relation to that.

ANSWER

Questions relating to lowering of the seniors card age for Aboriginal people should be directed to the Minister for Ageing, The Hon. John Ajaka MLC.

QUESTION 11 – PAGE 29 OF TRANSCRIPT

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: Can I just answer Mr Donnelly's point in relation to the \$32.5 million? That was due to –

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Not an accounting error?

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: No, it was an underspend due to a number of positions being held vacant, subject to the realignment. That realignment of the agency is now taking place and it will be completed in September-October this year.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It is not my question but -

Ms JAN BARHAM: It isn't actually.

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: I am running out of time.

CHAIR: Order! The Hon. Paul Green's will now ask questions.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I said that I would take it on notice.

ANSWER

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QUESTION 12 – PAGE 29 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. PAUL GREEN: If you could take it on notice that would be great. I want to come back to something the Hon. Greg Donnelly was talking about, the \$0.9 million. Mr Peace, given that you are the Chief Financial Officer, can you add any comment to that?

Mr PEACE: I would have to take that on notice. I am not across the particular detail of the issue that has been raised. I will take it on notice.

ANSWER

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QUESTION NO 13 – PAGE 30 OF TRANSCRIPT

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: Minister, did you authorise those positions to be held vacant? Was that something that you did?

CHAIR: We have agreed to take those questions on notice, Mr Donnelly. We have now concluded the time for questions.

The Hon. GREG DONNELLY: It was just a clarification I was seeking, that is all.

Mr VICTOR DOMINELLO: I will take it on notice, Mr Donnelly.

ANSWER

No