

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Burgoyne to the Minister for Agribusiness and Aquaculture:

Support for Melon Industry Pickers – Part II

- 1. Of the \$745,000 committed to supporting the Melon Industry workforce needed between April-July 2021, only \$292,000 was spent. What happened to the remaining \$453,000?**

The \$453,000 unspent funding from this grant program was returned to the NT Government and will be used to support other territory business support programs.

- 2. You have advised that \$73,000 was spent on \$1,000 per worker relocation incentive, but there were 88 melon pickers. Why did 15 melon pickers not get included in this incentive?**

The earlier interim reporting advice provided referred to relocation incentive payments of \$1,000 per employee for 73 farm workers.

Final program funding acquittal reported \$86,000 was spent on relocation for 86 employees eligible for funding.

- 3. Who received the \$154,000 loyalty bonuses? What did they achieve to receive this bonus?**

The funding acquittal reporting advised that loyalty bonuses of \$200 per week, totaling \$141,000, were paid to 88 melon farm workers on completion of an initial continuous five weeks work at a minimum of 30 hours per week and on each full weeks work thereafter, during the grant program period 12 April to 12 July 2021.

The 88 workers filled critical workforce shortages on six melon farms in the Douglas-Daly, Katherine and Mataranka regions, supporting the Territory's \$70 million melon industry harvest and the regional economy.

- 4. What administrative officer level was the NTG staff member seconded to the Territory Harvest Program and how long were they seconded for?**

The NT Government staff member seconded for the 12 week program period is a permanent AO7 with the Department of Industry, Tourism and Trade. The officer supported the roll-out of the program and the reporting requirements.