

## Estimates Committee 2009 Questions Taken On Notice

( 16/6/2009 to 19/6/2009 )

Date: 16/06/2009 Output: 4.0 – POLICY  
COORDINATION  
Sub Output: 4.1 – Community  
and Justice Policy

Subject: Return to Country program

**From:** Mr Gerry Wood to Hon Delia Lawrie  
Justice and Attorney-General

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**Question:** 2-4  
In relation to the Return to Country program, how much money has been repaid to the service provider by those people using this program?

Mr CHAIRMAN: Minister, you are happy to take that question on notice?

Ms LAWRIE: Well, it is going to be ...

Ms MORRIS: I am not sure if we will be able to answer how much money has been repaid.

Mr WOOD: What percentage then? Perhaps would that be ...

Ms MORRIS: What percentage of people have repaid their travel debt?

Mr WOOD: Yes, that will do.

Ms LAWRIE: What percentage of people have repaid their travel debt?

Mr WOOD: Yes, cancel the previous bit.

**Answer:**

Answered On:

Answer: Return to Country providers pay up front for travel and obtain repayment of the travel costs through regular deductions from welfare benefits or other income.

In Darwin, the repayment rate is approximately 85% each year. That is, Larrakia Nation Aboriginal Corporation is reimbursed for almost 85% of the travel expenses incurred and 15% remains unpaid.

In Katherine, the repayment rate is approximately 88%.

In Alice Springs, the repayment rate is sitting at approximately 92%.

The high repayment rate in Alice Springs can be attributed largely to a service level agreement negotiated between Centrelink and Tangentyere Council. The Department is working with the other Return to Country providers and with Centrelink to put in place similar agreements in other areas.