

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mr Higgins to the Minister for Primary Industry and Resources:

**Department of Primary Industry and Resources Annual Report**

- 1. Regarding page 26 of the Annual Report, please explain why the percentage of 'extractive mineral permits granted within 11 months' was targeted at 85% in the 18/19 Budget, but only 20% was achieved in Financial Year 2018/19.**

The 2018/19 figures represent the first full year of KPI reporting and are impacted by the low number of extractive mineral permits, total of 12, granted during that period. The grant times ranged from 62.31 months to 9.40 months and are influenced by many factors, many of which are outside of the Agency's control. These include:

- Comments required to be obtained from other government agencies.
- Environmental considerations in relation to endangered flora and fauna.
- Objections lodged by landowners and interested members of the public.
- Landowners refusing access to allow a title area to be pegged.
- Applicant requesting extensions of time to peg title or notify landowners.

- 2. Regarding page 63 of the Annual Report, please explain why the amount paid on 'consultants' has increased from \$1,580,000 in 2018, to \$3,584,000 in 2019.**

The increase in consultant expenses was primarily due to Commonwealth funded national partnership agreement relating to the rehabilitation of the former Rum Jungle mine site and national biosecurity responses (Citrus Canker / Browsing Ant).

A \$1.65 million increase to previous year was spent undertaking rehabilitation works at Rum Jungle. Additionally in 2018/19 the Agency spent approximately \$0.353 million to develop the NT Petroleum Codes of Practice to implement the regulatory framework on onshore gas exploration and contributed \$0.13 million towards a joint agency consultancy on gas optimisation.

Other expenses were once off initiatives occurring in 2017/18 only, or decreases in expenses to the following year, such as bush food forums, application support for information technology systems, and McArthur River Mines independent monitoring.

- 3. Similarly on page 63 of the Annual Report, please explain why the amount paid in 'legal expenses' has increased from \$113,000 in 2018 to \$267,000 in 2019.**

The increase in legal expenses was primarily in relation to a \$110,000 settlement liability to pay the plaintiff costs as a result of a judgement in their favour.

Other expenditure incurred included legal advice regarding onshore shale gas development legislation reform, applications under the *Petroleum Act*, *Mineral Titles Act*, advice on legislation *Agricultural and Veterinary Chemicals (Control of Use) Act 2004*, and animal welfare prosecutions.