

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Ms J Carney

to Minister for Justice and Attorney-General

Outstanding debtors

1. Is there an outstanding debt owed to your department by the former member for Macdonnell, Mr Neil Bell?
2. If so, can you confirm that the outstanding amount is \$38,617.68 or an amount thereabouts?
3. If this debt is still outstanding, why has this debt not been pursued in like manner to all other outstanding debtors owing money to your department?

ANSWER

On 25 November 2005, the then Attorney-General, Dr Peter Toyne, announced that the Government had decided to waive its \$35,000 legal costs from the former Member for Macdonnell, Mr Neill Bell. The costs were incurred by Mr Bell in a defamation action by former CLP Minister Mr Fred Finch against Mr Bell.

Mr Bell is still liable for the \$5,000 defamation awarded to Mr Finch.

At the same time, Dr Toyne announced the Government would use part of the \$500,000 recovered from NAALAS in the *NAALAS-v-Bradley and the Northern Territory* matter, to reimburse former Opposition Leader, Mr Denis Burke, the \$43,000 awarded against him in his contempt of court case.

The Government made these decisions based on advice from the Solicitor for the Northern Territory.