

**LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY**

**WRITTEN QUESTION**

Mrs Finocchiaro to the Minister for Trade, Business and Innovation:

**Annual Report – Department of Trade Business and Innovation**

1. The 16/17 Report states over \$452m in Economic Stimulus Grants were processed. Please provide evidence to support this claim.
2. Small Business Champions undertook 2000 'business snapshots' in 16/17. How does this compare with FY 15/16?
3. Please provide additional information at the Fraud Control Plan as listed on p15 of the Annual Report.
4. What is the end date for the Home Renovation Grant?
5. With respect to 'Room to Breathe', please give a specific example of a 'tailored program' to build capacity amongst Aboriginal Territorians.
6. When will the 'Strategic Framework for Bringing Back the Arafura Games' be made public?
7. Please explain how DTBI supported "project proponents to present information to the NAIF about their projects"?
8. What were the outcomes of the \$100,000 pilot grant program to encourage international students to experience life as a Territorian?
9. What is the timeframe around the refresh of the NT Government Strategic Defence Strategy?
10. In August 2016 the luxury hotel development was \$250m, the Annual Report lists the value of the luxury hotel development as being \$200m. Please explain the discrepancy.
11. Please explain the FTE decrease from 358 in 15/16 to 236 in 16/17 and advise what if any programs are no longer undertaken and why?
12. How many DTBI staff participated in 'The Emotionally Intelligent Communicator'?
13. For an individual or company to receive an Indigenous Business Development Program grant what qualifies as 'significant equity'?

14. Why did Civil Construction Federation SA receive \$176,320 in INDUSTRY Buildskills funding in 16/17?
  15. What due diligence was done prior to awarding 'Equatorial Launch Australia' \$50,000 under the Regional Economic Development Fund?
  16. How many Small Business Champions were there across the Territory at 30 June 2017?
  17. How many Small Business Champions were there across the Territory as at 27 August 2016?
  18. How many Small Business Champions were there in Katherine, and Tennant Creek as at 30 June 2017?
  19. How many business snapshots were conducted in Financial Year 2016/17 versus Financial Year 215/16?
  20. How many Small Business officers were there in Katherine for Financial Year 16/17?
  21. How many Small Business officers were there in Wadeye for Financial Year 16/17?
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## **ANSWER**

1. The actual amount of Economic Stimulus Grants reported in the Annual Report is over \$52 million paid out under the Immediate Work Grant, the Home Improvement Schemes and the 1<sup>st</sup> Homebuyer Home Renovation Grant, as outlined below:

"Over \$52 million in Economic Stimulus Grants were processed with an estimated stimulus impact on the Territory economy of more than \$200 million" (refer to page 10 of the Annual Report).

"As at 30 June 2017, the total value of economic stimulus grants paid out was over \$52 million consisting of:

- \$19.3 million in Immediate Work Grants to fund improvements, repairs and maintenance to not-for-profit and community organisations' service facilities and premises
- \$30.2 million in Home Improvement Scheme (HIS) vouchers
  - \$12.3 million for the first round HIS which closed in 2016
  - \$17.9 million for the second round HIS which closed in 2017
- \$3.1 million in the Home Renovation Grants directed at first homebuyers of an existing property" (refer to page 24 of the Annual Report).

2. 'Business snapshots' is a form of reporting undertaken via an engagement questionnaire between businesses and Small Business Champions. This was not undertaken in the 2015-16 financial year.  
Following the roll out of the Customer Relationship Management system in August 2016, 'business snapshots' was a new initiative implemented from the system.
3. The Fraud Control Plan includes the fraud risks to the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation (DTBI) and controls that are in place to manage the likelihood and impact of the risk.  
DTBI implements a range of strategies to manage its fraud risks and ensures the controls are adequate by including them in internal audits completed as part of its Internal Audit Plan. The Internal Audit Plan, and the implementation of recommendations made from internal audits, are monitored by the Risk Management and Audit Committee and are reported to the Chief Executive Officer of DTBI.
4. The end date for the Home Renovation Grant is 30 September 2018.
5. DTBI has placed an out-posted officer to work directly with the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) and various stakeholders to facilitate tailored programs that will support the continued development of Aboriginal business enterprises to benefit from the Room to Breathe and other DHCD initiatives through expanded business and workforce capability.

An example is the tailored support DTBI provided Yagbani Aboriginal Corporation (YAC) through accessing both the Aboriginal Business Development Program (ABDP) and Tender Solutions program. This enabled the YAC to develop a strategic business plan and improve their capability to write competitive tenders and achieve their CAL accreditation. This 'tailored program' achieved outcomes that has improved the YAC's competitiveness in relation to construction opportunities, including but not limited to 'Room to Breathe'.

6. The Strategic Framework was an internal document for consideration by the Northern Territory Government and is not for public release.

The Northern Territory Government has announced that the Arafura Games will be held from 27 April 2019 to 4 May 2019, and it is intended that the following sports competitions will be included: athletics, table tennis, boxing, football, badminton, swimming, archery, tennis, muay thai, sailing, volleyball, weightlifting, basketball, hockey and netball.

Dragon Boating and Sepak Takraw have been designated as exhibition sports.

Sporting organisations that expressed interest in their sport being part of the Arafura Games, via the Arafura Games public consultation process, have been advised of their success or otherwise.

The Department of Tourism and Culture, supported by DTBI, is currently in the process of resourcing and planning for the return of the Arafura Games. Further advice will be provided about the process in early 2018.

7. DTBI actively promoted the Northern Australia Investment Forum (NAIF) to project proponents who may have been eligible for funding.

DTBI hosted several information and networking functions facilitating interaction between the NAIF Board and executives, and NT industry.

DTBI spoke with project proponents interested in submitting NAIF applications about the type of information that could be included. On occasion this included providing feedback on proponents' draft applications.

DTBI maintains regular communication with NAIF and ensures it is aware of potential projects in the NT which may be eligible under the Facility.

8. The \$100 000 pilot International Student Wellbeing Grant Program will be launched in December 2017.

The main objectives are to enhance international student wellbeing and encourage international students to experience life as a Territorian. More information is available at [StudyNT.nt.gov.au](http://StudyNT.nt.gov.au)

9. It is expected the Northern Territory Government will consider the draft Strategic Defence Strategy documents in the first quarter of 2018 with public release to follow.

10. To assist the evaluation panel in assessing proposals submitted for the Darwin Luxury Hotel Development, the NT Government undertook a high-level review of construction costs submitted by each of the proponents. The quantity surveyor's assessment indicated estimated costs in the vicinity of \$250 million. This estimate was noted to be preliminary in nature and a guide only.

At the time that the project was initially announced in August 2016, figures stated in media coverage were based on this estimate.

Landbridge subsequently advised that its cost estimate is closer to \$200 million than \$250 million. This project specific figure of \$200 million has been used by the Northern Territory Government in all subsequent communications.

11. 141.6 FTE moved out with the Machinery of Government changes and DTBI gained around 32.9 FTE

- divisions/units transferring out of the Department of Business were NT WorkSafe, Red Tape Abolition Squad, Licensing NT and Alcohol Policy
- divisions/units transferring into the new Department of Trade, Business and Innovation were Northern Australia Development Office, Central Australia Development Office, StudyNT, Defence NT and Strategic Infrastructure and Projects.

12. Two DTBI staff attend the course. DTBI's Annual Report did not provide figures but listed this course under 'other' training attended by staff.

13. Significant equity refers to the ownership of the business entity to ensure it is at least 50% or more Aboriginal-owned and operated. Below is the relevant extract from the program guidelines.

*The Program is for Aboriginal(s) and joint ventures where Aboriginal Territorians hold significant equity.*

- *applicant(s) must be an Aboriginal resident of the Northern Territory*

*Aboriginal is defined as:*

- *being of Australian Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent*
- *having previously and consistently in day-to-day life been known to be and/or identified as an Australian Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander*
- *being accepted as an Australian Aboriginal and /or Torres Strait Islander in the community in which they live or have lived*
- *businesses must be at least 50% Aboriginal-owned and operated, and based and registered in the Northern Territory*
- *Aboriginal corporations must be registered under the Corporations Act 2001 or 2006 or Corporations (Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander) Regulations 2007 (CASTI)*
- *Aboriginal associations must be incorporated under Northern Territory Associations Act*
- *a combination of the above Aboriginal entities where there is a joint venture arrangement with non-Aboriginal partners who are able to demonstrate due diligence*
- *evidence of financial contributions is required by either being self-funded, from government agencies or joint venture partners*
- *has all necessary approvals, licences, endorsements required to carry out the business activity*

14. Civil Construction Federation NT (CCF NT), on behalf of its NT business membership, sought funding for skills development of employed Territorians. The training assisted NT businesses to maintain an appropriately skilled workforce in civil construction and allied industries to ensure they operate safely and competently in accordance with Work Health and Safety legislation and industry standards.

The training was delivered through CCF NT's counterpart Civil Construction Federation South Australia's Registered Training Organisation, Civil Train. This training operates in the NT and included workplace health and safety, plant and equipment operations and high risk licensing.

15. Significant due diligence was conducted by the NT Government prior to supporting the activities of Equatorial Launch Australia and the Gumatj Corporation Ltd to progress development of the proposed space centre in Arnhemland, including:

- undertaking referee checks for the proponent
- seeking independent advice from experts in the space industry on the merits of the proposal.

16. As at 30 June 2017, there were 24 Small Business Champions across the NT.

17. As at 27 August 2016, there were 24 Small Business Champions across the NT.

Small Business Champions were formally known as Business Development Officers. This rebrand was part of the new Government's commitment to provide advice and support to small businesses in the Northern Territory.

18. As at 30 June 2017, there were three Small Business Champions in Katherine and one in Tennant Creek.

19. In 2016-17, 55 labour market and economic fact sheets were issued compared to 46 fact sheets in 2015-16, as outlined on page 49 of DTBI Annual Report 2016-17.

All labour market and economic fact sheets relate to business conditions in the Northern Territory and comparative data with other Australian jurisdictions. Some examples are:

- NT Business Confidence Report (four quarterly reports)
- Business Count Snapshot (annual)
- Business Count Infographic (annual)
- Economic QuickFacts – State of the NT Economy (four quarterly reports)
- Key Business Statistics (12 monthly issues).

20. There were three Small Business Champions in Katherine for the 2016-17 financial year.

21. The Wadeye area has been serviced by a Senior Small Business Champion on a monthly rotation. During this period, 11 trips of three days in duration were undertaken.