

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Higgins to the Chief Minister:

Annual Report – Department of the Chief Minister

1. Reference is made throughout the report to the local decision making agenda as a future priority. Please advise the details of the local decision making agenda that has been developed and provide a copy of the implementation plan.
2. There is no mention in the report of Statehood. Can you please advise what specific staff are devoted to Statehood and will you provide a copy of the implementation plan to achieve Statehood for the Northern Territory?
3. The report does not break down staffing numbers to business unit. However, given that the number of staff in the Office of the Leader of the Opposition are less than the previous Opposition, please explain why the total number of Ministerial staff has increased and with what outcome?
4. In relation to the question above, are there any union staff employed by Ministers and if so how many?
5. Why have the number of staff employed in Tennant Creek been reduced and is it correct that this is from 6 to 3, a reduction of 50%? What impact has this had on the Barkly Region programs? What programs will not be delivered as a result of this reduction?
6. The Legislative Assembly agreed to adopt a whole of Parliament approach to growing the population in August 2017. Would you please advise how you propose to engage with the Members of the Legislative Assembly to develop the population plan? Do you propose to bring this to the Parliament for debate and if so when?
7. Please provide the details of the one off executive terminations as a result of the change of government expenses.
8. What are the specific outcomes of the SA-NT Strategic Partnership that directly benefit Territorians in relation to:
 - New infrastructure
 - New investment
 - Increased leisure visitors and expenditure
 - Environmental conservation
 - Development of the arts
 - Improvements in the delivery of cross border services

9. What are the specific details of the key intergovernmental agreements achieved?
 10. With respect to the 'have your say' website, how many initiatives were posted and how many submissions were received? Will you make all of these available?
 11. How many meetings of the First Circles Engagement group were held during the year and what were the specific outcomes of this program?
 12. A key achievement of the Barkly Regional Office was the continued support of the Tennant Creek and Mount Isa Cross-Border Alliance. Please advise what the Mount Isa Cross-Border Alliance specifically achieved during the year?
 13. Can you please advise the specific financial commitment to support the creation of a railway spur line to QLD?
 14. Please provide a copy of the due diligence that was undertaken on Equatorial Launch Australia who are the proponents of the DEAL aerospace development initiative in the East Arnhem Region? What funding has been provided to this organisation by the NTG?
 15. What was the outcome of advocacy, listed as an achievement of the Central Australia Regional Office, for the development of a senior's village in Alice Springs?
 16. There is no mention of the Community Champions program in the report. Please advise whether the vacant positions on the program have been filled and what specific outcomes were achieved for each of the 13 community champions?
 17. What are the agreed performance success measures with the four NT Land Councils and please specify the outcomes achieved against these measures?
 18. Can you please advise the additional cost as a result of the extensions of the Royal Commission into the Protection and detention of Children in the Northern Territory?
 19. Can you please advise the additional cost as a result of the extensions of the Hydraulic Fracturing Inquiry above the estimated \$3 million?
 20. It is noted that during 2014-15 and 2015-16, 54 and 38 Freedom of Information requests respectively, were received under the *Information Act*. Can you please advise how many of these were submitted by the then Labor Opposition?
 21. Please advise the names of the Members of the Indigenous Sub Committee of Cabinet, the selection criteria and process for these appointments and when the appointments were made.
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ANSWER:

1. Local Decision Making is a key election commitment that is a 10 year plan to transfer power back to Aboriginal communities wherever possible. This will ensure that Aboriginal people are making decisions on the issues that impact on them, which is based on the principle that Aboriginal empowerment and decision making will provide better solutions going forward.

Government will work in partnership with Aboriginal representative organisations and Aboriginal people to co-design 'place-based' plans through formal agreements related to government service delivery. We will continue the good work currently being done by government agencies and Aboriginal organisations. Based on community aspirations, Local Decision Making will see the transition of effective control of government service delivery to Aboriginal organisations.

A framework and implementation plan is currently under development for approval by Government in early 2018.

2. The Department of the Chief Minister's Federal Policy and Strategic Coordination Division, comprising 11 FTE staff as at 30 June 2017, provides overarching policy advice in relation to Statehood to the Chief Minister and the Assistant Minister for Statehood, Ms Selena Uibo MLA.

The NT Government supports Statehood and has recently expressed to the Commonwealth Government that the Northern Territory should have the right to make its own laws without the risk of Federal intervention, including assisted dying legislation. However, Statehood cannot progress without the support of Territorians and the Commonwealth Government, and it must be informed by genuine community engagement, when the time is right.

3. This figure includes Departmental Liaison Officers (DLOs). Ministerial staff support their Minister in the execution of their duties.
4. No. All staff except for DLOs are employed on ministerial contracts.
5. There were a maximum of five staff for a short period, one Regional Development Officer was transferred to Nhulunbuy and the Economic Development Officer position was transferred to the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation but remains in Tennant Creek. The impact on program delivery is minimal.
6. The Government's population plan includes:
 - Creating more jobs through a record infrastructure investment and increasing the buy local program across all stages of procurement.
 - Marketing the Territory through Team NT.
 - Putting downward pressure on the cost of living through first homebuyer support, keeping power prices rises to CPI and concessions for seniors and families.
 - Revitalising our towns and cities.
 - Ensuring population policy is based on research and data.

Additional measures to increase population are currently being considered and the government will consider any ideas put forward and welcomes a debate in parliament about this important policy area.

7. John Coleman (September 2016); William Freeland (October 2016) (NT EPA); Stephen Menschely (October 2016); and Mike Chiodo (March 2017).
8. The South Australia / Northern Territory Strategic Partnership Agreement was signed in May 2017 and promises to deliver long lasting economic, social and environmental benefits for the Territory. The Strategic Partnership builds on the previous SA-NT Memorandum of Understanding (2015-2017).

The Strategic Partnership extends traditional inter-jurisdictional relations through an innovative and dynamic approach to cooperative federalism that targets shared objectives between State and Territory borders.

The five strategic priorities of the Strategic Partnership, agreed by both Governments, are:

1. connecting our people and our economies;
2. one road to Asia;
3. the heart of Australia as an iconic destination;
4. strong, smart and healthy children; and
5. a focus on people.

Outcomes achieved under the 2015-17 MoU include:

- Co-location of SA Police intelligence officers in Alice Springs with the NT Police Cross Border team – acting on illicit drugs, transit routes, road safety, alcohol, and family and domestic violence.
 - A new decoupling facility for road trains at the Yorkey's Crossing Road, increasing productivity and supply chain routes for the primary sector industry.
 - Joint Trade Mission with South Australian delegates to China 7-15 May 2017.
 - Joint tourism investment and collaboration - marketing the 'Ghan Expedition', revitalisation of the iconic 'Explorer's Way' driving experience, and expansion of the World Solar Car Challenge.
 - Collective advocacy at the national level on policy priorities including Horizontal Fiscal Equalisation, renewable energy and climate change, early childhood reform and the National Disability Insurance Scheme.
 - Jointly funding \$150 000 to the NPY Women's Council to build male community leaders and promote healthy respectful relationships.
9. Key Intergovernmental Agreements the Department of the Chief Minister facilitated negotiation and signing of in 2016-17 include:
 - Addendum to the National Healthcare Reform Agreement 2017-18 to 2019-20, \$1.065 billion¹ (plus up to a maximum of \$15 million per year should the annual growth in the Northern Territory's entitlements under the Agreement exceed the Commonwealth's funding cap of 6.5% per annum).

¹ Commonwealth 2017-18 Budget Paper No. 3, Page 15.

- Intergovernmental Agreement on Competition and Productivity-Enhancing Reforms (no specified funding).
- Project Agreement for the Women's Safety Package Technology Trials 2016-17 to 2019-20, \$425 289.
- National Partnership Agreement on Specified Projects: Schedule C OzFoodNet Program 2016-17 to 2019-20, \$596 000.
- National Partnership Agreement on Legal Assistance Services Variation 2015-2020, supplementary funding of \$1.416 million for community legal centres in the Northern Territory.
- National Partnership Agreement for the National Water Infrastructure Development Fund – Capital Component, \$440 million national pool.
- Transitional National Partnership Agreement on Homelessness 2017-18, \$10.84 million (including NT Government \$5.42 million co-contribution).

10. Nine initiatives were posted on the 'have your say' website and 3789 submissions were received.

Please contact each relevant Ministerial Office regarding the release of submissions.

11. Two meetings of the First Circles Program was held in 2017 under a revised framework.

12. With the ongoing support from the Department of the Chief Minister, the Tennant Creek Mount Isa Alliance has formalised its links into the Tennant Creek-Mount Isa Commission with representatives from both localities. These include local business leaders and local government elected members and staff. A Tennant Creek contingent travelled to Mt Isa on 4, 5 and 6 December 2017 to hold discussions on strengthening their relationship. Talks included the construction of the gas pipeline from Tennant Creek to Mt Isa and possible rail links into the future, as well as cross border mining exploration. The trip was viewed as a major success.

Jemena update.

- 403km pipeline completed, 261km in the Northern Territory.
- Construction of compressor stations started.
- Tennant Creek Social Employment Project, giving 10 people (nine Aboriginal) opportunity to work on the NGP.
- Project Ready Training Program (PRTP) provided to 45 local people with job offers to all graduates.
- 14 local training opportunities through Spinifex program.
- Two young local men offered 12 month health and safety traineeships.
- 428 project jobs provided to Barkly, Northern Territory and Mt Isa regions.
- Local businesses awarded 206 contracts.
- \$60 000 provided to enable businesses to increase capacity.
- Roll out of the Sponsorship program, providing financial and in kind support to a range of local organisations.

13. The following answer was provided by the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation.

The Australian, Queensland and NT Governments jointly funded preliminary investigations into the Mount Isa to Tennant Creek railway through two work streams:

- a Strategic Options Paper (up to \$1 million, NT contribution of \$250 000) that will consider options to advance the railway, and
- a Technical Assessment Program (up to \$1.2 million, NT contribution of \$100 000) to investigate and address engineering and environmental issues with developing the railway and establish a cost envelope for construction.

In September 2016, following a competitive tender process, Advisian was selected as the successful consultant to prepare the Strategic Options Paper.

Findings of the Strategic Options Paper are being considered by the respective governments and will inform the next steps to progress the Mount Isa to Tennant Creek Railway.

The Northern Territory Government has not yet made a specific financial commitment to the construction cost of the railway.

14. Significant due diligence was conducted by the NT Government and Developing East Arnhem Limited prior to supporting the activities of Equatorial Launch Australia (ELA) and the Gumatj Corporation to progress the development of the proposed Space Centre in Arnhemland. This included:

- undertaking referee checks for the proponent;
- seeking independent advice from experts in the space industry on the merits of the proposal;
- analysis of the project delivery methodology; and
- engagement with the Commonwealth Civil Space office and other relevant agencies.

\$250 000 of funding, approved by the former Government on 31 July 2016, was drawn from a range of NT Government programs and provided to Developing East Arnhem Limited via a grant on 11 August 2016, on a matched funding basis, to support the funding of both ELA and Gumatj project milestones including:

- the development and implementation of a multi-party Project Facilitation Agreement and project delivery cooperative group;
- direct Traditional Owner engagement on the proposal;
- development of an approach to address Commonwealth and Northern Territory regulatory processes and approvals;
- land tenure approvals through the Northern Land Council; and
- infrastructure planning and works.

15. The outcome was that the project is now being undertaken by the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation as a facilitated project with land negotiations underway and subject to approvals should be released to the market in the first half of 2018.

16. There is no Community Champions program.

Feedback from across the Northern Territory indicated that many communities felt excluded from the Community Champion Program and that a few communities were progressed at the expense of others.

The Government's Local Decision Making policy provides opportunity to all communities over a 10 year timeframe to empower local people making decisions in their local regions, with a focus on enabling communities to have stronger social and economic development opportunities.

The Community Champions Program has been refocused to support all remote Aboriginal communities in a range of programs, with an emphasis on supporting Local Decision Making.

17. DCM does not have agreed performance measures with the four NT Land Councils.

18. Estimate of around \$16 million for the NT Government to participate in the Royal Commission.

19. The entire cost of the Inquiry will be determined when the Inquiry's Final report is handed to the Government in March 2018.

20. 2014-15 – 24 (54 FOI) and 2015-16 – 20 (38 FOI).

21. The Aboriginal Affairs Sub-Committee of Cabinet membership includes:

- Chief Minister and Minister for Aboriginal Affairs – Hon Michael Gunner MLA (Co-Chair);
- Assistant Minister for Aboriginal Affairs – Selena Uiibo MLA (Co-Chair);
- Assistant Minister for Aboriginal Affairs – Chansey Paech MLA;
- Member for Arnhem – Lawrence Costa MLA;
- Member for Karama – Ngaree Ah Kit MLA;
- Member for Johnston – Hon Ken Vowles MLA;
- Member for Barkly – Hon Gerry McCarthy MLA; and
- Member for Stuart – Scott McConnell MLA.

Independent Advisors membership:

- Mr M Rioli (recently deceased), Tiwi Islands;
- Mr Timmy 'Djawa' Burarrwanga, East Arnhem;
- Dr Josie Douglas, Alice Springs;
- Mr Norbert Patrick, Lajamanu;
- Mr Matthew Ryan, Maningrida;
- Ms Valda Shannon, Tennant Creek;
- Mr Tobias Nganbe, Wadeye; and
- Ms Andrea Andrews, Katherine.

The Sub-Committee representation is inclusive of a balance of gender, age and locality for north, south, urban and remote areas and representation is as Aboriginal Territorians