



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

REPORT

TUESDAY	12 JUNE 2012
WEDNESDAY	13 JUNE 2012
THURSDAY	14 JUNE 2012
TUESDAY	19 JUNE 2012
WEDNESDAY	20 JUNE 2012

The Estimates Committee examined the estimates of proposed expenditure contained in the Appropriation Bill 2012-2013.

Questions were raised by some Members on the following issues:

PORTFOLIO	ISSUES
Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Management of Government debt.• Goods and Services Tax revenue.• Own source revenue.• Non-financial public sector debts.• Public sector efficiency.
Business and Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Workforce Growth – Education and Training for NT workers.• Procurement Processes – contracts for local businesses.• Asset Management System payments.
Major Projects & Economic Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marine supply base.• Development of Waterfront Precinct.
Police, Fire and Emergency Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Police and fire services staff numbers.• Crime issues in Alice Springs – especially young people on streets at night.• Alcohol related crime.• Eligibility to hold an Ochre Card and system for revoking cards.• Benefits close circuit television cameras.

PORTFOLIO	ISSUES
Education and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with essential utilities – in particular electricity and repairs and maintenance. • Design and upgrades of schools to improve energy efficiency. • Staffing levels in schools. • Staff housing in regional and remote areas. • Staff inductions for remote teachers. • Encouraging more males into the teaching profession. • Encouraging more Territorians to take up teaching positions in remote locations. • Re-engaging children in schools. • Assistance to Essington School. • National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy scores and school improvement program in literacy and numeracy. • Special education facilities in Palmerston and funding for students with disabilities. • Effectiveness of the Middle School model. • Behavioural issues in schools. • Fundraising capacity of schools.
Public and Affordable Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public housing stock • Contract payments through Asset Management System • Availability of public housing. • Indigenous housing. • Strategic Indigenous Housing & Infrastructure Program
Local Government and Regional Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asset Management System. • Northern Territory Jobs Package and transition of Community Development Employment Program positions to real jobs. • Municipal Rubbish Tips. • Removal of asbestos in remote communities. • Animal management programs in remote communities. • Sustainability of Shires • Local Government Association’s role in Governance Training.

PORTFOLIO	ISSUES
Local Government and Regional Development - continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional economic development. • Indigenous business development.
Indigenous Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of the carbon tax on the provision of Indigenous essential services.
Tourism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declining budget support of NT Tourism.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power generation for Darwin Hospital. • Costs of staff travel. • Cost of land tenure for facilities on Aboriginal land. • Magnetic Resonance Imaging Equipment. • Palmerston Hospital Services - in particular maternity services. • Audit processes for Non Government Organisation health providers – in particular Central Aboriginal Congress. • Implementation of recommendations from Inquiry into Youth Suicide.
Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costs associated with recruitment of Child Protection workers from the UK. • Staffing - retention rates and additional staff recruited over the past 12 months. • Increases in executive positions within the department.
Children & Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Non Government Organisation funding • Extension of Non Government Organisation contracts to provide family support services beyond 30 June 2012. • Increases in Executive Officer positions over the past 12 months.
Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Moratoriums and exploration re sea bed mining. • Mine management plans. • Mining Limmen National Park
Parks and Wildlife	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crocodile management plans. • Camel management plans. • Damage to natural habitat from bush fires in Central Australia.
Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weed management plans – in particular Mimosa and Salvinia.

PORTFOLIO	ISSUES
Natural Resources, Environment and Heritage - continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beach water pollution and water quality in Darwin harbour. • Review of Water Act re definitions of natural waterways and lagoons. • Water licences. • Funding for environment groups. • Cash for Containers Program
Lands and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Land Valuations • Access and associated costs re archived files. • Relocation of staff to Parap office. • Completion of town plans and township leases for Growth Towns. • Development and maintenance of land planning data sets. • Short term accommodation workers village in Howard Springs. • Release of industrial land in Humpty Doo. • Use of ex Royal Australian Air Force base houses. • Release of land for residential and Industrial purposes.
Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public transport services. • Mandorah Ferry Contract. • Taxi licences. • Motor Vehicle Registry wait times. • Number of licences returned to Motor Vehicle Registry following introduction of Banned Drinkers Register • Heavy vehicle movements during peak periods – around schools for example. • Condition of Gunn Point Rd. • Tiger Brennan Drive extension.
Justice and Attorney-General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation training courses. • Costs of legal advice and demand for legal services. • Debt recovery of fines. • Funding for Victims of Crimes. • Property forfeitures and disposal of assets. • Jabiru township native title claim. • Increase in projections of cases going to the Supreme Court. • Budgetary allocation for higher courts..

PORTFOLIO	ISSUES
Justice and Attorney-General - continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remuneration for Judges and Magistrates. • Upgrades of lower courts and development of youth court and holding cells. • Circuit courts activity • Implementation of Youth Suicide Inquiry recommendations re suicide register and grief counsellors for coroner's office • Community courts in Aboriginal communities. • Community Justice Centre presentations. • Customer satisfaction surveys. • Fines recovery rates. • Reasons for increases in consumer affairs enquiries. • Investigative powers of Consumer Affairs Commissioner. • Anti Discrimination Commissioner - complaints. • Information Commissioner - freedom of information. • Registrar-General – timeframe for registration of titles and complaints. • Key performance indicators for policy advice and ministerial briefings. • Purpose of interagency tasking coordination groups. • Review of Bills. • Acquittal and auditing process for community justice grants. • Notice provided to Non Government Organisations re funding renewals. • Implementation of Youth Justice Unit. • Asbestos Removal

Michael Gunner MLA

CHAIR