

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Gary Higgins MLA, Leader of the Opposition to the Treasurer

Interim Report – A Plan for Budget Repair

1. In a media release dated 26 October 2018 the Government stated that “the Government will work with independent experts Mr John Langoulant and Ms Helen Silver to examine fiscal and productivity reforms that will help improve the budget position.” Please outline the specific actions involved and the outcomes of this engagement.
2. How are the independent experts remunerated for their examination of fiscal and productivity reforms and at what cost?
3. What are the terms of reference for the engagement of Mr Langoulant and Ms Silver?
4. What is the timeframe for their engagement?
5. On December 14 2018, the ‘Plan for Budget Repair – Interim Report’ was released to the public. Notably the names of the external experts Ms Silver and Mr Langoulant were not on the report. Why was this so?
6. Why has there been no public comment from the independent experts referenced above on the Interim Report ‘Plan for Budget Repair’?
7. What role did Mr Langoulant and Ms Silver have in preparing the ‘Plan for Budget Repair’ document?
8. When will the final report and Plan for Budget Repair be released? What role do Mr Langoulant and Ms Silver have in this examination and reporting to government?

ANSWERS

QUESTION 1:

The Government commissioned a Fiscal Strategy Panel, with Mr John Langoulant as Chair and Ms Helen Silver, Ms Jodie Ryan and Mr Craig Graham as panel members. The scope of work includes two parts:

Part 1: Provide an assessment of the Territory Government’s fiscal strategy and proposed overarching reform framework, and identify reform opportunities

Part 2: Deliver a prioritised action plan to return the Territory Budget to balance over the medium term

Consistent with Part 1 of the scope of work, the interim report was released publicly on 14 December 2018. Work continues towards delivering Part 2 requirements.

QUESTION 2:

Sitting fees for the external members, Mr Langoulant and Ms Silver, are aligned with the determination made under the *Assembly Members and Statutory Officers (Remuneration and Other Entitlements) Act – Statutory Bodies Classification Structure*; specifically for the Class CI Advisor and Review Bodies – Critical Issues category

(https://dcm.nt.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/440087/list-ntg-statutory-bodies-by-classification.pdf)

The daily rate for the chair is \$959, and \$719 for the other external member. Also in accordance with the determination of remuneration and entitlements, the external panel members are entitled to travel allowance at the public sector rate (except if paid by any other body for the same period), and reimbursement of any other reasonable expenses. Travel fares and accommodation are paid directly to service providers by the Department of Treasury and Finance.

QUESTION 3:

Refer to answer to Questions 1 and 2.

QUESTION 4:

The Fiscal Strategy Panel is established by Government. The Panel's Final Report is to be provided to Government in March 2019. The Panel may be retained beyond this time period at the discretion of Government.

QUESTION 5:

The information was not included initially as the Interim Report provided projections and potential repair measures as the basis for stakeholder consultation. Notwithstanding this, the Treasurer's Media Release on 26 October 2018 named Mr Langoulant and Ms Silver as independent experts.

The Final Report will incorporate the Terms of Reference for the Fiscal Strategy Panel, including details of the membership of the Panel.

QUESTION 6:

On 16 January 2019, the Fiscal Strategy Panel Chair, Mr Langoulant, made public comments on the Interim Report. Consultations are ongoing until 25 February 2019.

QUESTION 7:

Refer to answer to Question 1.

QUESTION 8:

The Final Report is scheduled to be provided to Government in March 2019, and will be released once Government has taken time to consider the report and make decisions on its response.

Mr Langoulant is Chair and Ms Silver is a member of the Panel preparing the final report to Government, in accordance with their engagement and the Terms of Reference for the Panel.