

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Higgins for the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Community Development:

LGHCD Department Workforce Issues

- 1. Which 10 positions (FTE) are being lost under the whole of government efficiencies identified by the Department to save \$5.7m (root and branch, p2)?**

The \$5.7 million is not directly related to the 10 positions being saved. The 10 positions are the workforce sustainability savings as queried in question number two.

The Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development is currently identifying positions that will not impact on the delivery of frontline services.

- 2. In BP3 p141, \$1m in savings is identified through “workforce sustainability savings” – please provide some detail on precisely what that means.**

This is addressed as part of the response to question number one.

- 3. How many executive contract officers are in the Department? How many have been cut and from what areas?**

As at 30 June 2019, there were 27 Executive Contract Officers within the Department of Local Government, Housing and Community Development. Since 30 June 2019, however, there has been two resignations and the Department now has a total of 25.

- 4. From the answers to the Global Questions, it appears there are 83 additional FTEs including three more ECO2s, five more SAO1s and four more AO7s for the timeframe compared to the same timeframe from last year. Please explain the staffing increase.**

The Department's Full Time Equivalent (FTE) has increased by 83.04 since 31 March 2018. Some of the reasons for this increase are as follows:

- additional 20 FTE for the Remote Housing Investment Package. The Department continues to build the capacity to meet the requirements of this substantial Government initiative to improve the lives of remote Territorians;
- additional temporary FTE for the \$100 million Public Housing Stimulus Program, which is responsible for urban public housing infrastructure. This program was established in November 2018 and is funded until the end of the 2019-20 financial year. It is expected that these positions will only be required during the period of the stimulus;
- recruitment of all five established Early Careers positions;
- recruitment of six additional Public Housing Safety Officers in Tennant Creek, Katherine and Alice Springs;
- increased demand for casual Aboriginal Interpreters. The Department's casual Aboriginal interpreter FTE has increased by 14.27 since 31 March 2018;
- the Department's central procurement team has increased by 6.37 FTE since 31 March 2018; and
- Executive Contract Officer 2 positions have increased as a result of Government policy initiatives, including the Remote Housing Investment Package and the Town Camp Futures Unit.

- 5. From the answers to the Global Questions, why do you have 52 more supernumerary positions?**

In order to quickly resource existing and new projects such as the Remote Housing Investment Package and the \$100 million Public Housing Stimulus Program, the Department employed staff to supernumerary positions temporarily while the formal evaluation process was undertaken.

6. From the answers to the Global Questions, your consultancy expenses were up by \$1.49 million – why is that so?

The increase of \$1.49 million consultancy expenses from 2017-18 to 2018-19 is largely due to consultancy expenditure relating to the Room to Breathe program under the Remote Housing Investment Package.

The Room to Breathe program engages suitably qualified architects (consultants) to provide advice on potential house modifications and to develop technical drawings suitable for use by building contractors.

In 2018-19, the program undertook extensive community engagement with individual households in remote communities across the Northern Territory. As part of the engagement, an architect was present to inspect and review houses and consider the best options (from an architectural and construction perspective) for incorporating the suggested modifications into the existing houses. The increase in consultancy expenses is reflective of the extensive work undertaken by the architects for the Room to Breathe program.

7. From the answers to the Global Questions, there is an “ongoing” claim of \$10,768.65 from 2013/14 under “vehicle incidents and others”. Why hasn’t this been resolved?

The injuries sustained were significant and have required ongoing medical treatment. The injured worker has been assessed with 14 per cent permanent impairment. The injured worker was deemed fit to return to work on modified duties and reduced hours.

8. From the answers to the Global Questions, there were six stress related reported incidents costing \$122,381 – were any of these related to bullying within the agency?

Of the six stress related claims, one accepted claim was related to workplace bullying.