

LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY OF THE NORTHERN TERRITORY

WRITTEN QUESTION

Mr Higgins to the Minister for Trade, Business and Innovation:

Appropriation Bill – Department of Trade, Business and Innovation

Please provide copies of:

- All questions, which have been received from the public in relation to the Estimates process and consideration of the Appropriation Bill for the 2017/18 financial year; and
- The answers to those questions that were presented to the Estimates Committee.

Please provide the information requested below for Agencies and Government authorities for which you have responsibility, as at 31 March 2017.

DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, BUSINESS AND INNOVATION

Please accept apologies if questions are not under the correct Output. Where this is the case, it would be appreciated if you could indicate the appropriate Output in your response. Thank You.

OUTPUT GROUP: BUSINESS INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT

OUTPUT: BUSINESS AND INNOVATION NT

First Home Owner Grant

1. In assessing the success or otherwise of the First Home Owner Grant scheme, is it important to look at the number of First Time Buyer sales as a percentage of the overall market?
2. Has the percentage of First Time Buyers changed since the introduction of the First Home Owner Grant on September 1 2016?

3. Has the percentage of First Time Buyers been broadly consistent as a share of the market over the previous 4 years?
4. How does the current percentage of First Time Buyer compared with long run averages and trends? If it has changed, by how much?
5. What business case was done prior to the announcement of this election commitment? Please provide a copy.
6. Will Territorians be given a firm commitment that the First Home Owners Grant will remain in place until the election in August 2020?

NT Defence Advocate

1. In the budget there is \$1.5 million over 3 years to support the work of the NT Defence Advocate in Canberra. What consultation was done prior to the announcement in Budget 17/18?
2. How is the Government assisting local business to win Defence contracts?
3. How is the Government pitching industry capability and capacity to secure major head contracts with US military tenders?
4. Will the Government pitch capacity and capability for sub contracts?

Innovation Fund

1. In the budget papers there is \$1.8 million to support initiatives to drive and support business innovation. What does this mean in real and specific terms for small business?
2. When will this money be available to business and what are the amounts?
3. How will they go about accessing it and what is the eligibility criteria?

Business in the Bush Workshops

1. Please advise how much Business in the Bush Workshops have cost?
2. Where have the workshops been held?

3. How many new businesses/jobs have been created because of these workshops?
4. What is the return on investment to Territory taxpayers of these workshops?
5. How has business in those areas been boosted?
6. What is the methodology?

Study NT

1. Please explain the purpose of the \$1million additional funding.

Small Business Champions Unit

1. \$7.9 million has been allocated to the Small Business Champions Unit to support business round tables. Please provide the measures that indicate the value for money aspect of this spend.
2. Please provide some evidence that feedback from these round tables is being incorporated into Government policy.

Buy Local - Buy Local Advocate

1. Budget 17/18 allocates \$200,000 for an independent 'Buy Local Advocate'. What amount of this allocation will be a salary component?
2. Are operational expenses of the Buy Local Advocate included in the \$200,000?
3. What modelling, research or consultation has been done to inform the \$200,000 allocation?
4. How many staff will be employed in the office of the Buy Local Advocate?
5. When will the Advocate commence?
6. How will the Advocate enforce 'Buy Local' rules?
7. What are the consequences for a breach of the policy?
8. Have the level of fines been set? What are they?

Business Confidence

1. *What new money is in the Budget to repair private business confidence and encourage private investment, given that the SENIS survey of business confidence, released in the March Quarter, shows business confidence is the lowest in the nation at 18%?*

Thoroughbred Racing NT

1. The NT News ran a story on May 13, 2017 showing that the Chairman of the Darwin Turf Club Mr Brett Dixon had donated \$100,000 to Territory Labor prior to the August 2016. In Budget 17/18 we see in Budget Paper 2 on page 47 a \$700,000 increase in funding to Thoroughbred Racing NT from \$2.5 million in financial year 16/17 to \$3.2 million in financial year 17/18. Is there any correlation between these two events?
2. Please provide evidence to support the Government's position.

Business Policy

1. In relation to procurement how is a business assessed as local - what is the specific criteria?
2. How many staff (and at what levels) will be engaged in the defence advocacy unit in Canberra? What is the selection process and when will this commence? What is the total cost for this unit?
3. What is the work in partnership with Land Councils outlined in Budget Paper No 3? What are the projects and which specific Aboriginal people and communities will benefit? What resources are allocated to this?
4. Please detail what is included in the \$3.6 million allocated for Aboriginal employment programs. What is the target for employment and in which communities?
5. What are the specifics of the \$1 million to support remote Aboriginal economic development initiatives, what is planned and how is this money going to be spent?

OUTPUT: STRATEGIC POLICY

Asia Ready Business Grants

1. What analysis or modelling underpins the \$5 million Asia ready business grant program?
2. How many businesses have submitted an application for an Asia ready grant?
3. How many have been successful?
4. *Who are the recipients?*

Immediate Works Grants Program

1. Information received from the Treasurer mid-March regarding the Immediate Works Grants Program advised the number of applicants to date was 312 and the number of successful applicants was 69. Please explain why there was a 78% fail rate/ rejection rate for the program at that time in March.
2. What was the cost of processing the 312 applications?
3. What is the average time for processing one application?
4. Given the very high fail rate, what steps will be taken to improve the outcome for applicants?
5. Given the stated objective of the Immediate Works Stimulus Package is/was to get money flowing into the local economy are these results indicative of a failed program?
6. How much was spent on advertising for the Immediate Works Stimulus Package?
7. What is the median grant size?
8. Please explain why \$4,910,032 of Immediate Works Grants money has been approved yet only \$60,629 had been issued at the time the answer to our question was provided?

First Home Buyer - \$10,000 Home Renovation Scheme

1. How many people have elected to take a \$2,000 upfront payment to purchase white goods as part of the Home Renovation Scheme?

2. In respect of the first Home Improvement Scheme under the past Government and the new revamped scheme under this Government, please advise as at 1 October 2016 and 31 March 2017
 - a. The number of applications received
 - b. The number of successfully assessed applications
 - c. The number of businesses that registered for the scheme
 - d. The total amount committed in vouchers for all successfully assessed applications

Home Improvement Scheme

1. Why did the government scrap the scheme not once but twice when it was so successful in stimulating the economy?
2. What will happen once the full \$15 million in grants has been allocated? Will some of those who applied by the cut-off date be excluded from the Scheme?
3. Given the work has to be completed within the three months of after the cut-off date and not to December 2017 as promised, will the government reconsider extending the time for works to be completed under Scheme to December to avoid a sharp and abrupt end for work for Tradies?

OUTPUT: NORTHERN AUSTRALIA DEVELOPMENT AND TRADE

Department of Business- Asian Relations supporting export led wealth creation

1. What allocation does Budget 17/18 make towards re-establishing an office of Asian Trade and Investment?
2. Under the former Government the Territory previously maintained a network of in-country representatives in China, Indonesia, Timor-Leste, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia. What money is being allocated to this presence in Asia in Budget 17/18 and the forward estimates?

Tiwi Plantation Corporation

1. Tiwi Plantations Corporation is on the brink of collapse. The Northern Territory Government is a secured creditor of the corporation and has already agreed in October last year to freeze repayments from a taxpayer loan of \$6.8 million. When did these matters become known?

2. What actions is the Government taking to protect taxpayer's investment and save jobs on the Tiwi Islands?

Indigenous Innovation Unit

1. In the Labor Party's Northern Territory Jobs Plan, there is reference to an Indigenous Innovation Project. Why is there no mention of this project in the Budget papers?

Online Gambling- Point of Consumption Tax

2. Online bookmakers are greatly concerned by moves at COAG and by some States to introduce a Point of Consumption (POC) Tax. There are currently 17 such major employers in the Northern Territory. These companies support 500 jobs and inject over \$50 million to the local economy every year. What action is being taken to address this by the Government and what resources are allocated in the budget for this purpose?

Economic Summits

1. Page 46 of Budget Paper 2 shows that the Economic Summits have cost Territory tax payers a minimum of \$1.193 million. Previously the budget for the Economic Summits series was \$550,000. Please explain this close to 100% blowout in the budget for the Economic Summit series.
2. What contracts were awarded to Bespoke Territory Pty Ltd to support the Economic Summits and at what cost? Was there a competitive tender process for this?
3. It is noted that Deloittes Consulting provided their professional services de gratis to the Government for the Economic Summits series. Is this still the situation?
4. How many Government contracts did Deloittes win before this complimentary work on the Economic Summit Series?
5. How many Government contracts did Deloittes win after this complimentary work on the Economic Summit Series?
6. What input was sought and received from Aboriginal Communities into the Economic Summit Series?

7. With respect to the Economic Summits, how did the Government engage with the Wadeye community?

Trade

1. Regarding the record delegation of 93 people travelling to China, what outcomes have been achieved? What has been the amount of investment from the region since public servants took this delegation to Rizhao?
2. What has been the return on investment for the international education program?
3. What is the target for new international students in relation to the additional \$1 million to support this initiative of the previous government?

China Trip (Shandong)

1. Did the Chief Minister travel to any or all of Guangzhou, Shandong Province, Rizhao City and Shanghai, China as part of a joint NT-SA Government mission in early May 2017?
2. If not, why not?
3. If yes, why was there no press release detailing airfares and accommodation expenses?
4. If the Chief Minister did not go, who did and where did they go in China?
5. Did the Chief Minister or any NT Government representative meet with Landbridge or any representatives of the Landbridge Group when in Rizhao City, China?
6. Who did the Chief Minister or any NT Government representatives meet when in China in May 2017?
7. What were the outcomes of those meetings?
8. What are the tangible achievements resulting from those meetings in China?
9. According to the SA Government Department of State Development website, the joint SA-NT trip to China in May 2017 had the following

priority areas for South Australia as Research and Development, Education and Training, Water, Health and Aged Care, Business Development. What were the NT focus areas?

10. What NT businesses and business organisations were invited to participate in this May 2017 trade mission to China?
11. What NT businesses and business organisations travelled as part of this mission to China in May 2017?
12. Why was there not an open expression of interest to participate in the SA/NT trade mission in May 2017 for example on the NT Department website as was the case in South Australia?
13. How much preparatory work was done by the Department of Trade, Business and Innovation before the China May 2017 trip?
14. How many man hours were invested in this trip and what was the cost to the NT Government?

Major Projects

1. What is the detail of the \$5 million allocated to the due diligence of the ship lift facility and how does it relate to the considerable investment made into the feasibility of the project undertaken by the Paspaley Group of companies?
2. What firm commitments have been received from the Federal Government to utilise this facility for defence border protection and other Commonwealth purposes? Please provide copies of the correspondence with the Commonwealth in relation to this important project which has bi-partisan support.
3. What specific projects has the Government submitted to the NAIF Board for consideration since September 2016?
4. What is the project plan for the \$10 million public infrastructure to support the Darwin Luxury hotel? Please provide a copy of the plan.

Northern Australian Development Office (NADO)

1. What is the expenditure of the NADO from 1 September 2016 to 31 May 2017. Please break this down to standard classification expense items.

One Belt, One Road

1. The Federal Government has recently decided not to proceed at this time with the Chinese Government's One Belt, One Road plan due to security concerns. What impact will this have on Territory businesses?
2. Will the Government continue to support the One Belt, One Road plan?
3. What actions will the Government take to support Territory businesses that want to participate in One Belt, One Road?
4. How much will be spent in support and what form will this take?

Darwin MOU City Deal

1. Who are the stakeholders involved in negotiating the City Deal?
2. What are the key projects that Government is taking to the negotiating table to become part of the City Deals program?
3. What is the timeline for negotiation of the City Deal and when will money start to flow?
4. If the \$50million Milly Point Museum is not considered a priority to re-vitalise the Darwin CBD and therefore does not form part of the City Deal, will the Government allocate this money to a project that has been identified as a key priority?

Delegation to Indonesia and Singapore

1. Please advise who representatives from the NT Government met with in the May 2017 mission to Indonesia and Singapore and what outcomes were achieved from these meetings?

OUTPUT: STRATEGIC INFRASTRUCTURE AND PROJECTS

1. This Output was reduced by \$255,000 at Mid-Year Review. Please explain why this happened and how the reduction will affect this output.

State Square Project

1. Please provide details of the final plans and costs in relation to the State Square project?

2. Is there a business case and if not, when will it be available?
3. Please provide plans for the Chan building?
4. Will plans be made public?
5. What advice has been received from the Government Architect?

Strategic Issues

1. In relation to page 58 of Budget Paper 3 please name the private sector projects that the Government has facilitated and the number of jobs created.

Inpex Ichthys

1. How much consultation with Industry was conducted regarding the wind down of the construction phase of the Inpex Ichthys project?
2. How were the groups engaged? How was the engagement conducted? When and for how long and what did it cost?

Major Project Status

1. In financial year 15/16 there were 18 projects with Major Project Status. In financial year 17/18 this number is set to drop to 14. Please explain the reduction.
2. What projects have lost Major Project status or have since been completed?
3. What new Major Projects has the Government signed up since coming to Government in August 2016?
4. Please provide plans to attract more major projects to the Northern Territory.

Business and Skilled Migration Visas

1. On page 62 of Budget Paper 3 the Government expects skilled visa nominations to be 700 ahead of the PEFO estimate for financial year 17/18. What are these numbers based on?

2. What impact will changes to the 457 skilled migration visa have on this projection?
3. What impact will the Foreign Worker Levy have on skilled migration to the Northern Territory?
4. Has the Government commissioned any research into potential impacts or effects of these changes?
5. Have any attempts been made to seek an exemption for the NT from the Foreign Worker Levy?
6. Has the DAMA been modified since the government came to office in August 2016?
7. Will the government be lobbying for changes to DAMA?
8. How often has the Chief Minister met the Federal Minister for Immigration and Border Protection?

Purchase of Assets

1. Page 65 of Budget Paper 3 details 'purchase of assets' worth \$964,000 in Budget 16/17. Please outline what these assets are, and how long they will be held for.

OUTPUT: CHIEF SCIENTIST

1. Has the Government scrapped the Office of the Chief Scientist?
2. Who is the Chief Scientist?
3. What resources are at his/her disposal?
4. Who is the Chief Scientist accountable to?
5. When will the Office of the Chief Scientist have a digital presence / website / social media presence?
6. How often does the Chief Minister meet with the Chief Scientist?

7. What is the role and how many support staff does the Chief Scientist have?

OUTPUT GROUP: EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLING

OUTPUT: EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLING NT

Inpex Ichthys Post Construction Phase Transition

1. What plans have been put in place to manage the post construction phase of the INPEX Ichthys project?
2. What budget has been allocated to this reskilling and transition program?
3. What measures are in place to support job creation in the NT?
4. What studies have been conducted to identify skills shortages in the NT? How much has been allocated and spent on achieving this outcome?
5. Please provide a value for the retraining, and reskilling budget in the NT for financial year 16/17. How does this compare to financial year 15/16?

OUTPUT GROUP: CORPORATE AND GOVERNANCE

OUTPUT: CORPORATE AND GOVERNANCE

Staffing

1. How many Full Time Equivalents are currently employed within this Agency, broken down by Output and Business Unit?
2. How many Full Time Equivalents have resigned, retired, taken a redundancy package or have been made redundant, or terminated? Please break down these numbers by Output and Business Unit?
3. What has happened to these positions? Has the work been reallocated to existing staff?
4. Are there any plans to fill these positions in the near future?

Procurement

1. \$442,598 out of \$560,705 in legal fees for Trade, Business and Innovation went to Minter Ellison. This is 79% of the total spend to one firm. Is this firm local and does it have a NT resident partner?

2. Why did so much of the total spend go to one firm?
3. The Strategic Defence Advisory Board spent \$259,252 for one meeting over the requested reporting period, for nine months up to March 31 2017. What has been achieved for this expense?
4. What is the return to Territory taxpayers of this investment?
5. Why was the Procurement policy review awarded to a South Australia firm?
6. Why do 20% of contracts continue to go outside the NT?
7. What action will the Government take to address this situation?
8. There is a \$205,032 contract to Melbourne University for foreign Country Engagement Plans. Why was this task sent to Melbourne? Please provide a copy of these rather expensive documents?

Travel

1. Further to responses to Questions 38 and 39 in the recently answered Written Questions on Agency Administration, please advise the names of those public servants that travelled interstate and intrastate, as were provided for those who travelled internationally.

Hospitality

1. Further to responses to Question 41 in the recently answered Written Questions on Agency Administration, please advise the names of the Ministers and public servants that incurred hospitality expenditure in each instance.
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