

**Estimates Committee 2010**  
**Questions Taken On Notice**

( 11/06/2010 to 18/06/2010 )

Date: 15/06/2010 Output:  
Sub Output:  
Subject: RDA NT and Regional Services joint office

**From:**Mr Adam Giles to Hon Malarndirri McCarthy  
Regional Development

---

**Question:** **4-10**  
I will repeat it in different words. Minister, has there been any correspondence between RDA NT and Regional Services or its predecessors, in relation to setting up a joint office in Alice Springs, and please table correspondence?.

**Answer:**  
Answered On: 06/08/2010  
Answer: Page 1 of 1

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE  
Questions Taken on Notice

Date: 17 June 2010 Output: 1.0 Local Government, Regional and  
Community Services  
Sub Output: 1.2 Regional Development

Subject: Answer to Question on Notice 4.10

From: Member for Braitling To: Hon Malarndirri McCarthy MLA  
Department of Housing, Local Government and Regional Services

Number: 4.10

Question: Has there been any correspondence between RDA NT and  
Regional Services or its predecessors, in relation to setting up a joint office  
in Alice Springs, and please table correspondence?

Answer:

The Northern Territory Government received correspondence from the  
Interim Chair of the Northern Territory Regional Development Australia  
Committee on 5 January 2010. This was in the context of establishing and  
agreeing new arrangements in the transition period from the Area  
Consultative Committee to the Regional Development Australia  
Committee.

There has been no further correspondence between Regional Development Australia NT and the Territory Government concerning establishment of a joint office in Alice Springs.

Q 4.10

Attachment A  
Received 5 January 2010

## **Regional Development Australia Northern Territory Committee Draft Cabinet Submission**

### **Background**

The newly elected Federal Labour Government in December 2007 foreshadowed a total review of the Area Consultative Committee Network.

This culminated in recent decisions that the Network is to be re-branded as Regional Development Australia and that its prime focus will be in engaging with the community rather than its previous core business of Regional Partnerships. (Refer to Attachment A for details).

It was further decided that future grant programs will focus primarily on Local Government and that Regional Development Australia will have no assessment or approval role although it will be encouraged to assist the less sophisticated proponents to make submissions. It's also being asked to seek out worthwhile projects which have suitable prospective partners but no obvious single proponent.

More recently the Federal Minister has announced that he wishes to enter into a separate Memorandum of Understanding with each State/Territory to merge as far as appropriate Federal and State/Territory regional development initiatives into a single Regional Development Australia Committee.

### **Discussion**

In developing his future directions the Federal Minister has recognised that Regional Development is handled quite differently across the nation and that a one size fits all approach will not work.

For example in Victoria the State Regional Development Network delivers a grant program on behalf of the Government.

Additionally the numbers of committees vary from around 15 in the most populous States down to single committees in both Tasmania and the Northern Territory.

He has also confirmed that his budgetary contribution to the new network will reflect his current commitment on a State by State basis although in the case of the Northern Territory there is some sympathy for a presence in Alice Springs in the form of a satellite office.

The Federal Minister has also foreshadowed that he will wish to select the Committee Chair and Deputy Chair as is the current practice however he is quite amenable to the other members, and in particular regional representatives, being selected by the Northern Territory.

In keeping with his major budgetary contribution, he will require direct access to the Committee on Federal issues but realises that the Northern Territory will require similar access on issues of particular relevance, or on Programs which it may separately fund from time to time.

The existing budget adequately covers the previous primarily project related activities and it is anticipated that an additional contribution will be forthcoming in respect of a part time shop front employee in Alice Springs.

The change of focus to engaging with the community in an area as large as the Northern Territory, will however be more expensive than the previous project work, and unless it is augmented in some way will restrict the ability of the Committee to carry out important field work. Additionally there will be need for an office and support services in Alice Springs which the Federal Government seems unwilling to provide.

### **Timing**

The Federal Minister was anxious to have negotiation with all States/Territories completed and signed off by the 1<sup>st</sup> of January, 2009 a date which is in most cases, not now achievable. Recognising this he has provided a level framework for the Committees to continue to exist until the 30<sup>th</sup> of June, 2009, although he sees this as an extreme outer limit. Additionally his budget for the nation is finite and should he make concessions for some of the earlier signatories, then there may well be less for those people who delay.

The Committee is scheduled to meet on Groote Eylandt on the 5<sup>th</sup> of February 2009 and it would be desirable if this could be the inaugural meeting of the joint Committee.

### **Options**

1. Reject the proposal. This is not recommended as it would pass up an opportunity to place the issue of regional development in a position where it would be more likely to gain both Federal Government and community support and consequently achieve better outcomes.
2. To accept the proposal but to attempt to negotiate further contributions from the Federal Government. This is not recommended because it would introduce possibly protracted delays, is unlikely to attract additional concessions, and may indeed have the opposite effect.

3. To accept the proposal and to negotiate the terms of reference, which will provide maximum benefit to the Northern Territory Government's regional development initiatives at minimum cost. This is the recommended option.

### **Recommendations**

1. That the Minister for Regional Development enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Federal Minister to create a joint Regional Development Australia Committee in the Northern Territory including a new shop front office in Alice Springs.
2. That Cabinet note that the Federal Government will appoint the Chair and Deputy Chair and that the Northern Territory may appoint up to nine regional and/or community representatives. The Federal Government has also expressed the desire for both Local Government and Youth to be appropriately represented, these appointments being made by the Committee. The Federal Government also sends the Regional Manager to meetings as an Observer and the Northern Territory Government may wish to do the same.
3. That the Northern Territory Government negotiate an annual budget contribution to Regional Development Australia Northern Territory Committee in respect of shared ownership of the organisation. It is not intended that this contribution reflect that of the Commonwealth (around \$500k). It should however be sufficient to cover at least the direct expenses of its nominated representatives together with a contribution for support services to the Alice Springs satellite office. A contribution to the staff operational budget would also be required to allow for expanded duties which the Northern Territory Government will require. A realistic estimate of this contribution would be \$80k in a full year. See Attachment B for details.
4. That the Department of Regional Development liaise with Regional Development Australia Committee to identify an appropriate shop front office in Alice Springs.
5. That the Department of Regional Development explore options for creating synergies with Regional Development Australia to offset annual costs of Committee membership.
6. That the Department develop a cabinet submission detailing the services to be provided to the Northern Territory by Regional Development Australia together with identifying any programs which the Territory may consider transferring to that Committee.
7. That the Northern Territory Government make a one-off contribution to the Regional Development Australia Committee for a branding program in respect of the new joint initiative, such program to be approved by the Minister for Regional Development and not exceed \$25,000.

## Attachment A

Regional Development Australia Northern Territory (RDANT) operates under the provisions of the NT Incorporations Act.

The current Committee comprises a Chair, Deputy Chair (both Ministerial appointments) and six Committee Members. Constitutionally, the RDANT Committee must have at least five members. One of the Members holds the roles of Treasurer, Secretary and Public Officer.

Additionally, two individuals have Observer status on the Committee. One of these positions is filled by a member of the Northern Territory Youth Minister's Round Table and the other is a representative from LGANT.

RDANT has traditionally aimed for a broad cross-section of membership covering each region of the Territory and comprising a mixture of NT Government, Local Government, Private Enterprise and Youth Representatives. Should a position become vacant, members discuss potential suitable candidates and rely on verbal recommendations from prominent individuals from the respective region to successfully fill the vacancy.

Although the Committee aims to have Indigenous representation, sourcing Indigenous members has continued to be extremely difficult. The Committee is however fortunate to have a Deputy Chair who is of Indigenous background.

The table below depicts the current membership of the RDANT Committee.

| <i>Member</i>   | <i>Representing</i>  | <i>Appointed</i>  |
|---|--|-------------------|
| Fuller, Col AM<br><i>Chair</i>  | Ministerial appointment  | 14 September 2005 |
| Brand, Tracey<br><i>Vice Chair</i>                                    | Ministerial appointment<br>Tangentyere Council, Alice Springs  | 15 May 2001       |
| Herden, Peter<br><i>Treasurer/Secretary</i><br><i>/Public Officer</i> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Justice of the Peace</li><li>• Civil Marriage Celebrant</li><li>• Lieutenant Colonel – Liaison Officer Defence Reserve Support Committee NT Kimberley</li><li>• Secretary of Defence Reserve</li></ul> | 28 November 2002  |

|                  |   |                 |
|------------------|---|-----------------|
| Bree, Dennis     | NT Govt   | September 2005  |
| Buchan, Norm     | Tiwi Islands Employment & Training Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trade Certificate Electrical Fitter Mechanic</li> <li>• Teaching Certificate</li> <li>• Diploma in Teaching</li> <li>• Bachelor of Education</li> <li>• Certificate IV in Training and Assessing</li> </ul>   | 1 December 1999 |
| Catchlove, Craig | Director of Corporate and Community Services – Alice Springs Town Council   | 13 March 2003   |
| Trevor Ford      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extensive experience in Retail and Tourism industries</li> <li>• currently the managing director of 5 Star Supermarket, Katherine, NT.</li> <li>• Director of Galdana which runs Leading Edge Electronics, Cutta Cutta Tours and Soundtracs Music Centre.</li> <li>• Director of Roxxie which owns and runs a supermarket in Nightcliff, NT</li> <li>• Director of GBF Group (Property Development Company and Property owner)</li> <li>• Alderman Katherine Town Council</li> </ul> | 23 June 2006    |
| Suter, David     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proprietor – Gove Pest Control (Nhulunbuy)</li> <li>• NT Regional Development Board member</li> </ul>  | 1 June 2002     |

The Committee meets quarterly and as required at various locations across the NT. Teleconference meetings are conducted when face to face meetings are not possible.

Although the exact terms of reference required by the Federal Minister are not fully developed the priorities which have been identified to date are:

(1) To engage with the community in respect of Federal Programs and initiatives to:

- Provide advice to Government about regional issues
- Provide strategic input into national programs
- To provide information to Regional Communities and Territory and Local Governments on national Government initiatives
- Help to coordinate regional planning and regional development initiatives
- Work closely with local State/Territory Governments and other regional organisations

(2) To assist the less sophisticated proponents (not for profit organisations or smaller municipal councils) to develop applications for Federal grant funding.

(3) To identify and promote significant projects with regional development outcomes for which partners can readily be identified but no single proponent exists.

The RDANT Office employs three permanent full time staff members and engages a financial service provider on a part-time basis. The staff are appointed by the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee. Current staff members are:

Executive Officer: Raymond D'Ambrosio

Project Officer: Jarry Kovarik

Project & Marketing Officer: Vicki Bridge

Each of these staff members have extensive experience and knowledge gained from working in Government and private enterprise over many years in the Northern Territory.

The current office budget is approximately \$420,000 (GST exclusive) per year of which \$222,000 is expended on staff salaries and related expenses. Additionally, \$137,000 is allocated to operational expenses, \$29,000 is allocated to providing support to members and \$32,000 is expended in community consultation. It is anticipated that \$80,000 per annum will be provided additionally from the Federal Government to cover the proposed Alice Springs office costs. This brings the total annual contribution from the Federal Government to around \$500,000.



## **Attachment B**

The Northern Territory Government's contribution to RDANT should be an amount cognicent with the services required. A breakdown of suggested expenditure is detailed below:

- Nine members meeting and travel costs (4 meetings per year). These figures are notional allocations and provide for the travel of members from their respective home bases. Meetings are generally held at a number of different locations around the Northern Territory. **\$25,000**
- Sitting fees (\$400 per Member per meeting). Currently Committee members are not paid sitting fees however their role will be significantly expanded and they'll be called upon to attend a minimum of four meetings a year involving at least three days away from their home base. Sitting fees comparable to similar organisations such as the Northern Territory Land Corporation would seem appropriate. This seems the inevitable outcome in the States where Regional Development Committees are already in receipt of such allowances. **\$14,400**
- Notional figure for staff travelling in remote areas. **\$4000**
- Associated costs for Alice Springs Satellite Office (presuming the employee will work from an existing NT Government facility). **\$9600**
- Average of one trip per year per member to an appropriate conference or seminar focusing on Regional Development (eg SEGRA) \$3000 per person (includes travel and accommodation costs). **\$27,000**

**TOTAL COST: \$80,000 per annum**