

ESTIMATES COMMITTEE

Question Taken on Notice

Date: 11 June 2019

Subject: Use of interstate rather than local legal firm

From: Mr Gary Higgins

To: Treasurer, the Hon Nicole Manison MLA

Agency: Department of Treasury and Finance

Number: 2-8

Question: Can you provide details on why we used the firm Johnson, Winter and Slattery on three occasions this financial year, as opposed to local?

Answer: The Utilities Commission requested legal services through the Solicitor for the Northern Territory to assist with legal matters/projects regarding the port access and pricing regime. The matters were outsourced to Johnson Winter and Slattery Lawyers, a provider on the Northern Territory Legal Services List (panel contract), managed by the Solicitor for the Northern Territory.

Ports access and pricing regulation and competition law surrounding major infrastructure is a highly specialised area. Unfortunately local firms are not adequately experienced in this area. Therefore, the matter was outsourced to an interstate law firm which had the practical experience and specialist skills and knowledge to be able to assist the Utilities Commission with these projects.