

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012 Additional Estimates, 17 February 2012

Outcome Number: 7 Indigenous

Question No: 315

Topic: Aboriginals Benefit Account

Hansard Page: CA33

Senator the Hon Rachel Siewert

Could you provide the total value of all the leases and all the lease payments which have come out of the ABA - the ones which will supposedly be repaid within the 15 years? Also the total of the administration cost which is not to be reclaimed?

Answer:

Payments for township leases granted under section 19A of the ALRA are sourced from the Aboriginals Benefit Account (ABA) as provided by section 64(4A) of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* (ALRA). Section 64(4A) of the ALRA provides that the Minister may direct amounts be debited from the ABA and paid in relation to acquiring or administering township leases.

ABA payments made to date for township leases granted under section 19A of the ALRA can be divided into two categories – a one off upfront lease payment and operational costs. The upfront lease payments to date have paid to the traditional owners in anticipation of the income generated in the first 15 years of the township lease through subleases and licenses. Upfront lease payments have not been made for any other types of leases, including section 19 leases.

Township leases are designed to be self-financing with a cost neutral impact on the ABA. The draw down on the ABA for the upfront lease payment and ongoing administration costs is intended to be reclaimed in full by the income generated under the township lease.

The total value of the upfront lease payments made from the ABA totalled \$9,500,000 over the 2007/2008 to 2010/2011 financial years inclusive. In November 2011, a township lease was executed for the communities of Milikapiti and Wurankuwu with lease payments for these two communities totalling \$1,760,000 and \$190,000 respectively. Payments have been debited in the current financial year.

The Office of Township Leasing (OTL) advises that the total value of operational costs debited from the ABA for existing township leases totalled \$3,896,320 over the 2007/2008 to 2010/2011 financial years inclusive.