

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2011-12 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number: 7

Question No: 287

Topic: Indigenous Economic Development Strategy

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Siewert asked:

1. Please outline the process used to develop the Indigenous Economic Development Strategy?
2. How many submissions were received?
3. How many community consultations were held?
4. How was this information integrated into the final report, released on the 19 Oct 2011?
5. Please outline the major areas of difference between the draft (released on the 24th May 2010) and the final report?

Answer:

1. The Strategy was developed by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) and the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). A cross-agency Indigenous Economic Development Reference Group, comprising representatives from relevant Australian Government agencies, was established to support the development of the draft Strategy.

A draft Strategy was released for public consultation on 24 May 2010. The Government actively sought feedback on the draft Strategy up until 17 December 2010. Feedback on the draft Strategy was received through written submissions, public consultation workshops and meetings with key stakeholders.

The Government received extensive and divergent feedback on the draft Strategy. All feedback was considered and assessed prior to the finalisation of the Strategy. When finalised, the Strategy was approved by Cabinet.

2. 112 written submissions were received from individuals, businesses, community organisations and state, territory and local governments.
3. Twenty public consultation workshops were held and over 700 participants attended these workshops. In addition, two informal workshops were conducted by FaHCSIA in Kununurra and Geraldton at the request of local Indigenous economic development working groups.

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4. All written submissions were summarised and analysed by FaHCSIA and DEEWR to identify key themes and issues. Records of the consultation workshops and one-on-one stakeholder meetings were also analysed.
5. A number of changes were made to the Strategy following feedback received through the consultation process. Major changes include:
 - Adding a section to explain how the Strategy fits with the broader Indigenous policy framework and its contribution to the Closing the Gap agenda, 'Building on progress towards closing the gap in Indigenous disadvantage'.
 - Adding a section that identifies ongoing programs that have had a significant impact on Indigenous economic development, 'Ongoing investment'.
 - Expanding the 'Unique assets and culture' section to clearly articulate the importance of culture and traditional knowledge as a valuable economic asset.
 - Including an explicit statement about location, articulating the differences, challenges and opportunities between urban, regional and remote.
 - Changing the focus of the 'measuring progress' section to clearly articulate how progress will be tracked.
 - Changing the order of the priorities so that 'Strengthening Foundations' appears as the first priority, emphasising the importance of having the necessary foundations to achieve economic development.
 - Moving Health from Education to Strengthening Foundations.
 - Changing the Education priority to better reflect the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Education Action Plan.
 - Greater emphasis on partnerships and the important role of non-government stakeholders, particularly the private sector.

The presentation of the Strategy has also changed to provide clearer links between objectives, strategies and actions.