

Senate Community Affairs Committee
ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
FAMILIES, HOUSING, COMMUNITY SERVICES AND
INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO
2012-13 Supplementary Estimates Hearings

Outcome Number:

Question No: 458

Topic: Barges and permits

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Scullion asked:

Presumably the company will have no choice but to pass the fee on to local consumers. What steps has the NLC taken to inform local communities about this new charge?

Answer:

First, the payment is not a "new charge". As explained in the NLC's answer to question 455, for many years the provision of goods by barge to communities in Arnhem Land has predominantly been provided by one operator, and that operator has always paid a financial benefit to the NLC to be distributed to or for the benefit of the traditional Aboriginal owners. That operator's service is presently provided pursuant to s 19 licences granted under seven agreements between the operator and the Arnhem Land Aboriginal Land Trust, four of which commenced in 1997 and three in 2000.

Secondly, as explained in the NLC's answer to question 455, the quantum has been identified through arms length negotiations, and has existed for over a decade under current agreements without any detrimental effect on the cost of living in those communities. Those agreements were negotiated in accordance with the consultative requirements of the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976 (Cth)*, which provide an opportunity for affected Aboriginal groups or communities to express their view.