

**Economics Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Industry, Innovation and Science Portfolio  
2016-17 Supplementary Budget Estimates  
20 October 2016

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**DEPARTMENT:** DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION AND SCIENCE

**TOPIC:** Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility

**REFERENCE:** Question on Notice (Hansard, 20 October 2016, page 123)

**QUESTION No.:** SI-32

Senator WATERS: I have some questions about the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility. Thank you for your response to my question on notice. I did not have a date on it, so I was not quite sure at what point in time the NAIF had received just one formal investment proposal. So can you just explain to me: is that still the case? Have there been any other formal investment proposals?

Senator Canavan: The information I have to date is that there is one formal investment proposal at this stage. That means that it has gotten to a stage of due diligence for the board. I believe there may be 13 other proposals that are at an advanced stage of discussion.

Senator WATERS: Okay. There were 11 at the time, so that has gone up to 13.

Senator Canavan: Yes, so there are a couple of others.

Senator WATERS: Okay. Carry on. When was the investment proposal that is now at formal stage submitted?

Senator Canavan: I do not have that information myself. Are there any officials that can help?

Mr Lawson: There is not a formal date of submission process. It is when the board would have met and decided to take that project through to the next phase of submissions.

Senator Canavan: How about we take that on notice?

Mr Lawson: The date would have been 10 August—the board meeting.

Senator Canavan: It most likely would have been at a board meeting, I would say, that they would have made that decision to take it. But we do not have officials here from the NAIF tonight.

Senator WATERS: Oh.

Senator Canavan: Well, there is a new CEO who was appointed last week, so she has not started yet. She starts on Monday, I believe—Ms Laurie Walker. But we will help you out as best we can, and we can take questions on notice.

Senator WATERS: Okay, thank you. So it was roughly mid-August when the board said it can go through to the next stage. But could you check for me, or take on notice, when the original proposal was submitted, and whether that was at EOI phase or whatever the first phase is. I cannot remember the formal process; I think it is

EOI, or you called for something or other.

Senator Canavan: I could perhaps briefly explain it, and some of this goes to before I was minister, so if officials need to correct me please do so. We asked for expressions of interest when the Northern Australia Infrastructure Facility was announced last year. Obviously there was no board or facility established at that stage.

The Export Finance and Insurance Corporation was assisting in that process. They were collated. The board has now been established, and they have obviously entered into more detailed discussions with proponents. As I think

Mr Lawson was explaining, my understanding—it is the board's prerogative to decide how it does this—is that there is not really a formal submission or application process. There are discussions that occur between the board, the NAIF officials and proponents, and they will advance through various stages as per the board's decisions.

Senator WATERS: Could you just take on notice for me when that EOI was first put in by the proponent for the project that has now moved on to that next stage of formal investment proposal.

Senator Canavan: Sure. We can take that on notice.

**ANSWER**

Initial project enquiry information was received on 5 April 2016.