

Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates 19-23 October 2015

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

Department/Agency: Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
Outcome/Program: Outcome 2: Indigenous
Topic: Devolve powers from NT Land Councils

Senator: Senator the Hon Jan McLucas

Question reference number: 300

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 4 December 2015

Number of pages: 1

Question:

In his keynote speech at Garma this year, Northern Land Council CEO, Joe Morrison, said that the Minister has agreed not to reintroduce the regulation to devolve powers from NT Land Councils into the Senate.

- a) Is this correct?
- b) When did the Minister give this undertaking?

Answer:

- a) Yes. The Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Amendment Bill 2015 was passed by Parliament in the Spring sittings 2015. This Bill amended the *Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act 1976* to improve the delegation of Land Council powers and functions for both Land Councils and applicants for delegations. The Northern Territory Land Councils received Exposure Drafts of the Bill and agreed to the amendments.
- b) The Minister wrote to the Northern Territory Land Councils on 3 March 2015 committing not to pursue regulations in regards to delegations of Land Council powers and functions until consultations on amendments to the Land Rights Act were undertaken. The amendments, developed through consultation, overtook the need for regulation.