

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013**

Prime Minister and Cabinet Portfolio

**Department/Agency:** Australian Public Service Commission

**Outcome/Program:** 1.1

**Topic:** Regional Indigenous employee networks

**Senator:** Moore

**Question reference number:** 60

**Type of question:** Hansard, Tuesday 28 May 2013, page 54

**Date set by the committee for the return of answer:** Friday, 12 July 2013

**Number of pages:** 2

**Question:**

**Senator MOORE:** Does the commission have any form of network or support mechanism that is open to people who are Indigenous or who identify as Indigenous?

**Mr Sedgwick:** Yes, several.

**Senator MOORE:** They are across the board? They used to be. This is why I am asking what is happening now.

**Mr Sedgwick:** They are across the board but they are voluntary.

**Senator MOORE:** Yes, and workloads intrude.

**Mr Sedgwick:** Yes. It is the old thing—people will come if they see value; they will come if they have got the time. They wax and wane a bit in terms of their effectiveness, but I think most of those things do. The whole point about a network is that it relies on the strength of the ties within the group.

**Senator MOORE:** There used to be a strong one in North Queensland, in Townsville. Is that still operating?

**Mr Sedgwick:** I do not for a fact know the answer to that.

**Senator MOORE:** It was formed as an independent mechanism that was funded from the commission that allowed people to get together. Townsville seemed to be a useful spot to do it simply because of the geographic base.

**Mr Sedgwick:** I do not think we fund a body in North Queensland. If I am wrong about that, I will correct it.

**Senator MOORE:** Can we find out what networks you do fund?

**Mr Sedgwick:** Yes.

**Senate Finance and Public Administration Legislation Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**BUDGET ESTIMATES 2013**

**Senator MOORE:** That would be very useful.

**Answer:**

The Commission has supported networking amongst Indigenous APS employees in 10 locations across Australia:

- Canberra
- Sydney
- Melbourne
- Tasmania
- Perth
- Darwin
- Alice Springs
- Townsville
- Sydney
- Brisbane.

The Networks are run by Indigenous employees in each area, with each network setting their own Terms of Reference and establishing a network committee. The Commission does not directly fund the operation of the networks, but may contribute in other ways such as making funds available for networks to host guest speakers, paying for appropriate venues if required and encouraging agencies to raise awareness about the networks to managers and supervisors.

The Commission has been working with network committees over the years to discuss ways to ensure that individual networks continue to be a valuable support tool for Indigenous employees. To assist in ensuring networks are sustainable, the Commission is currently coordinating an annual forum in each location, which will include a discussion about a strategy for ensuring individual networks are sustainable. The Commission will also be seeking the views of and input of Indigenous employees in the development of key initiatives such as the APS Cultural Competence Framework and further strategies to support the career development and retention of Indigenous employees.

It should also be noted that many agencies also provide internal networking opportunities amongst Indigenous employees.