

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(282) Output 3.1: Whole-of-government coordination of policy development and service delivery for Indigenous Australians

Senator Evans asked:

In relation to COAG Indigenous Community Trial in Northern Tasmania:

- (1) Can the Department provide a brief description of the elements of this trial? What specific initiatives are being implemented?
- (2) How much has the Department spent on the COAG trial to date?
- (3) Can the Department provide a specific breakdown of these funds, including administered funds, and departmental costs?
- (4) How much is allocated this year? Can the Department provide a specific breakdown of these funds according to administered and departmental expenses?
- (5) Has the Department identified a baseline data (e.g. school attendance figures, incidence of disease, etc) for use in measuring the success of the trial? When was this dataset formally agreed on?
- (6) If not, why not given the 2003 report identified this as an urgent priority? When will a baseline data be identified?
- (7) If so, can a copy of this baseline data be provided, i.e. what indicators are included?
- (8) If so, when did the Department start tracking this data?
- (9) If so, has the Department done any analysis of the information collected in tracking the baseline data? Has this information been reported on? If so can a copy of that analysis and/or reports be provided?
- (10) Has the Department identified performance indicators for the trial?
- (11) If so, when were these set? What are they? When will they be reported on?
- (12) If not, when will these be set? What is the reason for the delay?
- (13) Have the Department conducted any formal or informal evaluation of the trial? If so can the Department provide a copy of any related documentation?
- (14) If not, when will the Department conduct an evaluation? Will this information be publicly available?
- (15) Has the Department reported to OIPC or the Secretaries Group on the progress of the trial? List the dates of reporting. Can a copy of these reports be provided.
- (16) Does the Department intend on handing over responsibility for the trial to OIPC? If so, in what timeframe? Has the handover already begun? If so, when did it begin? If so, why is responsibility being handed over? On what date will responsibility transfer?

(17) Please list the dates of any visits made to the trial site by

- (a) Minister
- (b) Secretary of the Department

Please also specify the reason for the visit.

(18) Can the Department provide the number and percentage of Indigenous staff in the Department at present? How many are specifically working on the COAG trial? What percentage?

(19) Can the Department provide the number and percentage of Indigenous staff in the Department in 2004 and 2003? If the number has decreased, please explain the reason.

Answer:

(1) The Tasmanian COAG Trial has as its theme reducing family violence, to be addressed through the development of more effective ways of working between levels of government and community. The COAG Project Team is working in a number of locations within the Trial site. Initiatives include:

- a Shared Responsibility Agreement signed with the Cape Barren Island community and negotiations advanced to implement activities and programs for men, women, children and the whole-of-community around strengthening community cohesion and wellbeing;
- a lunchtime workshop series with Aboriginal secondary students in the Break O' Day area around issues including maintaining control over decision-making, making informed lifestyle choices, anger management and reconciling mixed heritage issues;
- focus groups working towards Shared Responsibility Agreements in Launceston around mentoring youth at risk (with a program within the youth detention centre, and another community-based), and another working to promote and monitor a health and wellbeing accredited course planned to commence semester 1 in 2006; and
- active dialogue with Aboriginal people on Flinders Island, and a small project with Aboriginal youth in the Northern Midlands area.

(2) Departmental expenditure on the Tasmanian COAG Trial from July 2003 to the end of October 2005 is \$327,784. A further \$34,318 has been expended from the Cross Portfolio Indigenous Flexible Funding Pool and the SRA Implementation Assistance Program (administered funds) in the Trial site since the Trial commenced.

(3) Salaries and administrative costs were approximately \$245,000 for the period July 2003 to June 2005. \$175,000 has been budgeted for 2005-06.

Departmental expenditure for the costs of bringing together members from the Trial site and Departmental staff was approximately \$60,000 for the period July 2003 to June 2005. \$75,000 has been budgeted for 2005-06.

Administered expenditure from the Cross Portfolio Indigenous Flexible Funding Pool and the SRA Implementation Assistance Program since July 2003 has been \$34,318.

- (4) The 2005-06 Departmental budget for the Tasmanian COAG Trial is allocated as follows:

Salaries: \$140,000

Property: \$10,500

Suppliers: \$99,500

No administered funding has been allocated or specifically sought at this stage.

- (5) A baseline profile of the Tasmanian COAG Trial Site developed during the first six months of the Tasmanian Trial is provided in response to Question 240. It is important to note that often the samples are numerically small, and therefore may be statistically unreliable, and there are some data integrity issues. The Trial's Inter-Governmental Co-ordinating Committee has considered this material, in addition to which several member agencies have presented their respective data baselines for discussion.

Importantly, the working focus of the Trial is on improving processes of effective and respectful communication, and effective engagement.

- (6) See response to Question 282(5) above.
- (7) See response to Question 282(5) above.
- (8) See response to Question 282(5) above.
- (9) Due mainly to the issues identified at Question 282(5) above, formal analysis has not been attempted. Qualitative information, coupled with observed quantitative trends, are being monitored as the Trial progresses.
- (10) No.
- (11) N/A
- (12) The COAG Trials are based on a set of general objectives which include better coordination of programs and services, and the tailoring of government programs and services to the needs of communities.
- Given the nature of these objectives, a set of specific performance indicators (such as those used to evaluate traditional government programs) is not appropriate for measuring the Trials' effectiveness. Measurement of progress will need to be largely qualitative, and is best addressed through the evaluation process now in train.
- Existing government programs within the Trial site continue to have their own performance indicators which reflect the aims of these programs.
- (13) No formal evaluation of the Trial has taken place at this time. There is an annual process to provide feedback on lessons learnt from all Trials, including the Tasmanian Trial, to COAG. This is progressed through the COAG Senior Officials Meeting. Release of such documents would need to be approved by COAG.
- (14) Terms of Reference for the formal evaluation of the Tasmanian COAG Trial have been developed, and this evaluation is scheduled to take place early in 2006. Any public release arrangements for evaluation reports from the COAG Trials is a matter for the governments involved.
- (15) OIPC is part of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

The Trial Project Team has reported to the Secretaries Group as required. A copy of the most recent report, which was provided in April 2005, is attached.

(16) OIPC is part of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs.

(17)(a) No COAG-specific visits have been made since the Trial commenced.

(17)(b) The Secretary of the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs participated in the initial planning for the Tasmanian Trial which included visits to some Trial site locations. The Secretary has attended Inter-Governmental Co-ordinating Committee meetings and convened Project Team meetings on at least six occasions. There has also been electronic reporting to the Secretary. The Secretary maintained detailed knowledge of the Trial and how it was progressing, and was involved in planning and logistical discussions.

(18) November 2005 - 155 indigenous staff (29%). Three OIPC staff specifically working on Northern Tasmania COAG trial, 1 indigenous (33%).

(19) July 2004 – 201 indigenous staff (40%). Unable to provide figures for 2003 as OIPC only came into existence on 1 July 2004.

OIPC's Indigenous staffing percentage has reduced as a result of a number of factors including:

- transfers to other agencies;
- a number of departures by staff who, prior to 1 July 2005, were supporting Regional Councils; and
- targeted high skill level recruitment.

It should be noted that although there has been a decrease in the percentage of Indigenous staff employed by OIPC, 29% still equates to around 13 times the APS average.

In conjunction with DIMIA National Office, OIPC is currently developing an improved Indigenous Career Development Strategy to provide recruitment, training and development opportunities to its Indigenous staff and is actively participating in the *APS Indigenous Employment and Capability Strategy* promoted by the Australian Public Service Commission.

REPORT TO SECRETARIES - TASMANIAN COAG TRIAL

April 2005

The Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs (DIMIA) is the Australian Government Agency Sponsor, with its State Government counterpart the Office of Aboriginal Affairs (OAA), which sits within the Department of Premier and Cabinet (DPAC).

The trial site is based in Tasmania's north-east, currently within the following local government areas: Break O'Day, Meander Valley, Northern Midlands, Launceston and Flinders (which incorporates Flinders and Cape Barren Islands).

Australian and State Government agencies have committed to working together through the establishment of an Intergovernmental Coordinating Committee (IGCC). The IGCC comprises representatives from eight Australian Government and five State Government agencies. The Local Government Association of Tasmania (LGAT) is also represented. The IGCC meets four times a year and has undergone cultural awareness training and each member agency has committed to providing its operational staff with similar training to enhance work with community trial partners. To date, the IGCC has agreed on a consultation strategy and how they can work together in engaging Aboriginal people in the trial site. Additionally, a number of local councils have agreed to participate in the trial.

A number of Aboriginal people in each trial site location have agreed to participate in the trial. Some trial site locations (such as Cape Barren and Flinders Islands) have begun listing priorities in preparation for meetings with government partners to draw up a Shared Responsibility Agreement (SRA). Three SRAs are well advanced and will be signed shortly with the Cape Barren Island community: one is directly trial-related while two more build on trial processes and learnings but are ICC-driven – all 3 involve other agencies such as FaCS and OATSIH. Our objective is that other locations will be ready to sign SRAs progressively through-out the rest of this year.

Other trial site locations (for example Deloraine, St Marys, St Helens, and Launceston) need further work around capacity building and priority setting. Recently, two Aboriginal Community Project Workers have been appointed, and an office base established within Launceston, to extend working with these communities towards more effective working partnerships.

Five phases have been identified for the Tasmanian COAG trial. They are: 1) Communication Strategy; 2) Consolidating Working Groups; 3) Trial Partners Working Together (to develop strategies to address Aboriginal family violence in each of the trial site locations); 4) the Signing of SRAs; and, 5) Review and Evaluation. The communication strategy has been delivered across the whole of the trial site and a monitoring and evaluation framework is being refined to support the work being conducted in each location, however, different locations within the trial site are at different levels of engagement with phases 2-4.

Given the problem around the definition of Aboriginality that exists within Tasmania, significant progress has been made between the Australian and State Governments toward finding a way to work together on the trial. There is a genuine commitment from all IGCC member agencies to work with Aboriginal people within the trial site to address issues around the impact of family violence, although there are some resourcing issues to work through. Similarly a number of Aboriginal people within each of the trial site locations have demonstrated their willingness to work in this new way with governments, that is outside of representational structures or organisations.