

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 1 November 2005

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AND INDIGENOUS AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(304) Output Output 3.2: Services for Indigenous Australians

Senator Evans asked:

1. How long has the department been working on advice for the Minister with regards the change to the Northern Territory Land Rights Act that will allow long term leasing on tracts of land?
2. What has the procedure to date been?
3. Which stakeholders have been consulted as part of this process, and to what extent?

Answer:

The Australian Government first received a submission advocating a township head leasing scheme from the Northern Territory Government (NTG) in February 2005. The NTG advised that the Land Councils were consulted about the proposal prior to it being received by the Australian Government. After receiving the NTG proposal, some of the Land Councils sent submissions to the Australian Government for consideration. Consultations were held between NTG and Australian Government officials. The National Indigenous Council issued its Indigenous Land Tenure Principles in June 2005. Cross-portfolio consultations occurred with relevant Australian Government agencies. The Land Councils, Aboriginals Benefit Account chairperson and NTG were briefed on the Australian Government proposed reforms prior to the public announcement.