

## ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

### QUESTIONS ON NOTICE SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

**Tuesday, 10 June 2014**

#### **Department of Commerce**

*Question No. B1: Hon K Doust asked – how much of the Royalties for Regions Grant Funds are directed to local participation activities?*

Answer: Budget paper 2, page 496, Details of Controlled Grants and Subsidies, Royalties for Regions – under this line item the allocation to Local Participation activities are as follows:

2013-14	\$1 million allocated for local participation activities
2014-15	\$1.5 million allocated for local participation activities
2015-16	\$1.5 million allocated for local participation activities
2016-17	\$1.5 million allocated for local participation activities

Funding of \$5.5 million has been provided with \$0.5 million from the existing program and \$5 million provided within the program extension until 2016-17.

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*Question No. B2: Hon K Doust asked what specific funds, under the Industry and technology Total Cost of Service, have been the specifically allocated to the Local Participation unit?*

Answer: Budget paper 2, page 493, Industry and Technology Total Cost of Service.

The Total Cost of Service figure of \$14, 328,000 includes the operational funding for the Local Participation unit. At present the internal allocation of the budget within Industry and Technology service area has not been finalised.

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*Question No. B3: Hon K Doust asked for the value of contracts awarded to local companies under the Local Industry Participation Framework during the 2013 financial year?*

Answer: The value of locally awarded, publicly announced contracts under the Local Industry Participation Framework for 1 July 2012 – 30 June 2013 was \$28,914,990,000

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*Question No. B4: Hon Peter Katsambanis MLC asked -*

- (1) *What changes were made as a result of the plumbing review that actually reduced the red tape for operators of small plumbing businesses, and in particular whether consideration was given to abolishing the multi-entry compliance certificate?*

Answer: This Government is committed to reform that delivers red tape reduction. The 'Review of Plumbing Regulations in WA' released in February 2014 identified elements of current regulatory arrangements that could be improved, modernised or made more efficient including the process of plumbing notifications but provided no details. The Building Commission has developed a staged implementation plan to adopt the review's recommendations as appropriate. Industry consultation, which will commence shortly, will shape and guide how this recommendation is implemented.

- (2) *Will the notice of intention for major plumbing works move from a triplicate book that is filled out and mailed, to an online system which again would streamline and reduce costs, both for the department and small business?*

Answer: The current system requires plumbers to pay a fee at the time they notify of their intention to carry out plumbing work. The review recommended that further consideration be given to introducing more efficient methods of raising funds to support the regulation of the plumbing industry that do not require plumbers to notify the Building Commission each time they seek to carry out work. Accordingly, the Building Commission is giving this recommendation further consideration and will report to me in due course.

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**Department of Commerce**

*Question No. B5: Hon K Doust asked –*

Programs or program budget for education, consultation and promotion to target regional Aboriginal communities to better educate them about online scamming. Are there any programs or is there a program budget for any education, consultation and promotion that would target regional Aboriginal communities to better educate them about online scamming and to prevent them being caught up in this?

**Answer:**

The Department has a budget allocation for an Aboriginal Consumers Education Program. As part of that education program, information is provided to Aboriginal consumers about scams, including online scams. In one activity associated with Project Sunbird, which examines defrauded funds being sent to specific West African countries, it identified some issues affecting Aboriginal communities. In some specific cases of relationship fraud, where some victims happen to be Aboriginal, Consumer Protection has made contact and intervened.

In 2013 scammers were found to be targeting young people in Aboriginal communities in Western Australia through the social networking service Divas Chat. Divas Chat operates through a Telstra mobile phone and 3G network coverage; making it popular with people living in remote communities where available telecommunication options can be limited.

Divas Chat gives the opportunity for a large number of people to share information with one another. Three Aboriginal women reported losses of between \$3000 and \$7000 through lottery type scams linked to them being on Divas Chat. Department of Commerce (Consumer Protection) regional officers sent out warnings via email to nearly 800 contacts including aboriginal communities, resource and language centres, health and legal organisations, police, shires and schools.

Consumer Protection instigated media and social networking initiatives to warn Aboriginal communities about the risks associated with these mobile phone/online scams. These included warnings broadcast on National Indigenous Television (NITV), Noongar Radio, Radio Tjuma Kalgoorlie and Radio Waringarri Kununurra. In addition to publication on the WAScamNet site and the issue of an email alert to hundreds of subscribers, articles were supplied to, and published by, the Mulga Mail, National Indigenous Times, Koori Mail, First Nations Telegraph and Native Title News. A Consumer Protection Facebook post tagged numerous Indigenous organisations asking for their help to spread the warning through their own networks and was widely shared electronically. In November 2013, there were more than 20 items broadcast or printed by Indigenous-specific media outlets, reaching an audience of about 45,000 people.

Consumer Protection utilises a range of methods to reach out to remote Aboriginal communities, including: regular radio segments on Indigenous radio stations, regular monthly columns in the State's Indigenous newspaper and Aboriginal Community Newsletters, established networks in the Aboriginal community and a dedicated Facebook page for Aboriginal consumer issues.