



**Hon Peter Collier MLC**  
**Minister for Education; Aboriginal Affairs; Electoral Affairs**  
**Leader of the Government in the Legislative Council**

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Ref: 34-61243

Hon Simon O'Brien MLC  
Chairman  
Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs  
Parliament House  
PERTH WA 6000

Dear Mr O'Brien

Thank you for your letter dated 12 May 2015 requesting comments on the terms of Petition No 82 – Food security capacity building project in Broome, tabled in the Legislative Council on 18 March 2015, and the submission from the principal petitioner.

The State Government has provided Feed the Little Children (FTLC) funding of \$230,000 through Lotterywest during October 2013 to December 2014. In 2014, FTLC also submitted a grant application of \$80,000 to the Department of Aboriginal Affairs (DAA). The request indicated that the funding would be used to cover operational costs. As this was outside of the scope of the DAA's grants and sponsorships program criteria, the application was declined.

With regards to the petition's request for a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the State and FTLC to access data, DAA and the Department of Health Western Australia assisted FTLC to obtain aggregated health related data for Aboriginal children aged one to nine years in Broome in 2014.

This body of work found that de-identified administrative data was not suitable for demonstrating program effectiveness in reducing hospitalisations for malnutrition, other related conditions and emergency presentations. This was largely as a result of the targeted scope of the program, which provided food to approximately 160 children out of an estimated population of more than 300 children.

The establishment of a data sharing MOU between the State and FTLC would require a significant investment by Western Australian (WA) agencies and would be unlikely to assist the organisation in statistically demonstrating program effectiveness. In addition, such an arrangement would be unique and would provide an argument for all not-for-profits to seek similar arrangements, including in support of their competitive grant applications.

Addressing the need to evaluate and demonstrate the effectiveness of the program would be more efficiently and effectively achieved through a combination of:

- FTLC collecting appropriate data from clients supported through the project; and
- FTLC working in partnership with a research institution to develop a research proposal to access relevant data holdings from WA agencies.

Through this approach, FTLC would be able to commission research (as previously suggested by DAA) using client level outcome data held across the indicated government agencies, while adhering to ethical and research standards.

The Australian Government is responsible for food security and through the Department of Social Services, provides financial assistance for people in need, which includes vouchers and assistance for food, prescriptions and education. In addition to the Australian Government service, the Western Australian Department for Child Protection and Family Support provides limited assistance targeted at people who have been subject to natural disaster or similar crisis.

A range of not-for-profit organisations also provide meals to assist disadvantaged families in Western Australia. Foodbank is the largest food relief organisation in Australia, partnering with food producers and manufacturers to provide food and groceries to charities and schools across Australia. Its School Breakfast Program has been implemented across more than 430 schools in Western Australia, including Broome Primary School. Additional breakfast programs also operate at Cable Beach Primary School and Broome Senior High School.

The Broome Girls Academy's Breakfast and Nutrition Program encourages school attendance through providing breakfast for students and promoting options for a healthier lifestyle. Centacare Kimberley offers a breakfast program and food vouchers for people facing financial hardship.

I trust this information will assist the Standing Committee on Environment and Public Affairs with its preliminary inquiries into the Petition.

Kind regards



Hon Peter Collier MLC  
**MINISTER FOR EDUCATION; ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

17 JUN 2015