

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

- 3 MAY 2012

Tuesday, 6 March 2012

5126. Hon Robin Chapple to the Leader of the House representing the Premier.

With regard to the development of the Browse Basin Gas Hub at James Price Point, I ask -

(1) Can the Premier confirm that Western Australian Government financial support for the Browse LNG project proposed to be sited at James Price Point is currently budgeted to cost \$487 million, comprising -

(a) \$111 million over five years to the Department of State Development (DSD) for the Browse LNG precinct (Budget 2010-11 at a glance);

(b) \$256 million Native Title settlement and regional benefits package (over 30 years); and

(c) \$120 million funding for James Price Point access road?

(2) If any of the amounts in (1) are not correct, will the Premier please detail the correct amounts?

(3) Will the Premier detail any further projected State Government expenditure on this project?

(4) For the allocations listed at (a) to (c) in (1), will the Premier provide -

(a) an annual breakdown of expenditure;

(b) clarification of whether any of the sums within these budgets, in particular within the \$256 million Native Title settlement and regional benefits package, are funds that have been previously committed by the Government through other budgets or programs such as, for example, the government's Indigenous Affairs housing, education or training budgets;

(c) confirmation that, if none of these funds have been previously committed under other government budgets and all these funds are 'new dollars', that the allocation of these amounts will not simply be deducted from existing government programs and commitments to services in the Kimberley region or more generally; and

(d) clarification of how much of each of these budget allocations has been or will be reimbursed by Woodside if the project goes ahead?

(5) How much funding has been, or will be, allocated to the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) to ensure it has the capacity to properly assess the impacts of the proposed gas hub and associated infrastructure?

(6) Is the Premier aware of how many staff the EPA has available to assess this project and the resources available to it to do this work?

(7) Given the disproportionate amount of funding has been allocated by the Government to subsidise and facilitate this project relative to the funds allocated to ensure the project is subject to a full, independent, transparent and rigorous environmental and social impact assessment, what does the Premier propose to do to rectify this failure of due process?

(1-4) The State has budgeted \$126.5 million over five years from 2009-10 to meet the costs associated with the Browse LNG Precinct, of which \$15.2 million has been reimbursed by Woodside Energy Limited.

This amount includes \$85.1 million over forward estimates as part of the \$256 million benefits package for Traditional Owners.

The Traditional Owner's benefits package will not be deducted from any existing programs or commitments. When a Foundation Proponent commits to a project at the Precinct, it will contribute an additional benefits package for Traditional Owners.

An annual breakdown of expenditure can be found in the State Budget. Any further expenditure is yet to be determined.

(5-6) Impact assessment is the core business of the Environmental Protection Authority and the allocation of resources is a matter for it to determine.

(7) Adequate resources have been allocated to facilitate the project, including the conduct of extensive environmental and social impact assessment.

CB