

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL**  
**Question on notice**

**Tuesday, 15 October 2013**

353. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

With regard to the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme Western Australia, I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of the claim of Mr John Echo from the Warmun Community in the Kimberley, whose application to the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme Western Australia was refused because he was "not born before 1958";
- (b) does the Minister consider the guidelines of the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme Western Australia to be fair to all Aboriginal people who had their wages withheld;
- (c) is the Minister aware that Mr Echo was born in 1962 and taken from his family in the East Kimberley to Beagle Bay when he was just four, that he went to school and worked there until he turned twelve, that he received no wages during this time and his experiences were the same as other children who were just a few years older than him yet he was found to be ineligible;
- (d) if yes to (c), does the Minister consider this to be a fair arrangement;
- (e) is the Minister aware that Mr Echo worked at Bedford Down Station from the age of twelve and that his wages were withheld;
- (f) is the Minister aware that many Aboriginal people consider the guidelines of the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme Western Australia to be unfair as non-payment of wages occurred as a direct consequence of State Government policy, regardless of their employer and where they worked, and that therefore the State Government should apologise and make amends to all Aboriginal people who were affected;
- (g) is the Minister aware that there are scores of people at the Warmun community who consider they have been unfairly treated as regards the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme Western Australia;
- (h) if yes to (g), will the Minister meet and listen to their grievances first-hand; and
- (i) if no to (g), why not?

---

Answer

- (a) Yes.
- (b) The eligibility criteria for the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme were reasonable and clear and were applied consistently in assessing each application.
- (c) I am aware of the statements made by Mr Echo in his application to the Scheme.
- (d) Refer to (b).
- (e) Refer to (c).
- (f) Yes.
- (g) I have received correspondence from a number of Aboriginal people from the Warmun community concerning the Scheme. It should be noted that the State Government currently invests heavily in measures intended to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal people. These investments are to a large degree, based on recognition that the

disadvantage experienced by many Aboriginal people is a result of discriminatory legislation and policy that existed during the period between 1905-1972.

(h) – (i) Not applicable.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Hillier". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R".

**Minister for Aboriginal Affairs**