

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
Question on notice

18 FEB 2014

Thursday, 21 November 2013

616. Hon Robin Chapple to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

I refer to the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme Western Australia, and I ask:

- (a) is the Minister aware of the claim by Mr Billy Duncan, formerly of Envoy and Mistake Creek Stations Northern Territory and Nicholson Station in Western Australia, whose application for stolen wages has been denied by the State Government;
- (b) does the Minister understand that Mr Duncan did not attend school and instead worked on various stations from about the age of eight years, for which he received no payment;
- (c) is the Minister further aware that when Mr Duncan finally did receive payment for work on Nicholson Station it was in no way commensurate with the long hours he worked and the skills which he brought to the task;
- (d) is the Minister also aware that Mr Duncan considers the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme Western Australia to be unfair since he, like so many others working on stations, were subject to discriminatory treatment that was sanctioned by the Government of the day and that therefore he considers it to be a government responsibility to make amends;
- (e) does the Minister accept that Mr Duncan is disappointed at the Government's response to station workers whose claims for stolen wages are being denied; and
- (f) will the Minister please reconsider establishing a new scheme that addresses Mr Duncan's and other station workers' concerns and which truly seeks to make amends for the discriminatory practices of the past?

Answer

(a) Yes.

(b) - (e) I am aware of the statements made by Mr Duncan in relation to his application to the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme (the Scheme).

(f) The Scheme will not be reviewed or reopened. It should be noted that the State Government invests heavily in measures to improve life outcomes for Aboriginal people.

As an example, the Productivity Commission's 2012 Indigenous Expenditure Report found that Aboriginal expenditure by the Western Australian Government in 2010-11 was approximately \$2.3 billion. This includes spending in areas such as early childhood and education services, health services, community support services and economic participation services.

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 1905-1972



Minister for Aboriginal Affairs