

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

C097

QUESTION WITHOUT NOTICE
(Of which some notice has been given)

Tuesday, 25 February 2014

Robin Chappie to the Minister for Aboriginal Affairs.

With regard to WA Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme claimant David Ryder from Wyndham, who has received an ex gratia payment of \$2,000, I ask:

1. Is it correct that Mr Ryder was sent a pro-forma or standard letter advising him that his application had been successful?
 2. If yes to 1, is this a reflection of the scheme's 'one size fits all' approach which does not attempt to address recipients' different circumstances when their wages were withheld?
 3. Was there any attempt made to calculate the true value of the income that was withheld from Mr Ryder and others in an attempt to make payments under the scheme more reasonable?
 4. Will the government consider establishing a Parliamentary review of the WA Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme with a view to developing a second stage of the scheme that builds on the findings and experiences to date and that reflects the many concerns the applicants have expressed to date?
 5. If no to 4, why not?
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I thank the **Hon. Member** for some notice of this question.

1. No. While all letters sent under the Scheme contained some standard information each letter also included details tailored to individual applicants.

2. Not applicable

3. The State Government's response to the issue of stolen wages was largely based on advice from the Stolen Wages Taskforce which acknowledged that the lack of surviving records and the passage of time meant that it was not possible for the WA Government to identify and repay the actual amount of monies that were withheld. Therefore, the \$2,000 ex gratia payment offered was not an attempt to repay wages that were withheld, but rather an acknowledgement that the practice of stolen wages did occur.

4. No.

5. The scheme will not be reviewed or reopened. It should be noted that the State Government invests heavily in measures to improve 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 1905-1972.



Minister for Education