

Thursday, 13 March 2014

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

With regard to the application by Mr Willy Staines of Halls Creek to the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme, I ask:

(a) is the Minister aware of the application, which outlines the extent of his unpaid work as a stockman on Shelby Downs and Lamboo Stations in Western Australia:

(i) if yes to (a), on what grounds will the Minister reconsider his application and if he will not, why not;

(b) given that it was the State Government's laws and policies that resulted in Aboriginal people like Mr Staines living and working on stations for decades without proper income support and workplace protection, what will the Minister do to acknowledge the harm done and make compensation and redress;

(c) will the Minister please explain to Mr Staines why he will not apologise or pay compensation for the unfair, unjust and discriminatory practices that prevented him from earning money and getting ahead in the same way as his non-Aboriginal counterparts could:

(i) if no to (c), why not; and

(d) is the Minister willing to work with Aboriginal people to achieve a solution acceptable to them regarding the unpaid wages of Aboriginal station workers in Western Australia:

(i) if yes to (d), what steps will the Minister take; and

(ii) if no to (d), why not?

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(a) Yes.

(i) Mr Staines' application will not be reconsidered. The State Government's response to the issue of stolen wages is largely based on the advice from the Stolen Wages Taskforce, which found that station workers' incomes were not controlled directly by Government, and consequently, fall outside the scope of the Scheme.

(b) Application to the Stolen Wages Reparation Scheme does not affect the legal rights of any applicant that may choose to pursue other courses of action.

(c) Refer to (a) (i).

(c)- i) Not applicable

(d) 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.

(d)-i) Not applicable

(d)-ii) Refer to (d)



Minister for Aboriginal Affairs