

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL Question On Notice

Tuesday, 8 May 2018

1199. Hon Robin Chappie to the Minister for Regional Development

I refer to the recommendations from the 'Special Inquiry into government programs and projects' for the Ord River irrigation Expansion project, and I ask:

- (a) given the original \$220 million budget, and the eventual \$334 million spend, the Special Inquirer believes that the Ord River Irrigation Expansion Project should have had its own separate steering committee. Will the Government create this separate steering committee without conflicted members as recommended in this report;
- (b) if no to (a), why not;
- (c) the project allocated \$200,000 for environmental costs, yet by June 2016, the environmental costs had reached \$8.1 million. Will the Minister provide a detailed breakdown of what the extra \$7.9 million for 'environmental management' was spent on and the correlating dates;
- (d) if no to (c), why not;
- (e) project management of the Ord River Expansion project was denounced by the Auditor General's report in September 2016, due to cross-membership between committees, unclear terms of reference and the regularity of meetings. In addition, Ministerial officers were members of the Steering Committee, as were the managers for the irrigation and Commonwealth projects, which blurred the responsibility and authority for each level. Will the Minister undertake a review of the project management framework for the project with the aim to fix the issues outlined in both the Auditor General's report and by the Special Inquirer;
- (f) if no to (e), why not;
- (g) regarding the finance of the project, the Special Inquirer reported that the project should have been subject to Department of Finance co-ordinated Gateway Reviews. These reviews would have provided an independent assessment of the project governance and delivery at key milestones. Will these reviews be required by the Minister to be conducted hence forth as the project progresses key milestones;
- (h) if no to (g), why not;
- (i) regarding the future expansion of thousands of hectares of irrigated agriculture projects across the Kimberley and the Pilbara, will the cumulative impacts to climate change and biodiversity loss from extended land clearing, and water extraction be taken into consideration in the planning phase by the Minister for Regional Development; and
- (j) if no to (i), why not?

Answer

(a) No

(b) While an appropriate recommendation, a separate steering committee is no longer required. The aims and objectives of the Ord East Kimberley Expansion Project have been met resulting in \$300 million of infrastructure assets being constructed and developers appointed to develop and farm over 18,000 hectares. While some residual tasks remain these

are adequately managed and governed through the normal departmental processes within the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, in consultation with other government agencies as required.

(c) [Refer to tabled paper no.]

(d) Not applicable

(e) No

(f) The Ord East Kimberley Expansion Project commenced in 2009 with key decisions made by the Ord Ministerial Council between 2009 and 2015. A residual budget of \$10 million remains to fulfil outstanding obligations. These obligations are adequately managed and governed through the normal departmental processes within the Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development, in consultation with other government agencies as required.

(g) No

(h) All the key project milestones in the Ord East Kimberley Expansion Project have been met. There are no remaining project milestones that warrant a Department of Finance co-ordinated Gateway Review.

(i) Yes

(j) Not applicable

a

PQON 1199

(c)

Dates	Environmental Management activities	Cost
July 2011 to June 2016	Environmental mapping, surveys, rehabilitation monitoring and the Independent Review Group	\$2.01 million
July 2011 to June 2016	Monitoring and reporting on <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i> (EPBC) Listed Species as required under Federal Environmental Approvals	\$1.06 million
July 2011 to March 2015	Groundwater modelling and monitoring	\$2.38 million
March 2012 to July 2015	Environmental audits	\$0.45 million
March 2009 to June 2016	Environmental consultancy work, including preparation of all Environmental Management Plans and reporting against the EPBC and <i>Environmental Protection Act 1986</i> (EPA) conditions	\$2.00 million
	Total	\$7.90 Million