

WATER RESOURCES, KIMBERLEY, EXPERT PANEL, COST

1079. Hon Barry House to the Leader of the House representing the Minister for Water Resources

I refer the Minister to the answer provided to question No. 71 regarding the operations of the Kimberley Expert Panel, and I ask -

- (1) What was discussed or investigated by the panel at the meeting held in Hobart on January 10 and 11?
- (2) What was the total cost associated with the panel meeting held in Hobart, including, but not limited to -
 - (a) travel costs;
 - (b) accommodation expenses; and
 - (c) meals?
- (3) Will the Minister please provide a detailed and itemised breakdown of cost allocations in regards to the \$146 536 in expenses for services and contracts, including but not limited to, the name of any individual or organisation that received payments and the reason for those payments?
- (4) Will the Minister provide a breakdown of all proposed tenders for specialist consultants, including but not limited to -
 - (a) the reason for the tender; and
 - (b) the estimated cost of the tender?
- (5) On what basis was \$5 million allocated for the operations of the Kimberley Expert Panel?
- (6) Will the Minister advise as to what the remaining \$4.84 million will be spent on in the period until the panel reports its findings in September?
- (7) Will the Minister concede that the allocation of \$5 million was not based upon any accurate cost estimate and was simply a ploy to give the impression that this is a genuine effort to investigate water supply from the Kimberley?
- (8) Is the Government obliged in any way to adopt the recommendations of the panel?
- (9) What financial allocations has the Government made to enact the recommendations of the panel?
- (10) Will the Minister concede that this Government has no intention to bring water from the Kimberley?

Hon KIM CHANCE replied:

- (1) The Panel met as a group for the first time and discussed the project, terms of reference and process for undertaking the task requested by Government.
- (2) \$9,030.
 - (a) \$7,861;
 - (b) \$855; and
 - (c) \$314.
- (3) The breakdown of the \$146,536 in services and contracts included:
 - \$49,581 - advertising internationally and nationally for EOIs;
 - \$86,798 - panel remuneration and travel expenses for meetings held in Hobart, Perth and the Kimberley region; and
 - \$10,147 - communications, Byrne and Byrne.
- (4) The Panel is currently considering the information it has gathered and its further information needs. Contracts will not be let until such time as information needs are fully determined.
- (5) The Government wanted to ensure that this investigation was undertaken thoroughly and did not want the panel to be financially constrained in its deliberations.
- (6) The Panel will only spend an amount of the project budget that is required to ensure that the investigation is completed in a thorough manner.
- (7) See 5.

- (8) The Government will consider the recommendations of the panel when they are submitted later in the year.
- (9) The Government must first receive the report to be fully informed of any financial implications.
- (10) The Government has established the panel to investigate if it is indeed viable to bring water from the Kimberley to the Integrated Water Supply Scheme.