

MURDOCH UNIVERSITY, PILBARA, STUDY FUNDING

1381. Mr L. Graham to the Minister representing the Minister for Local Government and Regional Development

I refer to the media release by the Minister on 31 March 2003 regarding funding to Murdoch University and I ask -

- (a) how was the amount of \$100,000 arrived at;
- (b) on what date did the matter receive the endorsement of the Pilbara Development Commission;
- (c) in what way did the Pilbara Development Commission support the matter;
- (d) specifically, who proposed that such a study be conducted;
- (e) what are the terms of reference for the study;
- (f) who wrote the terms of reference for the study;
- (g) to whom does the study report;
- (h) what experience does the study team have in the Pilbara region of the State;
- (i) is it the intent of the study group to use university students as part of the study resource;
- (j) specifically how does this project 'put Western Australia at the forefront of the regional application of sustainability concepts internationally';
- (k) specifically how does this project create 'long term benefit for communities and businesses' in the Pilbara;
- (l) how will those benefits referred to in (k) be assessed;
- (m) does the Government have a contract with Murdoch University to perform this work;
- (n) if the answer to (m) is no, why not;
- (o) if the answer to (m) is yes, will the Minister provide a copy of the contract;
- (p) in what way does this work comply with the State Supply Commission Guidelines and policies;
- (q) on what date, and in which publications was/were the opportunities to tender for this work published;
- (r) how many Pilbara based consultancies were invited to contract for this work;
- (s) in what way does this work comply with the Government Buy Local purchasing initiatives announced by the Minister on 5 June 2002;
- (t) how many similar studies does the Government intend to have carried out; and
- (u) what is the total amount of funding available for future studies?

Ms A.J. MacTIERNAN replied:

- a) Assessed from the budget and application for a Western Australian Regional Initiatives Scheme (WARIS) grant submitted by the applicant (Murdoch University).
- b) The WARIS application was discussed with Pilbara Development Commission staff during the assessment phase. It was agreed that preconditions for release of WARIS grant funding required the negotiation of the project's Terms of Reference, budget expenditure and scope of work prior to the final endorsement of the study by the Pilbara Development Commission Board. The Commission and the applicant are still in the negotiation phase.
- c) See above.
- d) The applicant.
- e) Murdoch University and the Pilbara Development Commission are currently working towards establishing the Terms of Reference and scope of work for the project.
- f) Not applicable.

- g) Subject to agreement on the Terms of Reference and the study proceeding, the Board of the Pilbara Development Commission. Final acquittal of the WARIS grant funding is to be managed through the Department of Local Government and Regional Development.
- h) Terms of Reference and scope of work will determine composition of the study team.
- i) Students may be used as part of the study team, subject to needs identified by the scope of work.
- j) Application of sustainability concepts at a regional level are relatively uncommon, though there is international recognition of their value to long term planning.
- k) Subject to agreement on the Terms of Reference, the strategy will identify sustainability objectives for the region and its communities relating to economic viability, social well being, and the maintenance of environmental integrity. The strategy will identify gaps in service or infrastructure delivery and propose solutions for communities to aid planning and prioritisation of resources.
- l) The impacts can be benchmarked against the published Indicators of Regional Development in Western Australia.
- m) No. Subject to Pilbara Development Commission negotiating and the Board endorsing the project's Terms of Reference, a Financial Assistance Agreement will be prepared.
- n) See above.
- o) Not applicable.
- p) Funds are provided through the WARIS grant program. The Financial Assistance Agreement will include a requirement that the recipient agrees to use local products and services for the project, wherever possible, using an open and competitive process.
- q) Project not funded through a public tender process. Application for WARIS grant was made under the WARIS scheme, advertised in The West Australian on Saturday, 24 August 2002 and in the regional press 21 – 28 August 2002.
- r) Not applicable.
- s) See point (p).
- t) Unknown, although the study may provide a framework for the development of sustainability strategies for other regions.
- u) Unknown.