

DIVISION 8: OFFICE OF NATIVE TITLE -

[Supplementary Information No A45.]

Question: Mr P.D. Omodei asked for an estimate of the State's costs in handling the Single Noongar Claim and the appeal.

Answer: The Single Noongar Claim (SNC) was filed in the Federal Court in September 2003 and the Metropolitan portion was combined into the claim in October 2003. Since that date, the Office of Native Title (ONT) has been involved in mediation with the South West Aboriginal Land and Sea Council to resolve the Single Noongar Claim and the underlying claims, by agreement. The costs associated with negotiation and mediation are a component of the overall operating costs of the ONT.

The trial of the Metropolitan portion commenced in October 2005 and a decision was handed down in September 2006. The State was represented by the State Solicitor's Office (SSO). Costs for SSO lawyers and ONT staff fall within the operating budgets of the respective agencies. The cost of external counsel and expert witnesses was \$214,972.

External costs for the appeal, heard by the Federal Court in April 2007 are \$84,378.