

Question on Notice

No. 589

Asked on 20 May 2004

MRS SCOTT asked the Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy (MS CLARK)-

QUESTION:

Will Aboriginal Council Area Communities receive the same level of funding once the State Government ceases to pay an annual operating grant to the Aboriginal Co-ordinating Council?

ANSWER:

When the operating grant to the Aboriginal Coordinating Council (ACC) is ceased later in 2004, Aboriginal Councils will receive an increased level of operational funding from the State Government.

On 2 October 2003, then Minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy, the Honourable Judy Spence MP, released *Meeting the Challenges of Community Governance – A White Paper on new laws for Aboriginal community governance*. The White Paper set out proposed new laws to replace the current legislation for Aboriginal Councils, the *Community Services (Aborigines) Act 1984*.

The White Paper indicated that the new laws for community governance in Aboriginal communities would no longer provide specifically for a peak body for councils in Aboriginal communities. The ACC would be wound up as a statutory body and operational funding allocated to it would instead be paid direct to Aboriginal Councils.

In 2003-04, the Department of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Policy's allocation of operational funding for the ACC is \$730,660, provided under the State Government Financial Aid Program. The Department is working towards a wind-up of the ACC's operations by 30 September 2004. Legislation to repeal the ACC as a statutory body is scheduled for consideration by Parliament by the end of 2004.

Once the operational wind-up of the ACC is finalised, the ACC allocation will be split equally between the 15 Aboriginal Councils. This will amount to an increase of operational funding for each Council of a little under \$50,000, to be paid under the State Government Financial Aid Program.

If they choose, the Councils can use this funding to establish a peak body of their own to represent them.