

Question on Notice

No. 576

Asked on Wednesday, 12 May 2021

MR M BERKMAN asked the Deputy Premier and Minister for State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning (HON S MILES) –

QUESTION:

With reference to the department's involvement as a party in Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal proceedings in Walker Group Holdings Pty Ltd v Queensland Information Commissioner [2021]—

Will the Deputy Premier advise (a) the total legal costs incurred by the department to participate as a party in this matter and (b) the department's justification for spending public funds to support Walker Group in its efforts to prevent the release of the Toondah Harbour Project Development Agreement?

ANSWER:

- a) I am advised that Economic Development Queensland (EDQ) within the Department of State Development, Infrastructure, Local Government and Planning has spent in the order of \$67,000 to date (excluding GST).
- b) EDQ is the project lead for the Queensland Government on Toondah Harbour. EDQ is as a specialist commercial business unit that carries out economic development and development for community purposes through agreements with private entities. EDQ delivers complex land development projects working with industry and in this capacity, is required by the *Economic Development Act 2012* to operate on a commercial basis to the extent practicable.

The RTI Act recognises that there are certain categories of information that may be exempt from disclosure, for example to protect an individual's privacy, maintain public safety and to allow companies to confidently enter into commercial agreements with the state.

EDQ appealed the IC decision in order to achieve certainty for EDQ and the private entities it deals with in the future about the confidentiality of their commercial dealings, in particular where the commercial arrangement contains a confidentiality clause requiring parties to keep certain information confidential. The decision of the Queensland Civil and Administrative Tribunal provides this certainty.

Members of the community will have an opportunity to see the details of the development proposal and have their say when the Walker Group environmental impact statement is publicly notified as part of the Commonwealth approvals process in coming months.