

Questions taken on notice and further information agreed to be supplied at the hearings.

Portfolio:	Regional Development
Witness:	Beth Jones
Committee Member:	Danny O'Brien
Page/s of transcript:	

Relevant text:

Danny O'BRIEN: Yes. Ms Jones, sorry, can I go back to my previous question about the staff at the LVA. You were answering at the time: are they all based in the Latrobe Valley?

Beth JONES: Thirty-two, yes, Mr O'Brien.

Danny O'BRIEN: Yes. Okay.

Harriet SHING: By Gippslanders for Gippslanders, I think, Mr O'Brien, which you would be delighted about.

Danny O'BRIEN: Different to the start, but anyway – when it started. Of the \$7.2 million, how much of that is actually allocated to staff salary and wages costs?

Beth JONES: I can tell you that, Mr O'Brien. The answer to that question is \$6.47 million.

Danny O'BRIEN: \$6.47 million divided by 32 is a total average of \$200,000. Is that right – \$200,000 per job?

Harriet SHING: And overheads, did you say?

Beth JONES: Yes, overheads. There is a range of operational costs – costs of buildings, costs of vehicles. It is encompassing all those things.

Danny O'BRIEN: Right. So that is not just wages then?

Beth JONES: No, absolutely. It is wages –

Harriet SHING: The total cost of running the LVA is \$7.2 million.

Danny O'BRIEN: I knew that, yes. That is in the budget.

Harriet SHING: Okay, just to be clear. I would hate for you to think, though, that this was about the figure of – what did you say – \$200,000?

Danny O'BRIEN: Well, \$6.47 million –

Harriet SHING: No, do not –

Danny O'BRIEN: Sorry, let us clarify this. I actually asked what the salary and wages cost is.

Beth JONES: Oh, the salary and wages cost – I do not have that in front of me, Mr O'Brien, but it is out of that.

Danny O'BRIEN: Okay. Could you provide that on notice?

Beth JONES: Yes.

Answer:

Funding provided for Victorian Public Service staff and operations is based on a Department of Treasury and Finance standard costing model that provides an allocation for salary, superannuation, on-costs, operating costs and accommodation. The salary component allocated for the Latrobe Valley Authority's staff in 2023-24, is \$4.6 million.

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Relevant text:

Danny O'BRIEN: Thank you, Chair. Ms Jones, just continuing on Tiny Towns – it is going to be very hard not to say 'tidy towns' – how much of that money is already allocated to cover Labor election commitments?

Beth JONES: Sorry, Mr O'Brien, can I clarify which money you are –

Danny O'BRIEN: The \$10 million for the Tiny Towns Fund.

Beth JONES: The \$10 million.

Danny O'BRIEN: Yes. Any?

Beth JONES: A small amount, Mr O'Brien. Sorry, Mr O'Brien, let me just clarify this. There is a very small amount. I will get the figure for you, Mr O'Brien –

Danny O'BRIEN: By the end or on notice.

Beth JONES: The Cockatoo town hall, for example, Mr O'Brien –

Harriet SHING: I think there is \$50,000 for the Cockatoo market. That is actually listed in the budget paper as well, Mr O'Brien, I believe.

Danny O'BRIEN: Would you mind providing a list, if there is anything more than that, on notice?

Harriet SHING: Yes.

Harriet SHING: It is just the \$50,000 for the Cockatoo –

Danny O'BRIEN: That is it? Okay, thank you.

Answer:

The Tiny Towns Fund is a new initiative of the Victorian Government with a commitment of \$10.03 million over four years in the 2023-24 Budget.

In 2023-24, the allocation of funding under the Tiny Towns Fund is \$2.53 million.

The only election commitment identified for funding under Tiny Towns is \$30,000 for the Lions Club of Beechworth to support the club to continue serving the local community. The funding is included in the \$10.03 million Tiny Towns Fund commitment.

Support for the Connecting Cockatoo Communities is separately funded through the Doing What Matters - regions initiative.

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Relevant text:

Danny O'BRIEN: Well, the question was how much is available for regional development funding for grants programs. Do you have a figure for that at the moment, jobs in particular? Just by way of example, I just had a quick look at RDV's website, and I am not sure that these are all DJSIR programs, but the Regional Infrastructure Fund, closed; Stronger Regional Communities, closed; Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund, closed; Latrobe Valley Economic Facilitation Fund, closed; the Ride High Country Fund, closed – just as an example. The Regional Jobs Fund is open. So can you tell me what, out of your department's funding streams, there actually is left?

Beth JONES: Yes. So obviously, Mr O'Brien, the Regional Jobs Fund is open, it remains open. That is an active funding stream at the moment.

Danny O'BRIEN: And how much money is in that?

Beth JONES: The balance of that, Mr O'Brien, would be in the order of I think about \$2.5 million – \$2 million.

Danny O'BRIEN: \$2 million?

Beth JONES: Correct. In terms of your question about next year, what types of grants are available within that output, the Minister has talked about the \$10 million for Tiny Towns, she has talked about the Bendigo Art Gallery, she has talked about the Bendigo industrial precinct. There is also significant money that is phased from existing RDV projects that continue to deliver into the out years, Mr O'Brien. So for example, we have about 650 active projects right across the state.

Danny O'BRIEN: Can I get, perhaps on notice, the actual funding amounts left –

Beth JONES: A breakdown.

Answer:

As of 8 June 2023:

- the Regional Jobs Fund stream of the Regional Jobs and Infrastructure Fund has a contestable funds balance of \$3.72 million noting that there are a number of projects currently under active assessment
- the Portland Diversification Fund has a contestable funds balance of \$6.70 million noting that there are also projects currently under active assessment

- the Tiny Towns Fund is currently being designed and will be launched in the new financial year with an allocation of \$10.00 million of contestable funds for eligible community groups, local organisations and towns with population under 5,000 to support the delivery of community infrastructure, facilities and capacity-building projects

In addition, there is \$64.3 million of grant funding in the Regional Development 2023/24 output that is committed to the delivery of around 650 existing rural and regional projects.