

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Environment portfolio

Question No: 139
Hearing: Additional Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1.4
Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: World Heritage Committee - advice provided to the 19 countries
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Question Date: 11 May 2015
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Singh asked:

Dr Dripps: There are 21 different countries and so he has had 21 different sets of advice. I am trying to draw out the general themes for you. There has been advice around making sure that countries are well informed and advised of Australia's responses. There have been responses of satisfaction with the degree of investment and the scope and scale of the long-term sustainability plan. There has been advice about engagement with the International Union for Conservation of Nature and those kinds of things. **Senator SINGH:** Are you able to provide the committee on notice with a more thorough answer to that question in relation to the advice that was provided by those 19 countries? **Dr Dripps:** I will endeavour to do so.

Dr de Brouwer: That material is typically reported through cables and Australia's diplomatic reporting, so I think we will have to consult with our colleagues about that. Are you talking specifically about each country's views or how they are responding to the detail of the state party report or the long-term sustainability plan? We will take that on notice.

Answer:

The issues raised by countries during technical discussions on Australia's response to the World Heritage Committee's recommendations on the Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area have focused on the issues identified in the World Heritage Committee's recommendations, that is:

- Improvements to Australia's environmental assessment and planning processes
- Maintenance and enhancement of the Outstanding Universal Value of the site
- Management of ports and shipping
- Enhancements to action, monitoring and reporting on water quality
- Strengthened governance and resourcing, and
- How Australia is addressing climate change impacts on the property.

The specific content of these discussions, including feedback and questions asked by World Heritage Committee member countries, are treated as 'in confidence' in accordance with standard diplomatic protocol.