

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

Question No: 45
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Programme: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division
Topic: WORLD HERITAGE - STAFF NUMBERS
Hansard Page: 28
Question Date: 27 May 2014
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: How many staff do you have working on World Heritage matters?

Mr Oxley: I will take that on notice because the number of staff working on World Heritage matters varies significantly according to what we are needing to deal with at any particular time in the World Heritage space. The staff of the Heritage Branch in the Wildlife, Heritage and Marine Division—some but not all of their efforts are directed towards World Heritage matters. A lot of their effort is directed towards National Heritage places assessments and so on.

Senator WATERS: The 19 Australian World Heritage Areas that we have—how many staff do you have working on those?

Mr Oxley: Again, this is something I will take on notice. The efforts of the Heritage Branch are generally directed towards World Heritage. We are structured into streams. We have a natural heritage team, an historic heritage team and an Indigenous heritage team, and embedded in their responsibilities is a focus on World Heritage. So I cannot be precise without taking that on notice.

Senator WATERS: I am interested in your remark that those staff do a range of tasks. I would be concerned if we did not have people who are solely dedicated to World Heritage.

Senator Birmingham: I am sure there are some who are solely dedicated; I am sure there are some who perform numerous functions. Obviously some of Mr Oxley's time is spent on such matters. Some of Dr Dripps's time is spent on such matters. Would you like them to spend time trying to apportion how much of their time they spend on such matters to answer your question?

Senator WATERS: I am more interested in the dedicated staff in that area. I will await that response on notice. Can you turn your minds specifically to World Heritage areas. Firstly the Tasmanian World Heritage area. Are you able to give me an approximation, if not a definitive answer, on how many staff are dedicated to the ongoing management of that area?

Dr Dripps: Mr Oxley has responded to the question in the general sense, and the answer in the specific sense can be also covered off in the question on notice.

Answer:

In June 2014 the duties of thirty staff of the Wildlife, Heritage and Marine Division included work relating to World Heritage. A sub-set of these staff work primarily or exclusively on the Tasmanian Wilderness World Heritage Area. In addition, staff in Policy and Communications and Sustainability, Policy and Analysis Divisions work on World Heritage matters as relevant.

Parks Australia, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the Australian Antarctic Division and the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust are involved in managing the World Heritage Areas under Australian Government jurisdiction - Uluru Kata Tjuta, Kakadu National Park, the Great Barrier Reef, Heard and McDonald Islands, and Cockatoo Island, part of the Australian Convict Sites.

State Governments are responsible for day-to-day management of World Heritage Areas in their jurisdiction.