

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 129
Hearing: Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Environment Standards Division (ESD)
Topic: Inpex – Western Top End Megafauna
Hansard Page:
Question Date: 9 June 2017
Question Type: Written

Senator Waters asked:

We have seen a copy of the agreement between the NT government and Inpex signed in October 2014. In Annexure D, the budget is laid out, and funds were supposed to start flowing in the third quarter of 2016. Why didn't that occur?

What is the holdup with that project? Does Inpex accept that they need to fund it, or are they still trying to dodge that obligation?

Answer:

Condition 11 of the approval for the INPEX Ichthys project requires the person taking the action to submit a Coastal Offset Strategy for the protection of listed threatened and migratory species impacted by the Ichthys project in Darwin Harbour. That Strategy was approved by the Minister's delegate in April 2012.

The approved Coastal Offset Strategy outlines programs to be funded by INPEX as offsets for impacts to matters of national environmental significance associated with the Ichthys project. One of those programs, the Western Top End Marine Megafauna Program is to be designed and implemented by the Northern Territory Government, with funding to be provided by INPEX.

The approved Coastal Offset Strategy requires INPEX to provide \$24 million over 22 years to the Northern Territory Government to implement the Western Top End Marine Megafauna Program. The Department has been advised by INPEX that the Northern Territory Government intends to commence the Western Top End Marine Megafauna Program in 2018/19, following completion of the Conservation Status of Coastal Dolphins Program (a program part of the approved Coastal Offset Strategy). The outcomes of the Conservation Status of Coastal Dolphins Program will inform the design of the Western Top End Marine Megafauna Program.