

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

Answers to questions on notice
Environment and Energy portfolio

Question No: 54
Hearing: Supplementary Budget Estimates
Outcome: Outcome 1
Program: Wildlife Heritage and Marine Division (WHM)
Topic: National Heritage Listing – Snowy Mountains Scheme
Hansard Page: 121
Question Date: 24 October 2016
Question Type: Spoken

Senator Bushby, David asked:

CHAIR: I just have one quick question, hopefully. I am interested in the announcement of the National Heritage listing of the Snowy Mountains Scheme. I am just interested in the process which led to that being listed and a quick summary of the heritage reasons that led to it being considered so important.

Mr Johnston: The Snowy Mountains Scheme was nominated a few years ago for National Heritage listing. The Australian Heritage Council conducted an assessment of that place and found that it would meet National Heritage values for two broad reasons: firstly, for its engineering achievement, in particular some of the significant engineering initiatives that were pioneered in Australia such as rock bolting, and, secondly, for its impact upon multicultural Australia, in particular the use of displaced migrants to build the scheme. Once the Australian Heritage Council had finished its assessment that then passed to the minister. A couple of years passed where we, as the department on behalf of the minister, were consulting not only with Snowy Hydro in particular but also with the other stakeholders in the area because, whereas the Australian Heritage Council by legislation can only consider the heritage values of a place in doing its assessment, the minister also takes into account social and economic impacts. So, prior to making the recommendation to the minister to list the Snowy Mountains Scheme, we made sure that we got the consent of Snowy Hydro and the other stakeholders in that area, and the minister was able to make the announcement on Friday.

CHAIR: A lot of the criteria that you raised or that has been noted about the Snowy Mountains Scheme and is part of that listing would also, I suspect, apply to the Tasmanian hydro schemes. Is that something that has been looked at at all?

Mr Johnston: To my knowledge the Tasmanian hydro scheme has not been nominated, but we can check that one and come back to you.

CHAIR: I am just curious because it similarly had a lot of migrants involved post-Second World War and probably even greater engineering challenges. If you could take that on notice, that would be appreciated.

Mr Johnston: Yes, and we will come back to you.

Response:

None of the Tasmanian hydro-electric schemes have been nominated to the National Heritage List to-date. The former Hydro Electric Commission Building in Hobart was nominated to the National Heritage List in 2004. After the Australian Heritage Council (Council) found the place did not have National Heritage values, the then Minister decided not to include the place in the National Heritage List in 2005.

During the Australian Heritage Council's National Heritage assessment of the Snowy Mountains Scheme, it compared the Scheme with a number of other hydro-electric schemes

across Australia, including the Gordon Power Scheme in Tasmania. The Council found that the Snowy Mountains Scheme is unique in terms of its size and complexity.