

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: AGLC **Question No:** 001

Topic: Caring for our Country – community organisation engagement

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator McKenzie asked:

By June 2013 Caring for our Country will have engaged with 500 community organisations in coastal and marine rehabilitation, restoration and conservation actions.

1. How is this engagement going?
2. What has been the feedback on this engagement?

Answer:

1. Caring for our Country has surpassed the goal of engaging with 500 community organisations with a focus on coastal and marine rehabilitation. At 2 November 2012, over 6,000 community groups have been engaged in over 900 Caring for our Country projects relating to coastal and marine conservation. Additionally over 1,290 community groups have been engaged through small Community Action Grants, which undertake a variety of conservation projects including coastal and marine conservation. Caring for our Country is now looking towards continuing this engagement through the next phase.
2. Feedback from the community about Caring for our Country and Community Action Grants, in particular, has been positive. In 2012, the Australian Government invited public consultation about the first phase of Caring for our Country. Over 4,000 submissions were received through a variety of mechanisms, including face-to-face meetings, online discussions, videos, written submissions and quick polls. Broadly speaking, the community has not suggested major changes to the way the government invests in natural resource management through Caring for our Country.

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Answers to questions on notice
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Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: AGLC **Question No:** 002

Topic: Caring for our Country – next phase

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator McKenzie asked:

Program deliverables under Caring for our Country include developing the next phase of Caring for our Country from 2013-14 to 2017-18 based on a review of the initiative in consultation with stakeholders.

1. Has the review of the consultation with stakeholders begun?
2. What is the next phase of development likely to entail?

Answer:

1. The Caring for our Country Review took place from November 2010 to May 2011.

Further public consultation took place from 21 June to 15 August 2012 to discuss ways to improve the delivery of Caring for our Country in the second phase. It was broadly based on the information presented in Caring for our Country: An outline for the future 2013-2018 which was released on 21 June 2012. A publication for the web is currently being prepared which will outline how the key messages received through both the review and the recent consultation will be considered in the new program design.

2. The next phase of development entails the Australian Government working through the information collected through the recent consultation and finalising the program design for the next five years of Caring for our Country. It is anticipated that further details on the future of Caring for our Country will be released in late 2012.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: AGLC **Question No:** 003

Topic: Indigenous expenditure – Working on Country

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Scullion asked:

1. Please indicate whether the programs and measures listed below are still operating in 2012-13. If they are still operating, please provide by program/ measure the current allocation and expenditure year to date (please indicate in respect of any of these programs/measures if information has already been provided):
 - a. Working on Country
 - i. C4oC Initiative
 - ii. NT
 - iii. Regional
 - iv. Flexible
 - v. Trainees

Answer:

Following the Indigenous Economic Review, all sources of funding for Working on Country were consolidated in to a single administered item under the Caring for our Country initiative through the May 2012 Budget (refer Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Portfolio, Portfolio Budget Statements 2011-12, page 31). The consolidation has had no effect on the level of funding available for Working on Country.

The Working on Country appropriation for the 2012-13 financial year is \$57.428 million (refer Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities Portfolio, Portfolio Budget Statements 2011-12, page 33). \$24.9 million was expended to 30 September 2012.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: AGLC **Question No:** 004

Topic: Ongoing funding for NRM programs
– Caring for our Country

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Siewert asked:

1. What is the commitment to ongoing funding for NRM programs and the future of Caring For our Country program specifically?
2. Now that the Caring for our Country program has been split into two streams (environment / agriculture), how are you intending to ensure that there is consistency between those streams?

Answer:

1. In the 2012-13 Budget, the Australian Government committed \$2.2 billion for the next phase of Caring for our Country. To allow for Caring for our Country to commence from July 2013, it is expected that program arrangements will be finalised in the coming months. Decisions on how Caring for our Country funding will be divided against priorities, delivery mechanisms and activities have not been finalised.
2. Consistency between the sustainable agriculture and environment streams will be ensured through joint governance arrangements. The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) are working together on the design of delivery arrangements. Ongoing formal governance arrangements are also in place for ongoing communication between DAFF and the department.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: AGLC **Question No:** 005

Topic: Reef Rescue

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. What is the spending allocation for Reef Rescue beyond 2013?
2. Can you confirm the amounts that have been allocated to Reef conservation through the Caring for Country program?
3. What proportion of the Caring for Country funding been frozen?
4. What programs are currently underway as part of the Reef Conservation components of the Caring for Country program?
5. From where and by whom are these programs being administered?
6. How are these organisational structures being funded?

Answer:

1. Details of the funding profile for the next phase of Caring for our Country are yet to be announced.
2. The amounts allocated to Reef conservation through the Caring for our Country program include:
 - \$200 million for the Reef Rescue initiative;
 - \$1.4 million for the Queensland Tourism Industry to control Crown of Thorns Starfish in high value tourism sites; and
 - \$0.7 million to the Great Barrier Reef Foundation's eReefs project which will support water quality monitoring across the entire Great Barrier Reef area and catchments.
3. Nil. Expenditure for Caring for our Country 2012/13 is on track.
4. Please see the response to question 2.
5. The overall funding is administered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. The components are being implemented by a range of organisations including Natural Resource Management groups, peak industry bodies, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, the Great Barrier Reef Foundation and the Queensland Tourism Industry.

6. Regional Natural Resource Management bodies, with the support of agricultural industry partners, deliver funding on behalf of the Australian Government via devolved grants. Delivery partners can allocate up to 10 per cent of their project funds for administration. The Australian Government-led program design was a merit-based select tender process. On-ground projects implemented by delivery partners were selected in accordance with specific Caring for our Country – Reef Rescue program guidelines.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: AGLC **Question No:** 006

Topic: Environmental Stewardship Program

Proof Hansard Page and Date 101

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Heffernan asked:

Senator HEFFERNAN: Could you give me the details of when this lady applied for the grant? Was it before or after she bought the property?

Mr Sullivan: I cannot give you that detail.

Senator HEFFERNAN: Can you take that on notice?

Mr Sullivan: I can take it on notice.

...

Senator HEFFERNAN: Can you give me the names of the people who visited the properties, on notice

Answer:

The final application for the fifth box gum grassy woodland round under the Environmental Stewardship Program was received from Empire Property and Investment Group Pty Ltd on 25 February 2010.

Information provided to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) as part of the application states that contracts for the sale of the property were exchanged on 23 February 2010.

The Central West Catchment Management Authority was contracted to undertake specified activities for the funding round on behalf of the department, including on-ground assessment. Mr Clayton Miller (Catchment Officer – Tablelands, Central West Catchment Management Authority) undertook a physical assessment of the property on 2 December 2009.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: AGLC **Question No:** 007

Topic: AGLC – natural attrition of staff

Proof Hansard Page and Date 110

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: ...Dr Grimes said that restrictions were going to be placed on replacing staff, so there is natural attrition. How many staff has your division not replaced if people have exited?

Mr Sullivan: I would have to take that on notice.

Answer:

Since the recruitment restrictions were put in place on 27 August 2012, the Land and Coasts Division has not replaced seven people from positions which have been exited, as at 15 October 2012.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 008

Topic: Caring for our Country –
establishment of threat abatement
plans

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator McKenzie asked:

Caring for our Country also aims to establish threat abatement plans (as required) to guide efforts to address invasive species-related key threatening processes.

1. How many plans are expected to be developed?
2. How many plans have so far been developed?
3. What process is undertaken to develop such plans?

Answer:

1. The number of threat abatement plans that will be developed is dependent on:
 - the list of key threatening processes that is established under section 183 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act); and
 - whether the Minister decides that a threat abatement plan should be made to abate a key threatening process (section 270A of the EPBC Act).
2. There are 14 threat abatement plans made under section 270B of the EPBC Act.
3. The process for developing a threat abatement plan is established in the EPBC Act, in particular section 270B (Making or adopting a threat abatement plan) and section 271 (Content of a threat abatement plan), and regulation 7.12 (Content of threat abatement plans).

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 009

Topic: AFMA and the application of precautionary principle

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Siewert asked:

1. Following on from the issues surrounding the Small Pelagic Fishery, and statements made by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities during Questions on the 13th of Sept 2012 which indicate some concerns with how AFMA has applied its legislation, what role is the Environment Department playing in reviewing fisheries management in Australia?
2. Will the review of AFMA and fisheries management have any implication for the ecological sustainability assessment process?
3. What responsibility does this Department have to ensuring that other agencies are performing their environmental management or protection duties effectively?

Answer:

1. The review of Commonwealth fisheries management legislation currently underway is being administered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF).

Officers from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) have met with the reviewer Mr David Borthwick, at his invitation. The department anticipates providing a written submission to the review. A departmental officer also sits on the steering committee for the reviews of the Commonwealth Harvest Strategy Policy and the Commonwealth fisheries by-catch policy being conducted by DAFF.

2. The terms of reference for the review include examination of intersections between the fisheries management legislation and the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act). The Australian Government will consider any recommendations made as a result of the review.

3. The EPBC Act imposes a number of requirements on Commonwealth agencies depending on the nature of the action in question. For example:
 - a. Commonwealth agencies must refer any action that has, will have or is likely to have a significant impact on the environment inside or outside the Australian jurisdiction;
 - b. a Commonwealth agency or employee must consider advice from the Minister before authorising one of the following actions with a significant impact on the environment:
 - i. providing foreign aid;
 - ii. managing aircraft operations in airspace;
 - iii. adopting or implementing a major development plan for an airport; or
 - iv. an action prescribed by the regulations.
 - c. the Australian Fisheries Management Authority must make agreements with the Environment Minister under section 146 of the EPBC Act for the strategic assessment of the impacts of Commonwealth managed fisheries, before determining a plan of management for the fishery or determining not to have a plan of management.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 010

Topic: Australia's sustainable fishing industry

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. Do you agree that Australia has one of the best managed and most sustainable fishing industries in the world?

Answer:

1. Yes.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 011

Topic: Marine Parks - compensation to affected business

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. Commercial fishing sector business lenders are obviously aware some of their customers will soon face significant income reductions when product volume dries up. There are no open fishing grounds left to move to, due to all the state and commonwealth reserves. The security value of their fishing boats will take a huge drop. Some of the banks moved quickly to wind up fishing businesses and recover their debts during the GBRMPA "RAP" process. Some fishers facing lock outs under these new reserves won't be able to borrow; others will soon face pressure to liquidate assets at their annual finance review. If they have a major break down and need to spend \$60,000 on new engines and equipment, they may not be able to secure finance. Where do they turn?

What is the Government doing to help businesses continue to operate, get support from their banks, and remain solvent during the 18 month wait for the marine parks to take effect?

2. The Environment Minister, Tony Burke and the Fisheries Minister Senator Ludwig indicated that approximately \$100 million would be set aside for compensation for the fishing related businesses.
 - a. How was that \$100 million figure calculated?
 - b. Where in the budget is there provision for the fisheries adjustment package?
3. Queensland has most of the Ports that ABARES say will bear the brunt of the new reserves, Mooloolaba, Cairns and Karumba. The exact impact can't be known yet, as SEWPAC doesn't know how many vessels will ultimately be removed due to reserve impacts (by licence and permit buy outs and also by resulting commercial pressures). However ABARES have documented that these Ports will be hardest hit. The Draft Fisheries Adjustment Package contains this statement: "Assistance for businesses upstream and downstream of directly impacted fishing businesses are not within the scope of the package. Such businesses have a demonstrated capacity to adjust to changing market conditions without government intervention."
 - a. What economist evidence is there to prove this claim?
 - b. How can such a broad statement be accurate in the context of each of Queensland's fishing Ports, given ABARES research saying some ports will hardly be affected and others will take major hits

- c. How can specialist seafood infrastructure businesses “adapt to changing market conditions” without help, if many of the boats that used the infrastructure in a Port are gone, and there are no boats to replace them?
 - d. The commercial fishing infrastructure providers in Mooloolaba (and presumably other heavily impacted Ports) have seen the capital value of their specialist commercial fishing infrastructure and plant and equipment decline significantly since the reserve announcement and Coral Sea closure. The businesses are now not saleable; buyers and banks are aware of the impending major decline in seafood harvest and vessel numbers. Future expansion opportunities have been ruled out; there can be no growth in such businesses when there are few boats and nowhere left to expand fishing operations. The special plant and equipment is not usable in other sectors, so diversification is not possible. Given these large impacts, poor prospects of recovery and nil future growth opportunities, why are they excluded from adjustment assistance?
4. Isn't the “world's biggest marine reserve network” a major Government market intervention that must distort the orderly operation of the market in these specific Queensland ports , rather than just a minor change to market conditions matter that businesses might be able to handle alone?
 5. The draft package suggests that fishing businesses might only be given 60% of the annual gross income they have historically earned from the lock out areas.
 - a. Is there any economist evidence that verifies that such a small (taxable) payment will adequately overcome this permanent loss of income and permit a fishing business to remain commercially viable and profitable into the future?
 - b. The capital values of commercial fishing boats and plant and equipment have already collapsed due to the new reserves announcements. Supply of fishing vessels now exceeds future demand, resulting in evitable large capital losses. Why is there no package component that adjusts these large capital losses, as in many cases a substantial part of a fisher family's life savings are invested in the fishing boat?
 6. Will the Government bear the claimant's cost of legitimate appeals?
 7. Will claimant's appeals be independently assessed?
 8. Is it true that the appeal process will be limited to the appeal reviewer checking whether the mathematics (gross catch multiplied by a percentage) was calculated correctly?

Answer:

1. The Australian Government is working with industry to reduce the uncertainty around the impacts of the new marine reserves on individual fishing businesses. An important part of this work is countering the misinformation that is being spread about the impacts of the new marine reserves on the commercial fishing sector. The government has already announced its intention to ensure that assistance to fishing businesses displaced by the new marine reserves is in place and flowing before the reserve exclusions come into effect.

2a. The \$100 million figure was calculated on the basis of the experience of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) with the administration of other structural adjustment schemes and the experience of other government departments and jurisdictions. The estimates were based on the level of catch assessed by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and Sciences (ABARES) as being displaced by the proposed marine reserves.

The socio-economic impact assessments undertaken by ABARES indicated the proposed reserves are likely to displace around 1 per cent of the average annual value of wild catch fisheries production in Australia. This analysis supports provision of an assistance package of this scale to meet the needs of those directly impacted.

2b. Funding for the Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package will be made available from the Caring for our Country initiative.

3a. ABARES has estimated the displacement impact of the new marine reserves at less than 1 per cent of the total annual average catch. Most fisheries have an annual variability in their catch (and income) significantly higher than the potential loss of catch as a result of the new marine reserves. Fishing businesses and those which support the sector have proven resilient to these changes.

3b. ABARES research is based upon the worst case scenario where no alternate fishing opportunities are available for any of the fisheries displaced from the new marine reserves. The actual impact upon Queensland ports is unknown at present as in some cases it will depend upon the response of a small number of operators and it is not possible to pre-empt how they may adjust their operations. In Cairns and Mooloolaba, the ABARES estimated impacts, even if they were to eventuate, would represent a small proportion of total fishing activity within these ports.

3c. Specialist seafood infrastructure businesses deal with fluctuations in the fishing industry on a regular basis. However, apart from a few ports (and in these the operations of only a minor proportion of fishers), most ports around Australia and in Queensland will experience negligible displacement. Given that the new marine reserves displacing an estimated 1 per cent of total wild capture fisheries, it is not realistic to draw the conclusion that many boats will leave Australia's ports.

3d. See the answer to 3c.

4. The government's marine reserve networks are a major reform of marine environmental management achieved with minimal overall impact on the Australian fishing industry. However, the government is aware that some individual fishing businesses may face significant adjustment costs. The government has indicated that it will assist those fishing businesses most affected by the creation of the new marine reserves through the development of a Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package.

5a. The discussion paper provided information on a number of possible elements of the eventual Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package and a number of suggested parameters to determine assistance levels at the individual business and fishery level. The proposal put forward included a proposed formula to provide assistance based on an assumed level of profit foregone. The profit level proposed (20 per cent) was considered substantially higher than that in many fisheries.

The discussion paper flagged several potential elements of an assistance package. The question on what adjustment strategy an individual business adopts is one that should be determined by the business itself based on all the information it has available.

For instance, some industry representatives and commercial fishers have stated a preference for fishery wide assistance such as assistance for certification, research or marketing rather than for individual assistance.

- 5b. The loss of access to historic fishing areas due to the new reserves is estimated to be low and unlikely to have flow-on impacts to boat prices. No evidence of actual impacts on boat prices has been brought to the department's attention.

It is anticipated that a well-designed adjustment package should adequately address any potential loss in entitlement value.

- 6. The Australian Government has made no decision on this as yet.
- 7. The Australian Government has made no decision on this as yet.
- 8. The Australian Government has made no decision on this as yet.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 012

Topic: Coral Sea Marine Park – discussions
with GBRMPA

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. Have there been any formal discussions with the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority in relation to the management of the Coral Sea marine Park?

Answer:

1. Discussions on reserve management are ongoing.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 013

Topic: Coral Sea Marine Park – foreign policy implications

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. Has the Government received any legal advice regarding the foreign policy implications of closing the Coral Sea to Australian commercial tuna fishing? What impact will this policy have on our relationship with our Pacific neighbors?

Answer:

1. Decisions in relation to the creation of new marine reserves were taken at a whole of government level and included consideration of relevant foreign policy matters. The Governments of Indonesia, Timor L'Este, Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, New Caledonia/France and New Zealand were briefed at key stages in the development of the marine reserves network, including on declaration. The decision to proclaim the network is not expected to have any negative impact on Australia's relationship with its neighbours.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 014

Topic: Coral Sea Marine Park –
management and budget

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. How will the 989,842 square kilometres of the Coral Sea be policed?
2. How does the Government intend to manage effectively 3.1 million square kilometers and has the cost been budgeted for in the forward estimates? What is that figure?

Answer:

1. Existing Commonwealth marine reserves are managed in cooperation with other Commonwealth agencies, State agencies (through annual business agreements) and through contracted service providers. The scope of this work includes compliance and enforcement activities. Border Protection Command coordinates surveillance and response operations that detect and deter maritime threats within Australia's maritime areas, including the Coral Sea.

It is anticipated that these arrangements will be built on and expand as management arrangements for the new reserves come into effect on the water from 1 July 2014.

2. The detail of how Commonwealth marine reserves are to be managed will be set out in their respective management plans. Under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act), once a new marine reserve has been proclaimed, the Director of National Parks must develop a management plan for the reserve. The process for developing management plans has commenced.

Reserves will be managed at a regional scale, with a single management plan being developed for each marine reserve network and for the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve. Management plans set out how the reserves are to be managed for a period of 10 years. The plans will provide details on the objectives, values and pressures, zoning, management strategies and actions for each of the marine reserves networks and the Coral Sea.

The 2012/13 Portfolio Budget Statement includes, in the provisional budget estimates, funding for \$58.2 million over six years for the Regional Marine Planning Program. The *One Land – Many Stories Prospectus of Investment 2013-2014* indicates that the management of marine reserves in Commonwealth waters will be given greater emphasis under the second phase of Caring for our Country in the sustainable environment stream.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 015

Topic: Dieback Threat Abatement Plan

Proof Hansard Page and Date: Written

or Written Question:

Senator Siewert asked:

1. What is the status of the Dieback Threat Abatement Plan and what are the plans for funding and resourcing the plan?

Answer:

Answer:

1. The 2001 'Threat abatement plan for dieback caused by the root-rot fungus *Phytophthora cinnamomi*' remains in force.

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) has developed a revised draft 'Threat abatement plan for disease in natural ecosystems caused by *Phytophthora cinnamomi*' in consultation with State agencies and experts in the field. The revised draft plan was reviewed by the Threatened Species Scientific Committee in September 2012. The draft plan is expected to be released for public consultation in early 2013.

Threat abatement plans are not funding programs and allocation of Australian Government funding to threat abatement varies according to government priorities and the activities of other organisations.

In 2012-13, as well as providing funding from Caring for our Country for integrated natural resource management projects which support activities aimed at reducing the impacts and spread of *Phytophthora* dieback, the department is contributing \$33,000 to the Australian Seed Bank Partnership to collect seed of nationally listed species which are threatened by *P. cinnamomi*.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 016

Topic: Draft management plans

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. When will the draft management plans be available?
2. What is the cost of preparing a management plan?

Answer:

1. Draft management plans for the South-west, North-west, North and Temperate East networks of Commonwealth Marine Reserves and for the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve will be released after consideration of comments received during a 30 day period of public comment on the Notice of Intent (NOI) to develop management plans. It is anticipated that draft management plans will be made available for public comment early in 2013.
2. \$95,000 has been allocated for the preparation of a management plan for each region; this does not include staff salaries.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 017

Topic: EPBC Amendment (Declared Commercial Fishing Activities) Bill 2012 – expert panel

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Who is or will the Minister taking advice from on the composition of the expert panel?
2. What is the likelihood that the expert panel maybe only one person?
3. What thought has been given to the Terms of Reference for the expert panel?
4. What thought has been given to the manner in which the expert panel is to carry out the assessment?

Answer:

1. On 19 November 2012, the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, with the agreement of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, made the *Final (Small Pelagic Fishery) Declaration 2012* and agreed to establish an expert panel to conduct an assessment of the environmental impacts of the declared commercial fishing activity described in the declaration.

Section 390SH of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) provides for the Minister to, as soon as practicable after making a final declaration, establish an expert panel to conduct an assessment and prepare a report about the fishing activity.

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, in consultation with the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, is providing advice to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities on potential membership of the expert panel.

2. The membership of the expert panel is a decision for the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.
3. The terms of reference are being finalised by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.
4. The expert panel will undertake its assessment consistent with the terms of reference.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 018

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – acceptable considerations

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. If the boat had less than 2000 tonnes storage would it be acceptable to fish for small pelagic fish in Commonwealth waters?
2. If the boat were less than 130m in length would it be acceptable to fish for small pelagic fish in Commonwealth waters?
3. If the boat did not have on board processing facilities would it be acceptable to fish for small pelagic fish in Commonwealth waters?

Answer:

1. The *Final (Small Pelagic Fishery) Declaration 2012* does not prohibit the operation of vessels with less than 2,000 tonnes of fish storage capacity.
2. The *Final (Small Pelagic Fishery) Declaration 2012* does not prohibit the operation of vessels that are less than 130 metres in length.
3. The *Final (Small Pelagic Fishery) Declaration 2012* does not prohibit the operation of vessels that do not have onboard fish processing facilities.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 019

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – assessment of operations

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. What advice did the Department give the Minister to help him come to his original decision regarding the additional requirements to be applied to the FV Abel Tasman: "require the super trawler to adopt worlds-best practice methods to avoid listed species, particularly seals, dolphins and sea birds being killed or injured during its trawling operations".
2. In Minister Burke's media release of 4 September, he also stated that these conditions were "based on a rigorous assessment" by the Department of the potential environmental impact of a large mid-water trawl freezer vessel. How was this "rigorous assessment" undertaken?
3. If the original additional requirements were based on a rigorous assessment and were in line with worlds best practice why did the Minister feel compelled to seek further ways to prevent the FV Abel Tasman from fishing in Commonwealth waters?
4. When did the Minister ask the Department to start looking at other options to prevent the FV Abel Tasman from operating in Commonwealth waters?
5. What was the Minister's justification for asking the Department to find other methods for preventing the FV Abel Tasman from operating in Commonwealth waters?

Answer:

1. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' (the department) advice to the Minister in relation to his decision to accredit the Small Pelagic Fishery with conditions under Part 13 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) is set out in the department's briefing note B12/1514 on the department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/commonwealth/pelagics/pubs/small-pelagics-assessment-brief1-2012.pdf>

2. The department's assessment of the potential environmental impact of a large mid-water trawl freezer vessel is contained in Attachment B of B12/1514, which is on the department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/commonwealth/pelagics/pubs/small-pelagics-part13-assessment-2012.pdf>

3-5. In his media release of 11 September 2012, which can be viewed at <http://www.environment.gov.au/minister/burke/2012/mr20120911.html>, the Minister outlines his reasons for introducing additional powers into the EPBC Act to prevent new commercial fishing activities from operating while further scientific assessments are undertaken.

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Question No: 020

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – considerations for uncertainty

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. How does the size of the boat affect the potential for the boat to have negative interactions / catch seals or dolphins or have a negative impact on sea birds?
2. How does the fact there is on-board fish processing facilities affect the potential for the boat to have negative interactions / catch seals or dolphins or have a negative impact on sea birds?
3. How does the storage capacity for fish or fish products in excess of 2,000 tonnes affect the potential for the boat to have negative interactions / catch seals or dolphins or have a negative impact on sea birds?

Answer:

The detailed advice of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities about matters pertaining to the potential environmental impacts, including on seals, dolphins and seabirds, from the introduction of large mid-water trawl freezer vessels can be found in briefing note – ‘*Environmental impacts of large mid-water trawl freezer vessels in the Small Pelagic Fishery*’. The briefing note is available at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/pubs/interim-declaration-briefing-note.pdf>

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 021

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – dolphin and seal interactions

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Has the Minister or any Departmental officers been on board the FV Abel Tasman?
2. Has the Minister or Department considered the comments of the skipper of the FV Abel Tasman regarding dolphin interactions in coming to a decision regarding the uncertainty of environmental impacts with regard to this marine mammal?
3. Has the Minister or Department considered the comments of the skipper of the FV Abel Tasman regarding seal interactions in coming to a decision regarding the uncertainty of environmental impacts with regard to this marine mammal?
4. If the Minister has not considered the comments of the skipper of the FV Abel Tasman, why not?

Answer:

1. No.

2-4. As required by section 390SE of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act), the Minister considered all matters raised in submissions received in response to the *Interim (Small Pelagic Fishery) Declaration 2012* Consultation Notice that was published on the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' website on 21 September 2012. The period for submissions closed on 16 October 2012. Seafish Tasmania, the company proposing to operate the Abel Tasman, provided a submission.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 022

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – environmental impact

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. How can the uncertainty of environmental impact from the FV Abel Tasman be addressed through a literature review?
2. What additional research is planned to address the Minister's uncertainty regarding the FV Abel Tasman and who will pay for this?

Answer:

- 1-2. Literature reviews are commonly used as a means of identifying research relevant to the subject of review of investigation. The Minister for the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry have agreed it is appropriate to establish an expert panel to conduct an assessment and review of the environmental impacts of the declared commercial fishing activity described in the *Final (Small Pelagic Fishery) Declaration 2012*. This expert panel will prepare a report for the Minister for the Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities.

The expert panel will determine what additional research is needed to meet its terms of reference. Any additional research would be funded by the Australian Government.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 023

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – instructions provided by the Minister to the department

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. What instructions did the Minister provide the Department regarding the FV Abel Tasman?
2. When were these instructions given?
3. Did the Minister ask the Department to investigate specific issues related to his "uncertainty about the environmental impacts" of the FV Abel Tasman? If so, when was this request made?

Answer:

The Minister sought advice from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) on the environmental implications of the *FV Margiris* entering the Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery.

The department advised the Minister that there were a number of uncertainties in relation to the likely environmental impacts. These are outlined in a brief to the Minister. This brief, B12/1514 '*Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery – Assessment under Parts 10 and 13 of the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*', is available on the department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/commonwealth/pelagics/pubs/small-pelagics-assessment-brief1-2012.pdf>.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 024

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – primary concern

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Given the Minister has stated that his concerns are primarily that the vessel could cause a "localised major bycatch issue" how does that sit with the consideration of "total impact over the entire geographic area affected and over time"?

Answer:

1. The Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has determined that there is uncertainty in relation to the environmental impacts of the proposed new commercial fishing activity, including over the potential for by-catch of threatened or protected species. The Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has further determined that it is appropriate that an expert panel be established to assess the activity. The expert panel will undertake its assessment consistent with the terms of reference, which are being finalised by the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 025

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – provision of advice to the Minister

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. What advice did the Department provide the Minister regarding the FV Abel Tasman?
2. When was this advice provided? Provide details of each advice and date this was provided to the Minister.
3. Where did the Department go for advice or information to address specific issues related to the "uncertainty about the environmental impacts" of the FV Abel Tasman?
4. How long did the Department have to provide this advice or information?

Answer:

- 1-2. As of 15 October 2012, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) has provided the advice listed in the table below to the Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities regarding matters pertaining to the *F.V. Margiris* or the *Abel Tasman*:

Date	Document
03.09.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B12/1514 – Brief – ‘Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery – Assessment under Parts 10 and 13 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>’ available on the department’s website at: http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/commonwealth/pelagics/pubs/small-pelagics-assessment-brief1-2012.pdf • Attachment A to B12/1514 – ‘Departmental advice on whether a Part 10 strategic reassessment should be undertaken’ • Attachment B to B12/1514 – Departmental ‘Part 13 Assessment of the Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery’, available at: http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/commonwealth/pelagics/pubs/small-pelagics-part13-assessment-2012.pdf

04.09.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • B12/1620 – Brief – ‘Supplementary – Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery – Assessment under Parts 10 and 13 of the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i>’ available at: http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/commonwealth/pelagics/pubs/small-pelagics-assessment-brief2-2012.pdf
20.09.12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Briefing note – ‘Environmental impacts of large mid-water trawl freezer vessels in the Small Pelagic Fishery’ available at: http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/pubs/interim-declaration-briefing-note.pdf

3. The department utilised in-house expertise, relevant scientific reports and other available information to assist in identifying the potential environmental impacts resulting from the possible introduction of a large mid-water trawl freezer vessel to the Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery. The department’s advice based on this assessment is set out in the documents referenced in the response to questions 1 and 2.
4. See the response to questions 1 and 2.

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Question No: 026

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – provisions to overcome uncertainty

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Did the Minister consider move-on provisions as an alternative management strategy to overcome his uncertainty regarding the impact of the FV Margiris?
2. What other options did the Department provide to the Minister to overcome his uncertainty regarding the impact of the FV Margiris?

Answer:

1. The Minister considered the imposition of move on provisions as a condition on the Part 13 accreditation of the Small Pelagic Fishery under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act).
2. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities provided the Minister with advice about options available under the EPBC Act to address the potential environmental impact of the introduction of a large mid-water trawl freezer vessel in the Small Pelagic Fishery. This advice can be found in the brief titled 'Commonwealth Small Pelagic Fishery – Assessment under Parts 10 and 13 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*' available on the department's website at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/commonwealth/pelagics/pubs/small-pelagics-assessment-brief1-2012.pdf>

The Parliament subsequently amended the EPBC Act to include new powers to address uncertainty regarding the environmental impacts of commercial fishing activities that had not been engaged in prior to 11 September 2012.

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Question No: 027

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – size of the net

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Has the Department and the Minister decided that the size of the net is not the issue of concern for the Abel Tasman?

Answer:

1. The Minister has determined, based on advice from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, that there are a number of uncertainties regarding the potential environmental impact from the introduction of a large mid-water trawl commercial fishing activity in the Small Pelagic Fishery.

The Minister has decided it is appropriate to establish an expert panel to conduct an assessment of the declared commercial fishing activity.

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Question No: 028

Topic: F.V. Abel Tasman – specific areas of uncertainty

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. What are the specific areas of uncertainty the Department and Minister have regarding the FV Abel Tasman?

Answer:

1. As at 15 October 2012, the detailed advice of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities about matters pertaining to uncertainty regarding the potential environmental impacts, including on seals, dolphins and seabirds, from the introduction of large mid-water trawl freezer vessels can be found in briefing note – *‘Environmental impacts of large mid-water trawl freezer vessels in the Small Pelagic Fishery’*. This briefing note is available at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/fisheries/pubs/interim-declaration-briefing-note.pdf>.

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Question No: 029

Topic: Commonwealth Marine Reserves
Network Proposal report – Karumba

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. On page 5 of the ABARES report, Final Commonwealth marine reserves network proposal report the impact on the town of Karumba is estimated at \$2023 per person. What is the government doing to alleviate such a large per person impact?
2. According to Australian Taxation Office data the average income in Karumba is \$52,500. That means this change is going to cause a 4 per cent drop in average income for people in Karumba. Does the Department regard that change as modest?
3. Does the Department agree with ABARES that this change could cost up to 111 jobs in the fishing industry?

Answer:

1. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics Sciences (ABARES) assessment of the displacement impact on Karumba assumes, for the purpose of estimating displacement, that no other opportunities exist to continue to fish within areas of the fisheries that remain open. As a result, actual displacement impacts are likely to be less than that estimated by ABARES.

The actual displacement impact upon Karumba will depend on how a few key operators respond to the introduction of the marine reserves. Through the Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package, the Australian Government will provide financial support for those fishing businesses displaced from the marine reserves to help them transition prior to fishing exclusions taking effect. The government will closely monitor the impacts of the reserves and the flow-on effects into local communities as part of its implementation of the Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package.

2. The actual displacement impact will depend on how several key commercial fishing operators adjust their businesses in response to the new reserves.
3. ABARES estimate of the potential loss of 111 jobs (in the short term) across the entire network of marine reserves were based on survey responses from commercial fishing businesses. In addition to these surveys, ABARES undertook economic modelling which indicated a (short term) reduction in employment within directly affected regions of up to 46 full time equivalent positions. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) engaged ABARES to undertake the assessments. The department has not separately made its own estimates.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 030

Topic: Fisheries Adjustment Policy – budget

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. How much money has been allocated to the Fisheries Adjustment Policy and associated package in the current budget?
2. How much money has been allocated to the Fisheries Adjustment Policy and associated package in the forward estimates?
3. Where is this documented in the budget papers?

Answer:

1. Funding for the Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package will be made available from the Caring for our Country initiative. While the timeframe for the delivery of assistance to commercial fishing businesses is yet to be announced funding is not anticipated to commence this financial year.
2. As funding for the Fisheries Adjustment Assistance Package will be made available from the Caring for our Country initiative provision for this funding has already been included in the forward estimates.
3. Funding for the Caring for our Country initiative is documented as an expense measure in Budget Paper Number 2. Budget Measures 2012-13.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 031

Topic: Food security modelling

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. Australia-wide, you are planning to lock up 3.1 million square kilometres of Australia's oceans. What modelling has the department done in relation to food security? How many tonnes of Australian seafood will be lost to the Australian people if the marine parks are extended?
2. If the extended marine reserves go ahead, the cost of Australian seafood will skyrocket because it will be in such short supply and people will have no option in many cases but to choose eating red meat over fish. What environmental modelling has the department undertaken into the impacts of replacing fish (because many Australians refuse to eat imported seafood) with red meat as the environmental impacts of producing red meat are considerable compared to the almost negligible impacts of harvesting seafood?
 - a. This proposal will deny Australians access to 3.1 million square kilometres of oceans which produce a sustainable, renewable and high protein food source, why is Australian's health needs not a priority, particularly as it is not fishing that harming our waters?

Answer:

1. Less than 1 per cent of Australia's wild capture fisheries production is estimated to be displaced by the new marine reserves networks. Some of this displacement is likely to be made up by increases in fishing effort outside of the reserves. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) estimates of wild-capture fisheries displacement can be found within the ABARES social and economic assessment reports at www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves/background.html#social.
2. ABARES estimates that displacement as a result of the new marine reserves will represent less than one per cent of total Australian seafood production annually. Given this level of displacement it is not anticipated that in aggregate the marine reserves will affect Australian seafood prices.
 - a. A national network of marine reserves has been an objective of consecutive Australian Governments since 1998, including the Howard, Rudd and Gillard governments. The reserves have been developed through extensive consultation to deliver a strong conservation outcome while ensuring that the commercial fishing industry continues to develop and contribute to national and regional economies.

The reserves provide a complementary mechanism for existing fisheries management measures, to ensure the sustainability of the marine environment and the resources it supports, for the longer term.

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Question No: 032

Topic: ABARES social and economic
assessment of the Commonwealth
Marine Reserves

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. Are you aware of the independent review by Ernest and Young of ABARES's Social and Economic Assessment of the proposed Commonwealth Marine Reserves that found that the assessments were inadequate for the task of informing a major new policy. Why was a full cost benefit analysis not undertaken?

Answer:

1. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) reports provide a detailed analysis of the social and economic effects of the proposed marine reserves on the commercial fishing industry. A full cost benefit analysis was not a requirement in developing the final marine reserve network. The ABARES assessments provided the Australian Government with a sound basis on which to minimise the socio-economic costs of the final marine reserves network proposal, consistent with the principles of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas.

It is noted that the Ernst and Young critique of the ABARES assessment itself acknowledged that some of the alternative approaches it suggested for measuring impact would not be possible to apply (see page 13).

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Question No: 033

Topic: Management of proposed marine parks

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. What negotiations or meetings has the Commonwealth had with state Government agencies in relation to the declaration and the management of the proposed Marine parks?

Answer:

1. Representatives from the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities met with State Government agencies in Western Australia, South Australia, Queensland, the Northern Territory and New South Wales to discuss marine reserves proclamation and management over the July–September 2012 period.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 034

Topic: Management of South Australian marine reserves

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Edwards asked:

1. With reference to Question on Notice 011 (May Budget Estimates 2012), are there any service arrangements undertaken with South Australia with regard to the management of marine reserves/parks?
2. Have there been any discussions in the last 12 months with the South Australian Government on marine parks? What have those discussions involved? What have been the outcomes of those discussions?
3. Has the Commonwealth provided the South Australian Government with any funding for marine parks? If so, how much and for what purpose?

Answer:

1. The Commonwealth, through the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department), has an agreement in place with the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources for the cooperative management of the Great Australian Bight (GAB) Marine Park (Commonwealth waters). The Marine Park has been revoked and incorporated into the larger GAB Commonwealth Marine Reserve. Management arrangements for the area corresponding to the former GAB Marine Park (Commonwealth waters) continue until July 2014, when a new management plan will come into effect. The agreement with South Australia remains in place and provides a good basis for discussion on the future management of the new reserves.
2. There have been several meetings of the steering committee established for the joint management of the GAB Marine Park. These discussions relate to implementing the Annual Business Agreement and ongoing management activities within the GAB Marine Park. There have also been periodic meetings between the department and relevant South Australian agencies to discuss the respective marine planning processes. These discussions have focused on opportunities for complementary outcomes in the development of marine reserves in the two jurisdictions and on the socio-economic impact assessments undertaken by the Australian Government and the South Australian Government as part of their respective marine planning programs.

3. Funding is provided to the South Australian Government under an Annual Business with the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources for the cooperative management of the GAB Marine Park (Commonwealth Waters). In 2012/13, the funding agreement/fee for service is \$97,185. The funding is used for a range of activities which includes park management salaries and community engagement projects.

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Question No: 035

Topic: Marine Bioregional Plans – Get the Facts advertising

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. How long did the Government's Get the Facts advertising campaign on the Commonwealth Marine Reserves run for? Which newspapers did the Department place ads in?
2. What was the total cost to produce and place advertisements in daily and community newspapers?
3. Wasn't this costly advertising campaign quite presumptuous given that nothing has been finalized and that the Director of National Parks report containing the comments received during the consultation and his recommendations are yet to be considered by the Government?

Answer:

1. The Get the Facts advertising campaign commenced on Tuesday, 25 September 2012 and will conclude in early December 2012.

Advertisements appeared in the following newspapers:

- The Byron Shire Echo
- North West News
- Bayside Bulletin
- Cooloola Advertiser
- Coffs Coast Advocate
- Milton Ulladulla Times
- Narooma News
- Clarence Valley Review
- Bayside and Northern Suburbs Star
- Northside Chronicle
- South East Advertiser
- South West News

- Redcliffe and Bayside Herald
- Wynnum Herald
- Western Cape Bulletin
- Bundaberg Guardian
- Ballina Shire Advocate
- Byron Shire News
- Shoalhaven and Nowra News
- City News
- City North News
- City South News
- Daily Telegraph
- Newcastle Herald
- Northern Star
- Grafton Daily Examiner
- Bega District News
- South Coast Register
- Courier Mail
- Bundaberg News Mail
- Cairns Post
- Mackay Daily Mercury
- Rockhampton Morning Bulletin
- Townsville Bulletin
- Fraser Coast Chronicle
- Sunshine Coast Daily
- Gympie Times
- Gladstone Observer
- mX Brisbane
- Redland Times
- Hervey Bay Observer.

2. The total cost to produce and place advertisements in daily and community newspapers was \$138,694.88 (GST inclusive).
3. Market research commissioned by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities regarding the level of community understanding about the proposed marine reserves found 70 per cent of people incorrectly believed the final proposed Commonwealth Marine Reserves would affect recreational fishing in State waters, that is, fishing in estuaries, from beaches and from boats close to shore.

A communications campaign was developed in order to provide correct information on the final proposed Commonwealth marine reserves and correct misinformation.

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Question No: 036

Topic: Marine Bioregional Plans –
Regulatory Impact Statement

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. How is it possible for the Government to produce a Regulatory Impact Statement on the proposed marine reserves network that does not include any costings at all and completely lacks assessment, or even proper identification of risks?

Answer:

1. The Regulatory Impact Statement (RIS) addresses the relative regulatory impacts of alternative ways to give effect to the Australian Government's policy to establish a comprehensive, adequate and representative system of marine reserves. The RIS drew on the socio-economic assessments conducted by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences in relation to the proposed marine reserves networks. This included estimates of fisheries catch displaced by the marine reserves and an assessment of the flow-on effects at the regional level. The RIS is consistent with standard government practice. The Office of Best Practice Regulation has confirmed the RIS as compliant.

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Question No: 037

Topic: Marine Bioregional Plans -
submissions

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. What was the number of submissions the department received?
2. How many were not template computer generated submissions?

Answer:

The number of submissions the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities received was 79,845. There were 79,467 “campaign submissions” generated using standard text provided by the organisation generating the campaign. Of these 79,465 “campaign submissions”, 15,645 included comments in addition to the text provided by the campaign organisation.

There were 378 individual submissions, that is, submissions not based on campaign material.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 038

Topic: Marine parks - South Australia

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Xenophon asked:

1. How many times have Commonwealth and South Australian State Environment met to discuss and co-ordinate marine parks planning in State and Commonwealth waters?
2. Has an economic and social impact assessment been done on the combined effects of State and Commonwealth marine parks on the important commercial fisheries of South Australia, such as rock lobster, abalone and tuna?

If yes, what was the conclusion of that study?

If no, why haven't assessments on the combined impacts on important fisheries that operate in both Commonwealth and State waters been undertaken?

3. Are Commonwealth and South Australian State marine parks processes based on the same principles? In particular, are both processes based on the National Representative System of Marine Protected Area (NRSMPA) and the subsequent NRSMPA Strategic Plan of Action developed in 1999?
4. What steps have been taken to ensure a consistent interpretation of the NRSMPA between the Commonwealth and the South Australian State Government?
5. In the light of an agreed national approach to marine parks, why are two separate marine parks processes being pursued in Commonwealth and South Australian state waters?

Further, is this a necessary duplication of meeting COAG's requirements of establishing a representative national system of marine parks under the NRSMPA?

Answer:

1. Since the beginning of the Marine Bioregional Planning Program in 2006, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) has met with its South Australian counterpart on numerous occasions to discuss marine planning matters. During 2012, officers from the department and the South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources have held regular teleconferences on a 6-8 weeks basis.

2. No assessment has been undertaken to calculate the combined effects of South Australian and Commonwealth marine reserves because of the very low level of impact of the Commonwealth marine reserves on South Australian fisheries as estimated by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resources Economics and Sciences. However, comparable methodology and, in most instances, the same data, have been applied in the work undertaken as part of the two processes.
3. The Australian Government's process to establish Commonwealth marine reserves was based on the 1998 *Guidelines for the Establishment of a National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas* (NRSMPA) which was agreed by all states and territories. Each jurisdiction has implemented its component of the NRSMPA according to its own policy priorities and timeframes.
4. All jurisdictions in Australian have been developing the NRSMPA in their waters through separate processes drawing on a national bioregional framework to support a consistent approach. The framework is the 2006 Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia (IMCRA) Version 4. Based on the bioregional framework, examples of each of Australia's diverse marine regions are intended to be represented within the NRSMPA.
5. All jurisdictions in Australian have implemented the NRSMPA through their relevant legislation. Separate processes are required to enable the development of marine reserves under the respective legislation in each jurisdiction. The intention to implement the NRSMPA by individual jurisdictions was set out in the NRSMPA guidelines in 1998. There is no duplication in establishing the NRSMPA as Commonwealth reserves relate only to Commonwealth waters and State reserves are within State waters.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee**
Answers to questions on notice
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 039

Topic: Marine Protection for the waters around Christmas Island and the Cocos

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Siewert asked:

1. Were these regions considered in the reserve network planning stages? If yes, why were they ultimately not included? If no, why weren't they considered, and can we expect them to be assessed and included in the near future?

Answer:

1. Consideration was given to the inclusion of Christmas and Cocos Islands in the marine bioregional planning program during the reserve network planning stage. Emphasis has been given to completing the representative system of marine reserves in Commonwealth waters adjacent to the Australian continent, while also including the waters surrounding both Lord Howe and Norfolk Islands. No decision has been made regarding establishing marine reserves in the waters around Christmas and Cocos Islands at this time.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 040

Topic: Marine reserves – non-fishing hazards

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. Marine reserves do not mitigate against a large number of non-fishing hazards and risk. As it is pollution and introduced organisms that are harming our waters, not fishing, why are you proposing to extend the marine reserves?

Answer:

1. There are many threats to marine life and ecosystems. Some of these threats, such as nutrients, sediments and chemicals carried in run-off from coastal areas, are the focus of interventions by governments other than through the establishment of marine reserves.

The marine reserves are being established to protect representative examples of the diverse range of ecosystems and habitats found in Australia's waters and the life they support.

The reserve network will help sustain the overall health and resilience of the marine environment, and complement other policies and programs to address threats that originate outside the marine reserves.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
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Answers to questions on notice
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 041

Topic: Potential compensation for Seafish
Tasmania Pelagic

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. What budget provisions have been made for the potential for compensation to be sought by Seafish Tasmania Pelagic?

Answer:

1. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has made no such provision.

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
Legislation Committee
Answers to questions on notice
Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 042

Topic: South Australia Gillnet Fishery

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Siewert asked:

According to an ABC news report fishers from South Australia are moving to the gillnet fishery in WA as a result of the closures and restrictions in SA;

1. Are you aware of this report and can you confirm if this is the case?
2. Is the Department monitoring this issue?
3. Can you confirm if this is the case?
4. How many gillnet vessels previously fishing in SA are now fishing in WA and where in WA waters these gillnet vessels are now operating?
5. Can the Department explain why the SA and WA gillnet fisheries are being treated differently for conditions posed on export approval when the industry has publicly stated they are going to now fish in WA where they are unrestricted?

Answer:

1. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) is aware of a news report broadcast on the ABC 7pm television news program in South Australia on Friday, 19 October 2012. The news report described impacts on gillnet fishers caused by spatial closures to protect Australian sea lions in the Commonwealth Gillnet, Hook and Trap Sector of the Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery, and concluded with the statement: "In the meantime, vessels are fishing in unrestricted waters off Western Australia and Victoria."

All shark gillnet fishing in waters offshore of Western Australia is managed by the Western Australian Department of Fisheries, in accordance with the *Joint Authority Southern Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Management Plan 1992* and the *West Coast Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Management Plan 1997*. Since 2006, fishing effort in these fisheries has been capped at 2001/02 levels and Western Australian legislation has prohibited the granting of new fishing licences. Any South Australian gillnet fishers operating in Western Australian fisheries could only be doing so under existing Western Australian licences, granted prior to 2006.

2. The department monitors gillnet fishing effort in the Commonwealth Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery and the Western Australian Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fisheries through ongoing assessments of these fisheries' under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act).

3. See the response to question 1.
4. The Western Australian Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fisheries extend from the border of Western Australia and South Australia around the south western tip of Western Australia and northwards to Shark Bay (Figure 1).

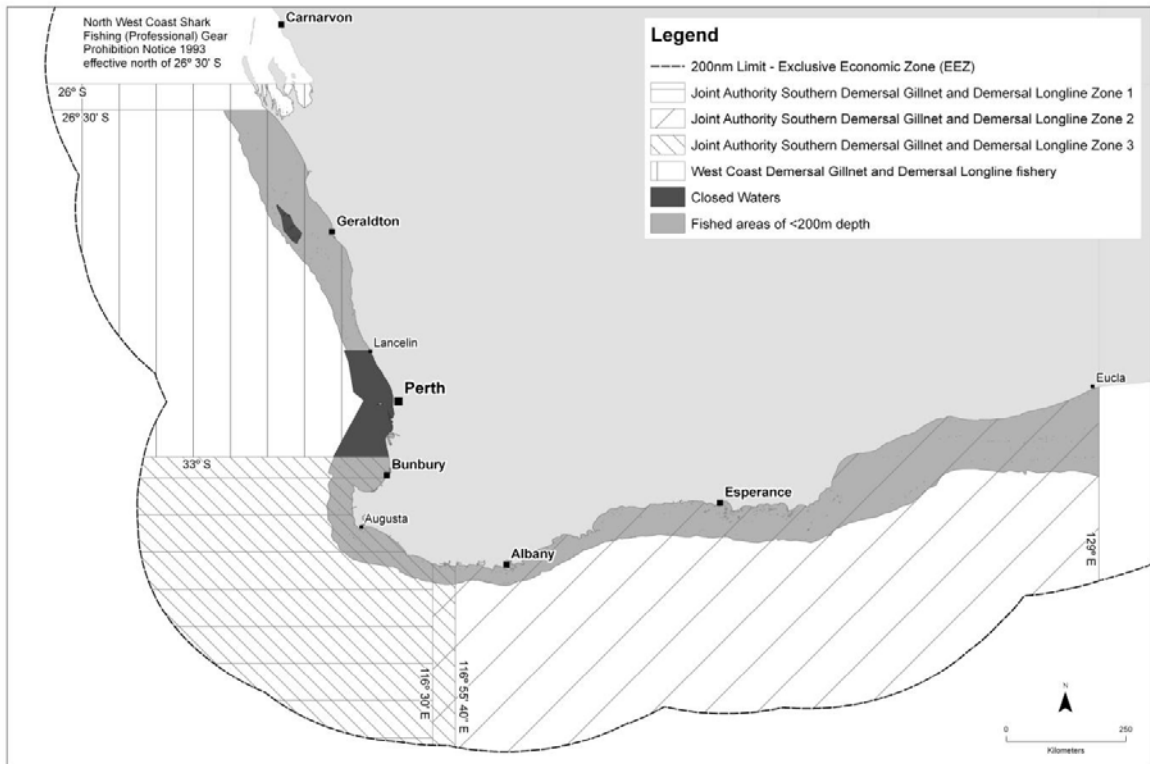


Figure 1. Management boundaries of the Western Australian Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fisheries (source: Western Australian State of the Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Report 2010/11).

5. The department does not consider that gillnet fishing in Western Australia is 'unrestricted'. As noted in the response to part 1 of this question, shark gillnet fishing in waters offshore of Western Australia is managed by the Western Australian Department of Fisheries. Fishing effort in these fisheries has been capped at 2001/02 levels since 2006 and spatial and seasonal closures are in place to protect species of concern. In August 2012, renewed EPBC Act accreditation for these fisheries included a condition to increase protection for Australian sea lions from gillnet interactions, including increased independent monitoring and consideration of area closures around small colonies and colonies at greatest risk of interactions with gillnets. This condition reflects the department's consideration of the most effective measures to protect the portion of the Australian sea lion population that overlaps with the Western Australian Temperate Demersal Gillnet and Demersal Longline Fisheries.

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Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2012

Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD

Question No: 043

Topic: Sustainable fishing practices

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

1. The Government is locking Australian fishers out of most of the Coral Sea – in fact an area that is more than half the size of Queensland. Other nations – Korea, China, New Caledonia, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands will still be able to fish in their part of the Coral Sea. Do you agree that some of those countries fishing practices are not nearly as sustainable as Australian fishers?

Answer

1. While a substantial proportion of the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve has been zoned to exclude commercial fishing activity, large parts of the reserve remain open to some forms of commercial fishing.

Australia is regarded as one of the leading nations in the sustainable management of fisheries.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 044

Topic: Threat Abatement Plan – impacts of marine debris on vertebrate marine life

Proof Hansard Page and Date 109

or Written Question: (15/10/12) and Written

Senator Whish-Wilson asked:

1. How is the threat abatement plan for the impacts of marine debris on vertebrate marine life progressing?
2. How much Commonwealth money has been budgeted for the Threat Abatement Plan and the actions outlined in it over the forward estimates? In reference to Action 2.1, has this commenced? How much money has been budgeted to carry out this project? What is the breakdown of Commonwealth and State and Territory contribution to this project?
3. Can a written summary of how each action is progressing under the plan be provided?
4. How are any changes being measured against the criteria set out in the plan?
5. What baseline data is being used for these measurements and what is its source?
6. Can you identify any particular sticking points with the States and Territories in negotiations for actions outlined by the plan?

Answer:

1. Progress is being made on the implementation of the threat abatement plan.
2. Commonwealth actions identified in the threat abatement plan are funded from various sources, including the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department); the Border Protection Command; Australian Maritime Safety Authority; and the CSIRO.

Funding from the department includes:

- a. Caring for Our Country grants to governments, land councils, and non-government organisations for projects implementing the threat abatement plan. From 2009 to 2013, \$7.1 million is being invested in marine debris issues such as pollution, litter removal, education, removal of ghost nets (abandoned fishing nets), species protection from marine debris, and monitoring.

- b. Working on Country funds around 40 ranger groups across Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory which undertake a range of activities, including some associated with the threat abatement plan. The activities include beach and marine debris cleanup, data collection and collation, marine fauna rescue and autopsy, community education, and liaison with project stakeholders.
- c. Water for the Future funding of over \$6 million from 2008 to 2014 for the removal of potential marine debris by the installation of gross pollutant traps, biofiltration systems and constructed wetlands in Sydney and Perth.

Progress on Action 2.1 (data collection protocols, national mapping of marine debris), has been significant. The department has, in conjunction with other agencies, developed standards, protocols and procedures for the creation, collation, storage and retrieval of spatial data.

The national mapping and development of a marine debris database is being undertaken through the TeachWild program. TeachWild is a national three-year research and education program developed by Earthwatch Australia in partnership with CSIRO and Shell Australia to gather data on marine debris and its impacts on Australian wildlife (<http://teachwild.org.au>).

- 3. The threat abatement plan five yearly review is due in 2014, in accordance with section 279(2) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. The review will consider progress on each action under the plan.
- 4. Progress against the plan's criteria will be considered during the five-yearly review.
- 5. Baseline data is collected by a variety of sources including the TeachWild project.
- 6. No sticking points have been identified.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 045
Topic: Great White Sharks
Proof Hansard Page and Date 108-109
or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT: ...The language about immediate threat in Western Australia is not as precise as was in the past. Because there has not been a definition available in Western Australia, has there been a discussion with you or have you defined what an immediate threat or a significant threat would be?

Mr Oxley: There has not been a discussion, to my knowledge, on that subject between departments at this point in time.

Senator SIEWERT: Between departments or within your agency to better define these concepts?

(Page 109)

Mr Oxley: I do not think we would have come back to that subject in recent times. I suspect that we will have had a view on that previously. If that is the case, we would share that and we can provide that to you on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: That would be appreciated, including the method to take.

Answer:

If the killing of a white shark is proposed to occur in a Commonwealth area, some exceptions in section 197 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) may apply.

Sections 197(f) and (h) of the EPBC Act provides that sections 196 and 196A do not apply (that is, it is not a strict liability offence) where the killing is 'reasonably necessary to prevent a risk to human health' or 'reasonably necessary to deal with an emergency involving a serious threat to human life'.

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) has been working collaboratively with the Western Australian Government to focus research efforts on understanding the current population status of the white shark. While the department has not discussed with Western Australian Government agencies the concept of 'immediate' threat, the department has confirmed with the Western Australian Department of Fisheries that the EPBC Act does have provision to "allow an action that is reasonably necessary to prevent a risk to human health or to deal with an emergency involving a serious threat to human life, such as the culling of sharks that pose a real threat to human life, even when those sharks are protected as a threatened species".

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 046

Topic: Snubfin dolphin

Proof Hansard Page and Date 19

or Written Question: (16/10/12)

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: ...Moving now to the snubfin dolphin, if we have the appropriate folk at the table for that. Is the department currently collecting data on the snubfin dolphin for the purposes of determining whether its status of 'migratory' is in fact correct?

Dr Dripps: I am sorry; I think the appropriate officials were in the marine division, who were here last night.

Senator WATERS: Then I will put that on notice for them.

Dr Dripps: I will take that question on notice.

Answer:

Section 209(3)(a)(ii) of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) states that the migratory species list must include all migratory species that are "from time to time included in the appendices to the Bonn Convention". The Australian snubfin dolphin (*Orcaella heinsohni*) occurs on Appendix II of the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (also known as the Bonn Convention).

The listing of a species on the migratory species list does not preclude it from occurring on other lists, such as the threatened species list. Due to concern that there was insufficient data to assess the Australian snubfin dolphin for inclusion on the threatened species list, the Minister has prioritised the funding of research to examine the distribution of this species in northern Australian waters. In addition to this, the Australian Government is also currently preparing a research strategy for this species.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 047

Topic: EPBC Act amendments – expert panel

Proof Hansard Page and Date 20

or Written Question: (16/10/12)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK: ... Minister, I am trying to work through a process and how fair it is for somebody who is potentially going to have this section of the act applied to them to not know what the process is going to be.

Senator Conroy: I am happy to take that on notice for you, Senator Colbeck.

Senator COLBECK: Thank you so much for your intervention, Minister. It is extremely helpful. Don't you think it is fair, Minister that somebody who is going to have an act of parliament applied to them should have some understanding of what the process is? That is effectively what I am trying to get an understanding of. You do not think it is fair that somebody should have an understanding of the process that might be applied to them?

Senator Conroy: As I said, I am happy to take it on notice, to seek a view from the minister. As you know, it is not my portfolio area.

Senator COLBECK: No, but I am asking you as the representative minister hear whether you think it is fair that people understand how things go.

Senator Conroy: I said I am happy to take it on notice to see what the minister would like to put on the record for you.

Answer:

Part 15B of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) outlines the process by which final declarations in relation to declared commercial fishing activities can be made.

In summary:

- If the Environment and Fisheries ministers agree that there is uncertainty regarding the environmental impacts of a new commercial fishing activity, the Environment Minister may make an Interim Declaration prohibiting that activity for a maximum of 60 days.
- During that period, the Environment Minister must take into account written submissions from declaration affected persons before making a decision about a final declaration.

- Before making a final declaration, the Environment and Fisheries ministers must agree that:
 - there is uncertainty about the environmental impacts of the new commercial fishing activity;
 - it is appropriate to establish an expert panel to conduct an assessment of the environmental impacts of the new commercial fishing activity, and
 - it is appropriate to prohibit the activity while the expert panel conducts the assessment.
- Following the making of a final declaration, section 390SH requires the Environment Minister to establish an expert panel, with terms of reference agreed by the Fisheries Minister, as soon as practicable.
- The expert panel must report to the Environment Minister by a date specified in the terms of reference of the expert panel.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: MD **Question No:** 048

Topic: Keep Australia Fishing campaign - submissions

Proof Hansard Page and Date 107-108

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT: Are you aware of how many submissions you got that were initiated by this particular website, and those that may have received an inducement to get a submission in?

Mr Oxley: We got quite a number of submissions. I would have to take on notice exactly how many, but I think we could confidently provide it to you. Keep Australia Fishing ran two campaigns under the title Don't Lock Us Out. I cannot tell you tonight how many we received through that organisation's campaign.

Senator SIEWERT: Could you take that on notice?

Mr Oxley: Certainly.

...

Senator SIEWERT: Are you aware whether this has been brought to the minister's attention?

Mr Oxley: I would have to take that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could that would be appreciated, and could you look at whether the department will in the future issue terms of reference or instructions that indicate that this sort of inducement may not be desirable.

Answer:

Keep Australia Fishing ran two campaigns. The first campaign generated 1,182 submissions and the subsequent campaign generated 8,172 individual submissions. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) is unaware of any inducements being offered by this organisation to those who made submissions and therefore has not brought the issue of possible inducements to the Minister's attention.

The department is bound by section 351 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (the EPBC Act) which sets out the contents of the Statutory notice inviting comment on a proposed proclamation of a Commonwealth reserve. There is no provision under the EPBC Act for the department to impose terms of reference and instructions on those wishing to comment, beyond those specified in the EPBC Act.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD

Question No: 049

Topic: Indigenous Protected Areas Program

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Scullion asked:

Please indicate whether the programs and measures listed below are still operating in 2012-13. If they are still operating, please provide by program/ measure the current allocation and expenditure year to date (please indicate in respect of any of these programs/measures if information has already been provided):

1. Indigenous Protected Areas Program.

Answer:

1. The Indigenous Protected Areas Program is operating in 2012/13. The program allocation for 2012/13 is \$13.5 million. As at 5 November 2012, expenditure was \$2 million.

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications
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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD

Question No: 050

Topic: Christmas Island – funding for eradication of Yellow Crazy Ants

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Macdonald asked:

1. Yellow Crazy Ants have been located on Christmas Island – can you give details of the eradication program, including the cost, for dealing with the Yellow Crazy Ant infestation on Christmas Island?

Answer:

1. Christmas Island National Park is halfway through a ten year program to research, control, manage and monitor the impacts of invasive yellow crazy ants on the island. The 2011/12 Budget provided \$4 million for four years to implement this program which involves mapping and monitoring crazy ants, red crabs and other aspects of the island's biodiversity; hand and aerially-baiting crazy ants; and a series of research projects into the biological control of crazy ants.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD

Question No: 051

Topic: Parks Australia - ecologists

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Waters asked:

1. How many field ecologists does the Australian national parks service employ - ie ecologists involved in ecological research relevant to conserving diversity in Commonwealth parks?

Answer:

1. The Director of National Parks does not employ any field ecologists specifically to undertake ecological research in Commonwealth parks, although a number of park staff have qualifications and/or experience in field ecology. Ecological research is encouraged in Commonwealth reserves, particularly where it contributes to improving the effectiveness and/or efficiency of managing the reserve. There are many cooperative arrangements between individual parks and field ecologists from other agencies and universities who undertake ecological studies in Commonwealth parks. In many cases the park provides in-kind support for these studies. A number of these cooperative arrangements are long-standing, such as the collaboration between Kakadu National Park and the Bushfires Council of the Northern Territory and others on the monitoring of the impacts of fire on the plants and animals in the park which commenced over 15 years ago.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 052

Topic: Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park –
filming requests

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Birmingham asked:

1. Are quotas, by month or similar, applied to allowed or permitted instances of filming in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park? If so, is this applied simply on a 'first come' basis or by some other means? How early is the quota reached in each instance (e.g. if monthly, by which date of each month in 2011-12 had the quota been reached)?
2. If a monthly or similar quota is applied, are estimates maintained of how many applications have been rejected, and how many requests have otherwise not even progressed to the making of an application, as a result of the quota being applied?
3. How many requests to film were approved in 2011-12 and how many were rejected? On what grounds were requests or applications rejected?
4. Which people or organisations received filming approval in 2011-12? Are film-makers charged? If so, on what basis are they charged?

Answer:

1. There is a quota of four film crews per month and this is applied on a first come basis. After this quota is reached, capacity for additional crews is considered on a case by case basis, subject to staff resources. The quota is reached usually one to two months in advance.
2. No filming applications have been rejected on the basis of quota becoming full. Next available dates are negotiated or additional crews approved if practicable.
3. In 2011/12, 43 film crews were approved. No film crews were rejected.
4. All crews are charged under a permit as required under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations guiding image capture in Commonwealth reserves. The rate is \$250 per day and usually limited to a two day filming schedule to facilitate demand for filming. The park takes a flexible approach to the needs of film makers and longer filming schedules can be negotiated. News of the Day crews do not require a permit and are not charged a fee.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 053

Topic: Christmas Island - biosecurity

Proof Hansard Page and Date 99

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT: I am interested in knowing how far they are kept from the island in terms of quarantine basis and making sure that nothing, including those ships, is able to gain access to the island.

Mr Cochrane: I would have to take that on notice because how far they remain off island would depend a little on weather conditions.

Senator SIEWERT: Please take that on notice. But you are confident that each one is inspected for quarantine hazards?

Mr Cochrane: That is my understanding but let me get back to you.

Answer:

The responsibility for matters associated with ship access, quarantine and the positioning and the secure mooring of these vessels resides with the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service, the Department of Defence, and the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service. Parks Australia officers on Christmas Island cooperate with their colleagues from these and other agencies on a variety of environmental and related issues, however this does not include determining where these vessels are kept from the Island as these are operational matters that are the responsibility of these other agencies.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 054

Topic: Christmas Island – cat eradication

Proof Hansard Page and Date 99

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT: In terms of cat eradication, can you tell me whether that program is still running.

...

Senator SIEWERT: Is funding being maintained?

Mr Cochrane: I believe so. Can I take that on notice, because it does depend on funding from several sources, as you might recall.

Answer:

Funding for the current cat program ceased in August 2012, with estimated over 400 cats removed between 2011 and August 2012. Parks Australia is working on ways to continue cat control work in 2013. In the first instance we aim to continue at a smaller scale, by working with the Shire to trap cats in selected Settlement seabird nesting sites and incorporating baiting into other park programs such as crazy ant control.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 055

Topic: Updated National Reserve System figures

Proof Hansard Page and Date 100

or Written Question: (15/10/12)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT: ...I want to move to the broader NRS program and perhaps ask you to take on notice...an update on the number of hectares we now have in the reserve system.

Answer:

As at 30 June 2010, the combined area of the terrestrial (103,298,950 hectares) and marine (91,019,333 hectares) components of Australia's national reserve system is 194,318,283 hectares.

These figures are taken from CAPAD10, the Collaborative Australian Protected Area Database. The database holds information on all formally protected areas in Australia, terrestrial and marine. CAPAD is published every two years with the next iteration (CAPAD12) to be published in 2013.

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Program: Division or Agency: 1.1: PAD

Question No: 056

Topic: Fitzgerald River nomination

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Siewert asked:

What is the progress on the renomination of the Fitzgerald River area as a Man and the Biosphere Reserve?

Answer:

Renomination of the Fitzgerald Biosphere Reserve under the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere Programme is a matter for the Western Australian (WA) agencies responsible for management of the lands that comprise the renominated area, primarily the WA Department of Environment and Conservation. When an endorsed renomination document is received from WA, the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities through the Director of National Parks (which serves as the Australian national focal point for the Man and the Biosphere Programme) will submit the renomination to UNESCO.