

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 147

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** National Climate Change Action Plan for Fisheries and Aquaculture

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

Can you provide an update on the present status of the national climate change and fisheries action plan?

**Answer:**

On 4 November 2010, the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council endorsed the *National climate change action plan for aquaculture and fisheries*, and agreed to its release.

The action plan is available from the department's website at [www.daff.gov.au/publications/fisheries](http://www.daff.gov.au/publications/fisheries).

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 148

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Contributions to NRM groups & Caring for Our Country Review

**Proof Hansard Page:** 89-90 (21/02/2011)

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Someone here may have a better memory than I, but did you ever supply me with the details of what individual state governments were putting in cash as opposed to in kind to the NRM groups in their state?

**Mr Thompson**—We provided you with some material on that, Senator. I do not think we were able to provide you with a comprehensive answer because we do not always know how much money the states may pay for various things. I think we provided you with a broad answer, but we were not able to do a really detailed one.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—On notice, if there is any update you can give me from what you last gave me, that is if you have, since you last replied to this, become aware or ascertained or perhaps even asked the state governments to tell you about any cash investment, could you let me know that on answer. And just finally, in the mid-term review of Caring for our Country is there any review of whether either the community based NRM groups or the state government statutory authority NRM groups is a preferred model of delivery? Is that part of the review?

**Answer:**

Through Caring for our Country, the Australian Government now has simpler administrative arrangements with the States and Territories. One feature of this is that the Government no longer measures matching funding from states and territory governments in relation to Commonwealth Natural Resource Management funding.

The Australian Government has made its expectation clear to state and territory governments that each jurisdiction will continue to contribute financial and in-kind support that is at least equivalent to that provided under previous programs, to activities that complement Caring for our Country.

The Caring for our Country Review will include an assessment of the relative effectiveness of different modes of delivery and governance of various Natural Resource Management (NRM) organisations across the country.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 149

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Chair, Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee

**Proof Hansard Page:** 100 (21/02/11)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

**Senator COLBECK**—He is maintaining his attendance record, by the sound of it. Can you give me some advice on the Chair of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee, whom I believe is David Llewellyn. Is that correct?

**Mr Neil**—Yes.

**Senator COLBECK**—What is the remuneration for the position?

**Mr Neil**—We would have to take that on notice. I believe it is only sitting fees, but I would need to confirm that.

**Answer:**

The Chair of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee is receiving sitting fees only. These fees were determined in accordance with the Remuneration Tribunal Determinations (Category 2).

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 150

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** European Union Regulation for Catch Certification for Illegal Unregulated and Unreported Fishing

**Proof Hansard Page:** 103 (21/02/2011)

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

**Senator COLBECK**—So can we quantify specifically what those difficulties might be? I would hate to infer that they were using them as an artificial non-tariff trade barrier. I would hate to infer that and I know you cannot. But what are the difficulties that we are facing?

**Mr Thompson**—I do not have the current status on that one. They were relating to issues about who was providing the certification, the verification of it, the data that was collected on vessels and dates and where the fish were caught, and a range of issues. We would need to get more detail on that.

**Senator COLBECK**—So if it does not have fish scales on it, it does not count effectively? Is there someone from Trade and Market Access who can, without confirming or denying my inference, give us any answers to that question?

**Ms Mellor**—We will have to take the rest of that on notice

**Answer:**

Since October 2009, officers of the department and the European Commission Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (EC DG MARE) have held discussions about the possibility of the European Union recognising the alternative certificate developed by Australia on catch certification. Australia proposed that the electronic certification system be automatically produced by the Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service (AQIS) as part of the Australian Export Documentation System (also known as EXDOC). Only seafood product caught by Australian vessels registered with AQIS would be eligible for an Australian catch certificate.

The EC DG MARE informed Australia that the catch certification system Australia intended using did not meet European Union requirements as the certificate did not include information about the fishing vessel or catch area of the product. The AQIS system was unable to be readily expanded to include this information. Aside from the difficulties tracing back seafood products to a specific capture vessel, an upgrade to the AQIS EXDOC system would be required to enable this additional information to be captured.

Negotiations about this issue have stalled. The multi-jurisdictional management of Australia's fisheries makes it difficult for one entity to certify all catch records. Fishing operators continue to rely on paper-based systems administered by the Commonwealth and state agencies.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 151

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Caring for our Country Review

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Given that one of the themes that the agency reported arose from stakeholder consultative forums as part of the review of the Caring for our Country program was that the ‘approach of specific and measurable targets at the national level imposed a number of challenges’; Can the agency please elaborate on the theme and whether the agency considers the targets unobtainable, unrealistic or ill thought-out?

**Answer:**

During the November 2010 caring for our Country stakeholder consultative forum, participants discussed a range of matters relating to targets including the need for national targets to be relevant at regional and local scales for the development of quality investment proposals, for targets to be developed in a way that promoted integrated proposals addressing multiple outcomes, and for targets to be developed cooperatively with stakeholders so that the rationale underpinning specific targets could be understood. Clear targets were considered a strength of the initiative but stakeholders considered more needed to be done around the relationship between national targets and regional and community priorities.

The agency does not consider the targets unobtainable, unrealistic or ill thought-out.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 152

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Caring for Our Country Review

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Can the agency please explain what is meant in the themes emerging from the public consultations associated with the review of the Caring for our Country program when it states that “Consultative and transparent target setting, to build an understanding of the rationale underpinning specific national targets, is important for the ultimate adoption of targets by stakeholders”?

**Answer:**

In 2009, the department undertook a series of national consultations in order to develop the targets. Some participants considered that more information needed to be provided on how targets were set and how they link to local and regional priorities.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 153

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Caring for our Country Review

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

Given that one theme to emerge from the community consultations with regard to the Review of the Caring for our Country program was that the complexity of the application process should be relative to the amount of funding being sought; does the agency therefore consider the grant process too complicated for small grants?

**Answer:**

The application process for Community Action Grants, for example, is proportionate and appropriate. It provides a balance of sound financial management of public money and a comparatively simplified process. Eighty six percent of respondents from a survey of the 2010-11 Community Action Grants round considered the application form was easy to complete. Following stakeholder feedback of the 2010-11 Caring for our Country business plan, the open call application form for larger projects was reviewed and simplified for the 2011-12 business plan.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 154

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Caring for Our Country Review

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

What are the main problems that have been encountered by the agency in the Caring for our Country program?

**Answer:**

In the review of the *Caring for Our Country* program currently under way, a number of stakeholder responses have expressed the views that the ‘top down’ approach of the national targets is a challenge for communities, that community capacity building should be funded in its own right rather than as part of another (biometric) target, and there is a need to ensure better cooperation among agencies and levels of government for natural resource management.



**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 155

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Caring for Our Country Review

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

When will the review of the Caring for our Country program be completed and published?

**Answer:**

The *Caring for our Country* review is expected to be completed by July 2011. Approval to publish the report will be sought from the Ministers for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, and Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, once the report is completed.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 156

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Southern Bluefin Tuna Propagation

**Proof Hansard Page:** 95-96 (21/02/2011)

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—They have been successfully bred and then there were some problems with what was bred and it has come and gone. I am wondering if you or anyone in AFMA are in a position to indicate where the proposals for breeding and farming southern bluefin tuna are at. It is the breeding rather than the farming I am getting at, I should say.

**Dr J Findlay**—AFMA manages the wild capture fisheries, as you know.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Yes.

**Dr J Findlay**—The actual aquaculture operation itself is managed by the South Australian government. I am not sure if Dr Begg has any more information about the current state of proposals with FRDC or the industry with regard to the propagation work, but it is not something we are directly involved with. As you said, it has been successful, but at this stage it is a big step going from a successful closure of the life cycle through to commercial reality for that program.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Does FRDC come before our committee?

**CHAIR**—No, they do not.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Would they if they were coming?

**CHAIR**—I am sure they would if you asked.

**Dr Dickson**—We could take on notice a question to FRDC.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—That would be good.

**Answer:**

The CleanSeas Tuna propagation venture comes under the management jurisdiction of the South Australian Government.

The Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) does not have any new research applications related to Southern Bluefin Tuna propagation.

The FRDC has co-invested with the Seafood Cooperative Research Centre (CRC), South Australian Government and CleanSeas Tuna in a number of projects that relate to propagation of Southern Bluefin Tuna. Current projects include:

2010/750 “Seafood CRC Improving hatchery production of SBT larvae and juveniles”

2009/726 “Seafood CRC: Southern Bluefin Tuna Larval/Juvenile Rearing”

2008/745 “Seafood CRC: The advancement of reproductive development in Southern Bluefin Tuna using hormonal manipulations of kisspeptin, the gatekeeper of puberty”

2008/711 “Seafood CRC: Addressing key aquatic animal health issues limiting production of Australian Yellowtail Kingfish (*Seriola lalandi*) and hatchery-reared Southern Bluefin Tuna (*Thunnus maccoyii*) industries”

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 156 (continued)

2007/717 “Seafood CRC: Southern Bluefin Tuna (SBT) Maturation and Sexing; develop and apply new technologies”

The most up to date information on the status of the Southern Bluefin Tuna propagation program, can be accessed via the Cleanseas Tuna website - [www.cleansas.com.au/main/investor-information.html](http://www.cleansas.com.au/main/investor-information.html)

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 157**

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Staff Budgets

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

1. In answer to a Question on Notice (SRM 07 – Supplementary Estimates October 2010) the budget for the Fisheries Branch has reduced from \$9.2 million in 2007-08 to \$5.1 million in 2010-11 with a cut in FTEs from 46 to 34. What positions have dissolved from the Branch during this time?
2. Can the Department provide specific details accounting for and explaining the reduction in funding?

**Answer:**

Note: A revised version of the answer to Question on Notice SRM 07 – Supplementary Estimates October 2010 has been submitted to the Committee Secretariat. There were 54.39 FTEs in the revised budget in 2007-08. The 46 FTEs reported in the answer to SRM 07 – Supplementary Estimates October 2010 reflected the FTEs for occupied positions and did not account for the FTEs of vacant budgeted positions within the fisheries branches. There are 34.07 FTEs in the revised budget in 2010-11 allocated to the fisheries branch.

1. The following positions have been abolished or transferred from the Fisheries Branch from 2007-08 to 2010-11.

<b>Class</b>	<b>2007-08</b>	<b>2010-11</b>	<b>Change</b>
SES equivalent	2	1	-1
APS EL2	8	6	-2
APS EL1	18	14	-4
APS Level 6	11	7	-4
APS Level 5	7	4	-3
APS Level 4	7	3	-4
<b>Total</b>			<b>-18</b>

Note: FTEs and positions are related but not the same. For example, one position could represent 0.75 FTE i.e. part time position.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 156 (continued)

2. The \$4.1 million decrease from the 2007-08 budget to the 2010-11 budget was in large part due to:
- budget measures that have terminated since 2007-08 for the following fisheries activities

<b>Fisheries program</b>	<b>Funding allocated in the 2007-08 budget</b>
Southern Bluefin Tuna Scientific Research Program	\$999 000
Recreational Fishing Community Grants Program	\$300 000
Southern Ocean Surveillance Continuation	\$119 000
Fishing Structural Adjustment Package	\$481 000
Illegal Foreign Fishing Vessels- High Seas Taskforce Initiative	\$510 000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2 409 000</b>

- the transfer of \$270 000 from 2010-11 in Departmental funding to the Australian Fisheries Management Authority for the reassignment of the responsibility for operational aspects of northern fisheries, including Torres Strait
- a reduction of \$700 000 received from external revenue sources
- a reduction in employee expenditure resulting from the 2009 merger of the International Fisheries Branch and the Domestic Fisheries and Aquaculture Branch.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 158**

**Division/Agency: SRM – Sustainable Resource Management**

**Topic: Effects of Seismic Surveys on Fish**

**Proof Hansard Page: Written**

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

1. Is the Department aware of any fisheries concerns related to seismic surveys, either in Australia or international waters?
2. What research or studies is the Department aware of in relation to the effect of seismic testing on any fishery?
3. What is the Department's view about seismic testing and effect on fisheries?

**Answer:**

1. The department is aware of industry concerns regarding seismic surveys and the condition of scallops in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery. The Department is also aware that some parts of industry have expressed similar concerns over the potential effect of seismic surveys on other species.
2. The department is aware that research has been undertaken into the effects of such surveys, including Harrington *et al.* 2010 (commissioned by the Australian Fisheries Management Authority) and Parry *et al.*, 2002 (by the Victorian Government's Marine and Freshwater Resources Institute):
  - Harrington, J.J., McAllister, J, and Semmens, J.M., 2010, *Assessing the short-term impact of seismic surveys on adult commercial scallops (Pecten fumatus) in Bass Strait*, Tasmanian Aquaculture and Fisheries Institute, 26 pp.
  - Parry, G.D., Heilslers, S., Werner, G.F., Asplin, M.D. and Gason, A., 2002, *Assessment of environmental effects of seismic testing on scallop fisheries in Bass Strait*, Report No. 50, Marine & Freshwater Resources Institute, Queenscliff, 32 pp.
3. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority commissioned the work by Harrington *et al.* referenced above. It has identified seismic surveys in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery as a continuing priority for research and remains committed to ensuring fish stocks are managed appropriately. The department continues to monitor the issue and is liaising closely with the authority in this regard.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 159**

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

Can you provide an update on the Australian Sea Lion Management Strategy since October 2010 Supplementary Estimates?

**Answer:**

The Australian Sea Lion Management strategy was implemented on 1 July 2010 and includes spatial closures, increased monitoring by observers and an adaptive management component that results in larger closures if a pre-determined number of sea lion mortalities occur. The strategy is reviewed quarterly; the second review was held on 4 March 2011.

In the first six months since the Strategy came into effect, two sea lion mortalities have been observed. Observer coverage has increased, however the target level of observer coverage was only achieved in one of the seven monitoring zones. Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) is working with industry to improve the level of coverage.

The Australian Government has also funded a trial to investigate cameras as a means of providing a cost effective tool to monitor interactions between gillnet fishing and sea lions. Under the trial, a full camera system has been installed on two vessels and the data has been retrieved for analysis. Cameras appear to be effective at monitoring interactions and are undergoing a formal verification process. The camera trial is due for completion in November 2011.

Recent scientific advice suggests that the adaptive management component of the strategy needs to be reviewed in order to be more effective in reducing and monitoring sea lion interactions. A scientific working group was formed and met on 7 February 2011 to provide advice on how to improve this component of the strategy to ensure its objectives are met. An update on progress of the scientific working group was provided at the second quarterly review on 4 March 2011. Work by the scientific group is still ongoing with further advice to be provided to the Australian sea lion working group at the third quarterly review.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 160

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Review of Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

1. A five-year review of the harvest strategy is required to be completed this year, has the review commenced?
2. What is the process for this review?
3. What is the timeline for the review?
4. With whom will the Department consult in undertaking the review?
5. How many Departmental officers will be allocated to undertake the work of completing the review?

**Answer:**

1. The department is currently developing terms of reference for the review of the Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy, prior to commencing a formal review and consultation process. The review is expected to be completed during 2012. The policy was released in September 2007 and states (page 8):

*The Policy is to be reviewed with a report to be provided to the Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation and the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources within five years of commencement. DAFF (the Australian Government Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) will initiate the review and ensure that stakeholders are involved in the review process.*

2. The process for the review is yet to be finalised.
3. The review will commence in the first half of 2011 and be provided to the Australian Government by September 2012.
4. While the list of individuals and organisations to be contacted is yet to be determined, the department expects to consult with other government bodies, industry, environmental non-government organisations and other relevant stakeholders.
5. The level of staffing will vary according to the particular requirements of the review at any given time. No staff are expected to be allocated solely to the review.



**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 161

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

The Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission met 6 – 10 December in Oahu, Hawaii.

1. Who attended the Commission's meeting representing Australia?
2. What was achieved at the WCPFC December 2010 session?
3. What action if any is required for Australia following this session?

**Answer:**

1. Australia's delegation for the December 2010 meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission consisted of:
  - Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry – Anna Willock (head of delegation), Camille Goodman and Terri McGrath
  - Australian Fisheries Management Authority – Trysh Stone
  - Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade–Sonja Weinberg and Tomm Ben-David
  - Conservation International–Jonas Rupp.
2. The key achievements of the December 2010 meeting of the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission were:
  - Endorsement of Australia's proposal for a Compliance Monitoring Scheme, to monitor compliance of members with their obligations under the Convention and measures adopted by the Commission to address non-compliance.
  - Agreement on the process to be undertaken during 2011 to develop a new, enhanced conservation and management measure for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tunas.
  - Adoption of a proposal to create a Special Management Area with enhanced monitoring, control and surveillance mechanisms for the eastern high seas pocket (surrounded by the exclusive economic zones of the Cook Islands, French Polynesia and Kiribati).
  - Adoption or amendment of a range of other conservation and management measures regarding, for example, south Pacific albacore, north Pacific striped marlin, pacific bluefin tuna and the process for the illegal, unreported and unregulated vessel list.
3. Australia will participate in the development of a new, enhanced conservation and management measure for bigeye, yellowfin and skipjack tunas, for adoption at the December 2011 meeting.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 162

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority Decisions

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

The Incoming Government Brief current issues section (p54) notes the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority (PZJA) had several important matters looming for decision by the end of 2010.

Can the Department provide a status report on the decisions taken by the PZJA since October Supplementary Estimates 2010?

**Answer:**

A record of decisions made by the Torres Strait Protected Zone Joint Authority is available at: [www.pzja.gov.au/committees/default.htm](http://www.pzja.gov.au/committees/default.htm).

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 163**

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy Project

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

The Government is providing \$500,000 to coordinate a national data collection project for recreational fishing in Australia:

1. What is the timeline for this project? When did it begin and what is the estimated completion date?
2. Where will the information be available from once the project is complete?
3. Will it be fully accessible by the public?
4. How will the information be updated over time?
5. Who is on the advisory committee for this project?

**Answer:**

1. The national data collection project for recreational fishing in Australia was approved by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) Board at its February 2011 meeting. The project will commence in July 2011 and is scheduled for completion by June 2013.
2. & 3. Information from the project will be publicly available on the internet and in printed form from the FRDC.
4. An objective of the national data collection project for recreational fishing is to identify the most efficient ways to update information. The project will build on complementary practices by the government and other organisations that are collecting recreational fishing data to improve data acquisition and aggregation for use by stakeholders.
5. The project will be administered by the FRDC. The FRDC's Recfishing Research Committee will oversee management of the project. The committee includes the following members:
  - Ross Winstanley – Chair
  - Crispian Ashby – FRDC
  - John Diplock – Consultant
  - Doug Joyner – Tackle Trade Association
  - Alistair McIlgorm – Economics expert
  - Kane Moyle – RecfishWest
  - Julian Pepperell – Recreational fisheries research/science
  - Bill Sawynok – Project Manager
  - Steve Sutton – James Cook University social science expertise
  - Bryan van der Walt – Recreational fisheries management

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 163 (continued)

Cameron Westaway – Recreational fisheries management (shared role with above member)

Steve Williamson – Charter/guiding sector

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 164

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Longline Trials in the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Siewert asked:**

1. Were seabirds present during longline trials of Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery?
2. Are you able to provide a breakdown of species and relative abundance?
3. What monitoring has been undertaken regarding the substantial loss of longline gear?
4. Has this resulted in the entanglement of marine mammals on shore?
5. Have efforts been made to determine the location of the lost gear and its potential impact on the surrounding habitat and species such as marine mammals?

**Answer:**

1. Yes.
2. Yes – the attached table provides seabird abundance data which was collected by observers. The observer was required to monitor abundance in the vicinity of the boat. The count of the number of birds is made in a 180 degree arc out to a distance of 300 metres from the boat over a 3 to 5 minute period daily.
3. It is a requirement of the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery Management Plan to report any gear loss to AFMA within 48 hours of the incident occurring. Two observers are present on each trip.
4. AFMA has received no reports of wildlife entanglements in lost longline fishing gear. Macquarie Island is permanently manned and personnel on the Island regularly monitor wildlife populations. AFMA is unaware of any reported interactions from lost longline gear from these studies.
5. The position of the lost gear is reported to AFMA. The gear is integrated weight line which is designed to sink rapidly to meet the sink rate standards of at least 0.2 metres per second which is determined by the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources, as a means of avoiding potential seabird interactions. It is expected the weight of the line would result in the lost gear remaining in situ on the ocean floor.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 164** (continued)

ATTACHMENT

**Summary of seabird numbers in the vicinity of the boat during longline operations in the Macquarie Island Toothfish Fishery**

Species	Year	Hauling observations			
		Total no. of observation periods	No. of observations where the species was seen	Maximum number of birds observed	Average number of birds per observation period
Wandering albatross Southern royal albatross	2007	29	21	24	2.89
	2008	18	9	4	1.06
	2009	67	38	19	2.53
	2010	51	16	5	0.57
Black-browed albatross	2007	29	4	7	0.44
	2008	18	0	0	0
	2009	67	9	4	0.22
	2010	51	0	0	0
Albatross (other)	2007	29	3	3	0.17
	2008	18	0	0	0
	2009	67	7	4	0.22
	2010	51	14	6	0.61
Grey petrel	2007	29	1	1	0.03
	2008	18	2	1	0.11
	2009	67	0	0	0
	2010	51	0	0	0
Southern giant petrel	2007	29	19	120	10.31
	2008	18	2	5	0.39
	2009	67	15	20	1.66
	2010	51	13	80	11.96
Northern giant petrel	2007	29	15	80	12.62
	2008	18	1	2	0.11
	2009	67	25	100	11.82
	2010	51	14	200	28.23
Giant petrel (unidentified) (northern or southern)	2007	29	2	150	5.24
	2008	18	12	100	25.17
	2009	67	56	150	31.21
	2010	51	40	260	48.76
Cape petrels	2007	29	29	290	94.38
	2008	18	18	300	102.50
	2009	67	65	300	66.37
	2010	51	51	450	139.45

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question:** 164 (continued)

ATTACHMENT

**Note:** In 2007 and 2008 the observations were made during the day and not when hauling as the longline gear was hauled through a moon-pool (an opening in the keel of the vessel) on the vessel *Avro Chieftain*.  
In 2009 and 2010 the observations were made when hauling on the vessel *Janas*.  
Setting only occurred at night.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Question: 165**

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Total Allowable Commercial Catches for ETBF

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Siewert asked:**

Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) program for yellowfin tuna, bigeye tuna, striped marlin, swordfish and albacore:

Why is the proposed TACC for these species much higher than the scientific advice for the Recommended Biological Commercial Catch (RBCC)?

**Answer:**

The Tropical Tuna Resource Assessment Group (TTRAG) expressed low confidence in the Recommended Biological Commercial Catches (RBCCs) for albacore tuna, bigeye tuna and yellowfin tuna. A key assumption of the model for calculating the RBCC is that current Australian catches will have an effect on the abundance of the stock and future Australian catches. This assumption does not hold for the tuna species because of the relatively small size of the Australian catch and the migratory nature of the tuna stocks.

Given this, Australian Fisheries Management Authority (AFMA) sought to clarify the scientific advice on setting the Total Allowable Commercial Catch (TACC) with the current and previous TTRAG Chairs, Dr Campbell Davies and Dr Cathy Dichmont. Dr Davies and Dr Dichmont provided advice on initial TACCs and all the TACCs set by AFMA are within or below these recommended catch limits, provided in Table 1 below.

<b>Species</b>	<b>Scientific advice for TACC (t)</b>	<b>AFMA TACC (t)</b>
Albacore tuna	2,000 – 2,500	2,500
Bigeye tuna	Less than 1,341	1056
Yellowfin tuna	2,000 – 2,200	2,200
Broadbill swordfish	1,400 – 1,600	1,550
Striped marlin	350 – 400	390

**Table 1:** Scientific advice on TACCs and AFMA's TACCs



**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Questions:** 166

**Division/Agency:** SRM – Sustainable Resource Management

**Topic:** Macintyre River

**Proof Hansard Page:** Written

**Senator Williams asked:**

1. Is the Department aware of a major problem in the Macintyre River north of Inverell where the Bannockburn Creek has filled many kilometres of the river with sand?
2. Has the Border Rivers –Gwydir Catchment Management Authority (CMA) applied for funding, or has at least put this issue on a priority list?
3. If there has been no contact, is it possible for the Department to contact people on the ground at the Inverell office to discuss this problem as it is getting worse and choking the river?
4. If a contractor wanted to enter a river and excavate sand from that river to clean it up, what type of approval process would need to be followed?
5. What environmental impacts do you take into account when assessing any such application?
6. Is there a cost involved in lodging that application?
7. Is there a limit as to how much sand can be removed?

**Answers:**

1. The Department was not previously aware of the sand deposit, or sand slug, in the Macintyre River from the Bannockburn Creek.
2. The Border-Rivers Gwydir CMA has not requested Australian Government funding for this particular issue. However, the Bannockburn Creek catchment, which is the source of the sand, and the effected reach of the Macintyre River, are within a current Investment Priority Area of the Border Rivers – Gwydir CMA, and the CMA has already invested funds in preliminary efforts to address this issue.
3. Recent contact with Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA has ascertained that on a regional scale this particular sand slug is not unique, with similar significant issues arising from the recent floods on the border with Queensland.

The Border Rivers - Gwydir CMA has identified the source of the sediments. However, to date funding offered by the CMA to treat the source of the sediments has not been taken up by the landholders within this Investment Priority Area.

Some properties in and around the affected area have received funding for property planning, water quality and biodiversity works. The CMA has also previously provided the Gwydir and Border Rivers Resource Management Committee (known as GWYMAC Landcare) \$130,000 to invest in the Bannockburn Creek and Macintyre River as a priority on-ground project.

**Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**

**ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**

Additional Estimates February 2011

**Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry**

**Questions:** 166 (continued)

4-7 These particular land use matters are the responsibility of the New South Wales Government under the New South Wales *Environment Planning and Assessment Act 1979*. Concerns about these issues should be addressed to the New South Wales Government Department of Environment, Climate Change and Water. Information and contact details for this department are available at: <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au>.