

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2010
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 01

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Funding or in-kind equivalent leveraged from investors

Proof Hansard Page: 70–71 (20/10/2010)

Senator IAN MACDONALD asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. One of the successes of the NHT Landcare program was the engagement of local and regional stakeholders in decision making and their increased commitment to funding leverage from non-Commonwealth sources. That was always one of the great benefits of it in the old days. Are you able to tell me what dollar funding or in-kind equivalent has been able to be leveraged from investors such as state and local governments, land owners and land managers, industry and community groups in providing Caring for our Country/Landcare funding over the last three years? Is that possible to get?

Mr Thompson—We would not be able to give you an overall figure for that because that is not something we collect on a regular basis. It would be something which—

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I have asked you this at practically every estimates though, and you have attempted to—

Mr Thompson—We do have some of the amount of money that some other bodies have put in, but it is not a comprehensive analysis. Because we do not control other people's budgets it can be a hard number to get a consistent number on, but the indications from the case studies we have looked at we get through from some of the ones in—in Victoria they have talked about a multiplier of between four-to-one and six-to-one, and I think there is about a two-to-one that we have got out of some of the Reef Rescue type investments.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I am told, and would you agree with this, that the trend is clearly downwards from leverage from other sources—that is, these groups are more and more relying on the Commonwealth, less and less are they able to leverage funding. One of the reasons, they tell me, is they are competing with people they used to collaborate with. I am told that the trend is downward. Would you agree, disagree or do not know or take it on notice?

Mr Thompson—We would have to take any sort of answer in that space on notice, but we have no comprehensive information to say whether it is upwards or downwards. We have heard anecdotally, and it has been observed—it is not a secret—that in some states some of the state expenditure has shifted from area to area.

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Question: SRM 01 (continued)

Answer:

The Australian Government is unable to give a definitive answer on the level of leveraged or matched funding (cash or in-kind) for Caring for our Country – Landcare projects. It was not mandatory for applicants to list in-kind contributions in their application.

The estimated breakdown of leveraged or matched funding (cash or in-kind) reported by applicants for 2008–09 is at Table 1. Information for 2009–10 and 2010–11 is not available as project final reports have not yet been received and analysed.

Table 1: Reported matching contributions to date

Financial Year	Caring for our Country - Landcare Funding	Total Matching Funding (GST Excl)
TOTAL 2008-09	\$25,869,331	\$39,459,141

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Question: SRM 02

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Maintenance of Effort

Proof Hansard Page: 71 (24/05/2010)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—You would be able to get the state government funding, because this is what I have asked for in previous years, and if you could update what I have asked previously, as to what is your latest information on contributions that the various state governments have contributed. Originally, when this all started with NHT it was supposed to be dollar for dollar as I recall. I am quite sure it is not that now, but I am just wondering if you can get for me the contributions by the state, appreciating that in many instances you will have to get that from the various state departments, and that is no easy task either. I accept that. But if you could—

Mr Thompson—We can take that on notice. We will attempt to get what we can from the states.

Answer:

As part of Caring for our Country's relationships with the states and territories to ensure simpler administrative arrangements, the Australian Government no longer measures matching 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.

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Question: SRM 03

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Approval Processes for aquaculture developments on Commonwealth land

Proof Hansard Page: 74 (20/10/2010)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Perhaps you are not the right agency and Senator Ludwig will certainly tell me if that is the case. Would there be any difference in approval processes for such a proposal on Commonwealth versus state privately held land?

Mr Thompson—I am not familiar enough with the relevant legislation relating to aquaculture to know.

Senator COLBECK—I do not think it is necessarily an aquaculture thing. I think it is a Commonwealth planning-type approval thing and, perhaps, even in transport tomorrow we might get—

Dr O'Connell—We could take that on notice, but I think the short answer probably is that there would be a difference between state land and Commonwealth land.

Answer:

Approval processes for aquaculture developments in the states and territories are generally subject to those jurisdictions' legislation and approvals processes.

The Western Australian Department of Fisheries has advised that the state's *Fish Resources Management Act 1994* is unlikely to apply to such developments where they occur on Commonwealth land. The WA Department of Fisheries further advised that it did not receive a formal request for information or advice in relation to the establishment of a barramundi aquaculture operation at the Curtin Air Base.

Land use approval processes between the Commonwealth, the states and territories are not primarily a matter for this portfolio.

In regard to Commonwealth environmental approvals, the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* (EPBC Act) applies on both State and Commonwealth land. However, an assessment of an aquaculture operation on Commonwealth land would consider significant impacts on the whole of the environment, whereas an assessment of significant impacts on state land would be limited to matters of National Environmental Significance, such as impacts on Commonwealth listed species. A referral would be required under the EPBC Act if the aquaculture development is likely to have a significant impact on a matter protected under the EPBC Act.

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Question: SRM 04

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Environment Staff Numbers

Proof Hansard Page: 77 (20/10/2010)

Senate Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD – While the change of staff is happening, could you, perhaps, Mr Thompson, on notice just indicate how many Environment staff can identifiably be allocated to Caring for our Country. Is that possible?

Mr Thompson—That is possible. We will take that on notice.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—I am really after you going back a couple of years so that I can see whether you are increasing your involvement or decreasing it, and whether Environment is doing the opposite, or whatever.

Answer:

The number of Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities staff in the Land and Coast Division are listed in the table below, with corresponding DAFF data for comparison:

These figures show staff in the Joint Team who work on Caring for Our Country to deliver joint outcomes.		
Budgeted ASL	SEWPAC	DAFF
2009-10	202.0	90.1
2010-11	189.4	81.4

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Question: SRM 05

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: Recreational Fishing Industry Development Projects
Proof Hansard Page: 99-100 (20/10/2010)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—What is the proposal for the recreational conference?

Mr Thompson—All of these projects are being worked on with the Fisheries R&D Corporation. The proposal there is to hold a national conference to bring relevant recreational fishing people together to discuss issues of importance. Each of these areas of activity were ones that were high priority activities identified in the discussion paper and the feedback to date. And for each of those activities, with ourselves and FRDC, we are looking to work with relevant leaders from the recreational fishing sector. And some meetings were held last week with various people from the recreational fishing sector to develop the detail of those proposals and what sort of outcomes would meet both our objectives and their objectives. The conference would be the speakers, the programs and the outcomes—that sort of thing.

Senator COLBECK—Why weren't all these decisions made public?

Mr Thompson—Some of them have been made public. I do not think there is any secret about them. The recreational fishing sector is certainly aware of them all.

Senator COLBECK—I have had a number of conversations with them about what is going on, and not all of them are aware of it.

Mr Thompson—That could be—for instance, I was at a meeting with them last week where we were talking about how we might do these, and they seemed to be—

Senator COLBECK—When was the announcement made? When were they made public? We have looked for this information because, at the last estimates, we agreed that there was \$1.3 million remaining. When did the minister sign off on all this?

Mr Thompson—I would have to take the exact date on notice, but I believe it was in June or July. I do not have with me the timing of what announcements about these were made.

Senator COLBECK—Where will I go for public information—on a DAFF website or an FRDC website? Where would I find this information if I was looking for it?

Mr Thompson—I am not sure whether they are on the website. Normally, these get listed on the website when contracts are finalised. They are not there yet. We will follow up.

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Question: SRM 05 (continued)

Answer:

The proposal for a national recreational fishing conference is consistent with the goals of the Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy. The conference will provide a forum for a broad range of stakeholders and government to consider emerging issues in recreational fishing.

On 31 March 2010 the then minister announced that the Australian Government would provide up to \$500 000 to help scope and implement a coordinated national data collection project for recreational fishing in Australia.

Additional to that, seven recreational fishing industry development projects totalling \$1.1 million were approved by the then minister on 16 July 2010. The formal announcement of these projects will be made soon. The projects are as follows:

-	A national education program	\$400 000
-	Health and well-being research	\$100 000
-	Expanding the future leaders program	\$250 000
-	A national recreational fishing conference	\$100 000
-	A discussion paper on the implications of climate change for recreational fishers and the industry	\$100 000
-	Expansion of the angel rings project nationally	\$100 000
-	Study for improved consultations between government and the recreational fishing sector	\$ 50 000

The recreational fishing projects will be managed by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) and project details will be available on the FRDC web site following their announcement.

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Question: SRM 06

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: National Health and Medical Research Council Food Guidelines
Proof Hansard Page: 100 (20/10/2010)

Senator Colbeck asked:

I have some questions on consultations with NHMRC on the national diet proposals that they had. We did talk about it at the last estimates. Have we had any discussions with them about that? Have they been to—sorry to mention ABARE-BRS again—for a copy of the fish stocks report, for example, to give them a demonstration of the sustainability of our fisheries? Have we posted them a copy?

Mr Thompson—I believe there were some consultations with them about the status of Australian fish stocks, and material of that sort was made available. I am not aware of any more detailed discussions.

Senator COLBECK—Was it made directly to NHMRC or their consultants that are doing the work?

Mr Thompson—I am not sure what the nature of the further discussions or information provision were.

Senator COLBECK—Could you investigate that for me and, perhaps, provide me that information on notice as to what your communications have been with NHMRC since the last estimates and whether they have been provided a copy of what is a very good document and provides some very encouraging news about the state of our fish stocks?

Mr Thompson—Yes, Senator.

Answer:

The department met with the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) in late May to discuss the NHMRC's consideration of sustainability issues in the review of the dietary guidelines. At this meeting the department sought further information on the NHMRC's work in this area and the nature of the information members were seeking from the department.

The NHMRC wrote to the department on 23 September 2010 in relation to the NHMRC's *A new food guidance system for Australia – Foundation and Total Diets*. The department has requested clarification from the NHMRC on some matters.

The NHMRC has not been in contact with ABARE-BRS. A copy of the *Fisheries Status Reports 2009* has been provided to the NHMRC.

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Question: SRM 07

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Fisheries staff and budget numbers

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. How many staff currently work in the Fisheries Policy Unit?
2. How has this changed since 2007?
3. What is the budget for this unit? How has this changed?
4. Since the last Estimates, Mr Pittar has left. Has he taken up a position elsewhere in DAFF, Government or somewhere else?
5. How many Fisheries staff have resigned during this calendar year?

Answer:

1. There are currently 39 staff working in the Fisheries Branch.
2. In 2007–08 there were 46 FTEs in the Fisheries Branch.
3. The current budget for the Fisheries Branch is \$5 159 562.50 for 2010–11. This includes a budget for the branch's operations, including travel and meetings.

Financial Year	No. of FTEs	Budget
2007–08	46	\$9 249 548
2008–09	52	\$6 268 551
2009–10	37	\$4 344 738
2010–11 (budgeted)	34.07	\$5 159 562.50

4. Mr Pittar has taken up a branch head position in the Australian Government Department of Infrastructure and Transport.
5. 2 FTE Fisheries staff have resigned in this calendar year.

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Question: SRM 08

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Marine Bioregional Planning

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Can you give me a rundown of DAFF's involvement over the past few months with the Marine Bioregion Planning process being run by DEWHA?
2. Has DAFF provided any data since Budget Estimates to DEWHA on fish stocks or similar data?
3. What feedback is DAFF receiving from the fishing sector – commercial and recreational – on the process?
4. DEWHA has been using the term "low impact" on fisheries/marine areas. What does DAFF understand this term to mean?

Answer:

1. The department and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (SEWPaC) (formerly the Department of Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts) senior officers have met on several occasions to discuss the Marine Bioregional Planning process and discussions are ongoing.
2. Since the last Budget Estimates ABARE-BRS has provided SEWPaC with gross value of production (GVP) data in interim reports; as GVP estimates, and as data summaries. ABARE-BRS also released the Australian Fisheries Statistics 2009 (in August 2010) and the Fisheries Status Reports 2009 (in September 2010), which contain fish stocks data.
3. Feedback from both the commercial and recreational fishing sectors is that they would like more consultation and clarification of the Marine Bioregional Planning process. The sectors have also called for a displaced activities policy to be available for future consultations.
4. SEWPaC has not defined the term "low impact" as it applies to fisheries/marine areas. The department understands low-impact to mean low-impact on fisheries and fishers causing little change to existing fishing opportunities in the context of responsible and sustainable fisheries management.

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Question: SRM 09

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Recreational Fishing Roundtable

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. On June 22, the previous Minister promised to the rec fishing sector a Ministerial roundtable. I note the Government didn't provide this commitment in its election policy. Will it still occur as Minister Burke promised on June 22?
2. Who was invited?
3. Who attended?
4. Which Departmental officials/Ministerial advisers attended?
5. Which organisations had their costs paid for?
6. What was the total cost of the Roundtable?
7. What was the agenda for the meeting?
8. What outcomes were decided? What action has been taken on these?
9. Will Ministers be attending the Ministerial Roundtable?
10. What date is set for the next meeting?

Answer:

1. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has confirmed that the Fishing Roundtable will continue and is considering arrangements for the meetings.
2. Representatives from the following fishing, boating and tackle industries were invited to the first Recreational Fishing Roundtable:
 - Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory Inc.
 - Australian Fishing Network
 - Australian Fishing and Trade Association
 - Australian National Sportfishing Association Inc.
 - Australian Underwater Federation
 - Boating and Fishing Council of Australia
 - Gamefishing Association Australia
 - Gone Fishing Tours and Tuition
 - Native Fish Australia
 - Recfish Australia
 - Recfishwest (Western Australia)
 - Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee
 - Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW
 - South Australian Recreational Fishing Advisory Council Inc.
 - SunFish (Queensland)
 - Tasmanian Association for Recreational Fishing Inc.
 - VRFish (Victoria)

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Question: SRM 09 (continued)

3. Representatives from the following fishing, boating and tackle industries attended the first Recreational Fishing Roundtable:
 - Australian Fishing and Trade Association
 - Australian Marine Engine Council
 - Australian National Sportfishing Association Inc.
 - Boating and Fishing Council of Australia
 - Boating Industry Association
 - Gamefishing Association Australia
 - Outboard Engine Distributors Association
 - Recfish Australia
 - Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee
 - Recreational Fishing Alliance of NSW
 - VRFish (Victoria)
4. The departmental officials who attended the Roundtable were the Executive Manager of the Sustainable Resource Management Division, the Director of the Domestic Fisheries Policy Section and two Assistant Directors from the Domestic Fisheries Policy Section.

Ministerial advisers from Minister Burke's Office and Minister Garrett's Office also attended.
5. No organisations had their costs paid.
6. The total cost for the roundtable was \$208.00 for morning tea catering. This does not include staff time.
7. The meeting participants discussed several issues including:
 - the purpose of the Recreational Fishing Roundtable
 - national information about recreational fishing
 - re-investment into recreational fishing
 - resource arrangements and safety in fishing
 - environmental legislation and its impacts on recreational fishers
 - consultation and recognition of the recreational fishing sector.
8. The record of the meeting has been provided to the incoming government for consideration. Participants were also provided with the record of the meeting.
9. Minister Ludwig and/or the Parliamentary Secretary will attend future roundtable meetings.
10. The minister is considering arrangements for the next roundtable meeting.

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Question: SRM 10

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: The Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Can you please advise on the status of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee? Does it still exist? Does it have an expiry date?
2. What is the status of the \$500k initiative announced by the Minister when releasing the draft discussion paper of the group relating to the collection of recreational fishing data?
3. What is the finalised terms of reference? Who will be consulted?
4. When will the project be completed?
5. Will the data be made public?
6. At the last Estimates, I asked for advice from DAFF about the Minister's request to the States and Territories seeking co-investment for the project. I didn't receive an answer (question transcript below). Can you provide me an answer about what has been the response?

Senator COLBECK—You provide a beautiful segue. Has the minister mentioned a request to the state and territories for co-investment in the project? What has the response been to date?

Mr Pittar—As you say, the minister has written asking for that information from the states and territories. I would have to check on the status of how complete the response is from the states and territories.

7. What is the status of the draft discussion paper of RFAC? Is it awaiting government consideration? Or is it still with the Committee for consideration?
8. Can you advise on the funds remaining from the \$2 million made available to this strategy? At the last Estimates, it was agreed \$1.3 million was still remaining.
9. I understand the Minister approved for all or most of this funding to be transferred to FRDC. Is this correct? If so, when was that approval made (why was that decision not made public)? What will FRDC be doing with those funds?

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Question: SRM 10 (continued)

Answer:

1. The Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee still exists. Its current terms of reference expire June 2011.
2. The \$500,000 national recreational fishing data collection project is being progressed by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC).
3. There are no terms of reference for the project. The scope of the project will be finalised by the Recfishing Research Steering Committee of the FRDC. The approach to consultation is to be determined by the steering committee and they will report on the project regularly to the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee.
4. The completion date for the project will depend on the final structure of the project.
5. The results of the project will be made public.
6. Some contributions from the states and Northern Territory, and from the FRDC are expected; however details have yet to be confirmed.
7. The Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee has reviewed stakeholder responses to the draft discussion paper. The draft paper is being further refined by the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee with government input.
8. \$200,000 of the original \$2 million remains available to progress the recreational fishing strategy.
9. The majority of the remaining funds has been transferred to the FRDC to support the administration of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee and management costs associated with the new projects. The then minister approved the FRDC administering the projects on 23 March 2010.

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Question: SRM 11

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: National Health and Medical Research Council Food Guidelines

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

At the last Estimates, I asked about whether or not DAFF provided any advice to the NHMRC's '*A new food guidance system for Australia – Foundation and Total Diets*'. DAFF advised they knew nothing! As did DEWHA in later hearings.

1. Is DAFF now aware of the concerns of the seafood industry about the draft guidelines which recommend Australians eat seafood just once a week?

Text from draft report:

"Aim at one serve fish a week. Combine all categories. Some varieties more environmentally sustainable than others."

2. Has DAFF now consulted with the NHMRC about the references its draft report makes to the 'sustainability of stocks' which has apparently been used to influence the draft dietary guidelines? When did DAFF first make contact with NHMRC about this matter? Did DAFF or NHMRC initiate this contact?
3. Has DAFF provided the NHMRC with the latest Fishery Status Report which showed an ongoing improvement in the level of healthy fish stocks? What other advice has been provided?

Answer:

1. The department is aware of concerns the seafood industry has with the information contained in the National Health and Medical Research Council's (NHMRC's) *A new food guidance system for Australia – Foundation and Total Diets* document.
2. The NHMRC initiated contact, writing to the department on 15 March 2010. Following this correspondence, the department met with the NHMRC in late May to discuss the NHMRC's consideration of sustainability issues in the review of the dietary guidelines. At this meeting the department sought further information on the NHMRC's work in this area and the nature of the information they were seeking from the department.
3. See response to question SRM 06.

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Question: SRM 12

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Southern bluefin tuna

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. What advice has DAFF provided to the Environment Minister on either export permits for OR the listing under the EPBC Act of Southern Bluefin Tuna? When was the latest advice provided?
2. Has DEWHA been provided with the results of the latest aerial survey which showed very promising stock recovery levels?

Answer:

1. The department provided advice to the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) on the assessment of the nomination of southern bluefin tuna for listing as 'conservation dependent' under the EPBC Act on 21 January 2009. The department provided further advice on the listing process to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee in December 2009. On 13 October 2010, the department provided DSEWPaC with advice on scientific issues relating to the listing process.
2. DSEWPaC was briefed on the most recent scientific data submitted to the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna (CCSBT) on 26 August 2010, which included a briefing on the latest scientific aerial survey of southern bluefin tuna. DSEWPaC also had access to a report on the most recent scientific aerial survey submitted to the CCSBT Scientific Committee in late August 2010.

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Question: SRM 13

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Southern bluefin tuna

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. There was a meeting of the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna in Taipei this week.
2. Which officials attended on behalf of the Australian Government?
3. Which NGO representatives attended from Australia?
4. Can you advise on the outcomes of this meeting and their impact on the Australian industry?

Answer:

1. There was a meeting in Taipei from 11 to 15 October 2010.
2. The Australian Government was represented by four officers from the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (including a scientific representative from the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics-Bureau of Rural Sciences), two officers from the Australian Fisheries Management Authority, and one officer each from the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities, and the Attorney-General's Department.
3. The non-government organisation Humane Society International sent an Australian representative to the meeting. An Australian representative of the inter-governmental organisation Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels also attended.
4. Most of the major decision items on the meeting agenda were deferred until 2011. The outcomes of the October 2010 meeting included:
 - An agreement to conduct further scientific testing of a formal rebuilding strategy for the southern bluefin tuna stock, before adoption of the rebuilding strategy in 2011
 - An agreement to develop a compliance plan to address the risks of non-compliance by member and cooperating non-member countries fishing for southern bluefin tuna
 - The adoption of data confidentiality rules.

There were no decisions arising from the October 2010 meeting that will change the current management of the Australian southern bluefin tuna fishery for the coming 2010-11 fishing season, which begins on 1 December 2010.

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Question: SRM 14

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. In 2005-2007, as you would be aware, there was a significant \$150 million Commercial fisheries buyback across various fisheries.
2. I understand there is some concern from those in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery that their fishery was not a significant recipient of assistance through this buyback as the effort was reduced by a relatively small level (approximately 14% or 22 concessions)? Is DAFF aware of this concern?
3. Is there any consideration of further reducing effort in that fishery and providing structural adjustment assistance for those affected?

Answer:

1. Yes.
2. The department is aware of the concerns of some entitlement holders in the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery, about the small number of Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery concessions purchased through the Securing Our Fishing Future package.

An independent audit of the buyback by Ernst and Young assessed whether fishers were treated fairly in the administration of the tender process. Ernst and Young did not identify any matters where the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery was affected to a greater extent than other fisheries.

The Australian National Audit Office audit of the structural adjustment package found that:

(The Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry) *successfully completed the buyback of fishing concessions and exceeded the reduction targets established for three of the four target fisheries (Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery, Northern Prawn Fishery and Southern and Eastern Scalefish and Shark Fishery). The target was not achieved in the BSCZSF primarily because the prices asked for the concessions being offered in this fishery were considerably more than the department was prepared to pay.*

(This report is available at:

http://www.anao.gov.au/uploads/documents/2008-09_Audit_Report_38.pdf)

3. The Australian Fisheries Management Authority manages catch and effort in the fishery in accordance with the *Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery Management Plan 2002*.

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There is no intention to provide further structural adjustment assistance for the Bass Strait Central Zone Scallop Fishery.

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Question: SRM 15

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Resource Sharing and the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck provided the following written question:

1. Given that the Australian Government has an obligation under Commonwealth Law to consider recreational catches and resource sharing in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery Management Plan 2005 (below), what efforts are being made to address sector concerns about:
 - a. Lack of data on recreational catches of tuna and billfish?
 - b. A resource sharing agreement?

Answer:

1. The government is providing \$300,000 to support socio-economic research in the game fishing sector. The research aims to quantify the value of the game fishing sector, and the contribution it makes to regional coastal communities in eastern Australia. The project will also develop methods for game fishers to provide information to underpin the sustainable management of high value game fish species. This project is being administered by the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC), and undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics – Bureau of Rural Sciences.

The government is also providing up to \$500,000 to coordinate a national data collection project for recreational fishing in Australia. The project will build on existing work by the states and territories and community-based recreational fishing organisations. The aim is to make recreational fishing data accessible, and where possible, in a common format from a readily accessible location. This project is being administered by the FRDC in coordination with an advisory committee

Considerable effort has been directed over several years, to progressing resource sharing arrangements in Commonwealth fisheries. Resource sharing is being progressed through the Natural Resource Management Ministerial Council.

Senate Rural Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates October 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 16

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Sustainability

Proof Hansard Page: Written

Senator Nash asked:

1. What is the definition of 'sustainable'?
2. What is the definition of agriculture practices which aren't sustainable?

Answer:

1. What is the definition of 'sustainable'?
There are a range of similar definitions of sustainable, for example the Standing Committee on Agriculture's definition¹ of sustainable agriculture is the use of farming practices and systems which maintain or enhance the natural resource base, other ecosystems which are influenced by agricultural activities, and the economic viability of agricultural production.

In the *Natural Heritage Trust of Australia Act 1997*, the meaning of sustainable agriculture, for the purposes of the Act, is the use of agricultural practices and systems that maintain or improve the following:
 - a) the economic viability of agricultural production;
 - b) the social viability and well-being of rural communities;
 - c) the ecologically sustainable use of Australia's biodiversity;
 - d) the natural resource base;
 - e) ecosystems that are influenced by agricultural activities.
2. What is the definition of agriculture practices which aren't sustainable?
The Australian Government does not define agricultural practices which aren't sustainable.

¹ Standing Committee on Agriculture, (1991), *Sustainable Agriculture, report to Australian Agricultural Council by a Working Group on Sustainable Agriculture*, SCA Technical Report Series No. 36. CSIRO, Melbourne