

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

Program: Division or Agency:	1.2: MD	Question No:	021
Topic:	Rio+20 obligations		
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:	83 (13/2/12)		

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: Will the Commonwealth be assessing the extent to which Australia has met or fallen short of our Rio obligations?

Mr Thompson: Certainly within the department and in coordinating across other agencies, there has been some analysis of that undertaken, but I do not think any decision has been taken about what happens with that analysis.

Senator WATERS: Is that analysis able to be tabled?

Mr Thompson: I would have to take that on notice, I am sorry.

Answer:

The draft analysis of environmental commitments from international obligations is able to be placed on the department's website when available.

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

Program: Division or Agency: 1.2: MD **Question No:** 022
Topic: Snubfin dolphin
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question: 104
(13/2/12)

Senator Waters asked:

Senator WATERS: ...I have a few questions about the snubfin dolphin, which is a listed migratory species that has been discovered just north of Gladstone at Balaclava Island where there is slated to be coal terminals and concomitant increases in shipping in those areas. What analysis has the department done and what advice have you provided to the minister, if you are able to answer me on that, on the impacts on the snubfin dolphin from these new proposed coal export facilities and the associated shipping?

Ms Dripps: All the information about assessment of prospective or potential developments is done by the Environment Assessment and Compliance Division. They will be here first up in the morning for 5.2.

Senator WATERS: And they would be the relevant section of the department to advise on the expected impacts on snubfin dolphin?

Ms Dripps: Yes.

Senator WATERS: As well is just assessing the project? They would not seek any advice from any of the folk at the table here?

Ms Dripps: They will take advice from a range of different parties in undertaking that assessment, including the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and sometimes the Marine Division, but I do not have the specifics of whether that project is having advice sought from the Marine Division with me.

Senator WATERS: If there is anything you could table that is from the Marine Division, that would be helpful. Thank you.

Answer:

Refer to the response to Question Number 214.

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

Program: Division or Agency: 1.2: MD **Question No:** 023
Topic: Marine bioregional planning – Coral Sea
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question: 107-108 (13/2/12)

Senator Boswell asked:

Page 107

Senator BOSWELL: ...Let us look at the marine bioregional planning process. Could you advise on the total cost to patrol, police and administer the Coral Sea marine park once it has been declared?

Ms Dripps: We have indicated that government is yet to make decisions on the scale and levels of protection within the Coral Sea marine reserve, so the department is at an early stage of planning such matters, and we are not able to give a definitive answer at this time.

Senator BOSWELL: You said the maps could be altered—by how much?

Ms Dripps: I do not know. I am going to have a look at the public consultation—

Senator BOSWELL: In other words, have you done any research, planning or costing on this question?

Ms Dripps: We have done preliminary work on that question, and Mr Routh might wish to add to my answer.

Senator BOSWELL: Could you assist me, Mr Routh, by telling me how much it will cost?

Mr Routh: The fundamental reason we do not have a final proposal is that we are still in the consultation phase. When there is a decision on a final proposal, we would then do the costings around management.

Senator BOSWELL: On the maps that are put out at the moment, what would the costing be?

Dr Grimes: I do not think anyone has done one.

Senator BOSWELL: They have. There are maps and there are changed maps there.

Senator Conroy: Are you asking for a future costing based on uncertain parameters?

Senator BOSWELL: I am asking for a costing on the maps. 'On the 24th we will declare it. No-one has any idea of how much it's going to cost.'

Page 108

Dr Grimes: As the officers have indicated, it is still an ongoing process of active policy consideration by the government. I am not sure what we can provide for you at the moment. We can take the question on notice.

Answer:

In regards to Senator Boswell's general questions on future management costings of the management of a marine reserve in the Coral Sea:

- The proposal for the Coral Sea Commonwealth Marine Reserve was released for public consultation on 25 November 2011. The consultation period concluded on 24 February 2012 and submissions have now closed. The proposal attracted strong public and industry interest and the thousands of submissions received will be considered before decisions are made. Once the reserve design has been finalised, detailed costings for the ongoing management of the reserve, including compliance, will be undertaken.

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

Program: Division or Agency:	1.2: MD	Question No:	024
Topic:	South-west marine bioregional planning – departmental funding		
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:	109 (13/2/12)		

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT: ...Has the department funded any organisation from the WA fishing industry as part of the marine planning process for the south-west marine region?

Ms Musgrave: The department has provided funding to commercial fishing representative bodies to facilitate thorough and good engagement with ABARES to ensure they can identify who the right people are that ABARES need to be talking to, which are the fishers who actually need to receive the survey because they are operating in the areas of interest and things of that nature.

Senator SIEWERT: Can you tell me how much they were funded and what the specific guidelines and activities are for?

Ms Musgrave: I can tell you how much. I do not have a copy of the contract terms here to tell you which activities, so I can take that on notice.

Senator SIEWERT: If you could.

Ms Musgrave: Is it specifically for a region?

Senator SIEWERT: It is for the south-west, but it would be helpful if you could provide it for any funding that has been made available for any of the other regions for the fishing industry to participate in that manner.

Ms Musgrave: Okay. Do you want me to give you the bits I know or do you want it just as one whole lot?

Senator SIEWERT: Could you tell me how much for the south-west one now and then take the rest on notice?

Answer:

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has provided financial support to representative commercial fishing organisations to facilitate coordinated engagement of this sector in the marine bioregional planning process.

The agreements entered into are focused regionally and include three key components which are:

- Raise awareness of marine bioregional planning across the industry;

- Facilitate industry participation in and data acquisition for the socio-economic impacts assessment; and
- Facilitate a consolidated industry position on the proposed marine reserves.

The funding provided to representative organisations is outlined below.

Marine Region	Provider	Total contract funding (GST Incl.)	Expenditure (as at end of February 2012) GST Incl.
South-west	Western Australia Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC)	(up to) \$181 500	\$141 270
North-west	Western Australia Fishing Industry Council (WAFIC)	(up to) \$174 000	\$44 000
North	Northern Territory Seafood Industry Council (NTSC)	(up to) \$198 200	\$128 353.30 (contract acquitted)
East	Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA)	(up to) \$233 000	\$25 000

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

Program: Division or Agency:	1.2: MD	Question No:	025
Topic:	South-west marine bioregional planning – use of funding		
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:	110 (13/2/12)		

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT: ...Was any of this funding used to develop industry submissions or consolidated positions to the south-west process or for any of the other regions?

Ms Musgrave: I cannot imagine so if it was not the purpose of the contract; but, without actually having asked anyone to account for every single hour—I do not think so. It is not the purpose of the contract. I cannot imagine.

Senator SIEWERT: I have been in the other estimates hearing and found out some other things about a grant proposal being reported differently from what it potentially was supposed to be for, so could you take it on notice to check for me please?

Ms Musgrave: Certainly.

Answer:

One of the objectives of these funding agreements is to facilitate communication with the commercial fishing industry and by doing so enable the development of consolidated commercial fishing industry positions on the proposed marine reserves. The funding of such work has been important in ensuring that this sector is fully informed about the program and that the Australian Government has the best possible understanding of the socio-economic impacts likely to result from the establishment of marine reserves.

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

Program: Division or Agency: 1.2: Marine **Question No:** 026

Topic: South-west marine region – funding to the Western Australian fishing industry

Proof Hansard Page and Date Written

or Written Question:

Senator Siewert asked:

In relation to the funding to the WA fishing industry as part of the Marine Bioregional Planning process in the South West Marine Region

1. What information was provided to the Department in relation to this funding?
2. Will you provide copies of all documents submitted in relation to this funding?
3. Did this funding assist the Industry in putting forward to the Department its consolidated Industry position?
4. Was this funding intended to support the Industry in publicly communicating its consolidated position and campaigning for its implementation?
5. Was this funding used by the industry in publicly communicating its consolidated position? If 'yes', how was this position communicated and did Commonwealth funding pay for the communicating of this position and the production of communications materials such as a brochure titled "We can have it all... with the right balance" and the web site www.seafoodforaustralia.com.au

Answer:

1. The department entered into a service provision contract with the Western Australian Fishing Industry Council Incorporated (WAFIC), acting on behalf of that organisation, the Commonwealth Fisheries Association and Wildcatch Fisheries South Australia, in relation to the marine bioregional planning program for the South-west Marine Region. The key components of the agreement are:
 - engagement of industry regionally for awareness and communication purposes;
 - facilitation of industry participation in the socio-economic impact assessment; and
 - communication activities facilitating a consolidated industry position.

A wide range of information has been provided to the department and to the Australian Bureau of Agriculture and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) in relation to the socio-economic impact assessment work it has been undertaking for the department.

The types of information provided have included details about fishing businesses potentially or actually impacted by the proposals, comments on socio-economic study methodology, feedback on draft reports; industry views about the proposals (as outlined in the combined industry submission) and issues of interest/concern to commercial fishers. A large body of material relates to the organisation of meetings by industry through this contract. This information has been provided through various means, including participation at meetings and teleconferences, by email and in written communication.

2. The material provided forms part of a decision making process that is still under consideration by the Australian Government.

The commercial fishing industry submission on the draft South-west marine bioregional plan and marine reserves network is available on the department's website. It represents a comprehensive picture of the industry's views on the government's proposals as conveyed to the department throughout the public consultation process and subsequently. The submission can be accessed at: <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/south-west/consultation/submissions/index.html>.

3. The funding provided is to raise awareness of the program across industry, facilitate industry participation in and data acquisition for the socio-economic impacts assessment project and facilitate a consolidated industry position on the proposed marine reserves.
4. No.
5. No. This would have been inconsistent with the objectives of the agreement. The department has no reason to believe that funds provided under the contract may have been used for this purpose.

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

Program: Division or Agency: 1.2: Marine **Question No:** 027
Topic: Marine bioregional planning
Proof Hansard Page and Date Written
or Written Question:

Senator Boswell asked:

In a United Nations report published in January this year titled Resilient People, Resilient Planet: A Future Worth Choosing in the section on Fisheries management the Great Barrier Reef was described the great success story in sustainable management?

1. The report sources the Australian Government as providing the information on the Great Barrier Reef. Is that correct?

The report states “sustainably managing the Great Barrier Reef requires balancing human use with the maintenance of the area’s natural and cultural integrity.”

2. If the source of the information was the Australian Government can we assume then that the Gillard Government is proud of what has been achieved in the Great Barrier Marine Park and that the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park is the benchmark for world’s best practice in sustainable fisheries management?
3. The UN report applauds the management of the Great Barrier Reef which permits trawling so why will trawling be excluded in the Coral Sea and the other Bioregions?
4. Did the Minister examine the sustainable fishing management practices in the Great Barrier Reef when drawing up the marine bioregion plans?
5. Given the glowing report of our fisheries management in the United Nations report, is the Minister prepared to go back to the drawing board and use the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park as the model for the marine bioregions of the South-West, North, North-West, Temperate East and the Coral Sea?

Answer:

The boundaries and zoning of the proposed Commonwealth marine reserves have not been finalised. The Australian Government is currently assessing feedback received from the public and industry during the public consultation process in each of the regions.

1. Yes.
2. The management achievements of the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park are well recognised.
3. No decision has been made on the final marine reserve proposal for the Coral Sea.

4. The matters considered in identifying new Commonwealth marine reserves are outlined in the Goals and principles for the establishment of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas in Commonwealth waters established in 2007 by the then government (<http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/general/goals-nrsmpa.html>). The marine bioregional planning program included an assessment of the risks posed by fishing methods to the conservation values of areas proposed for inclusion in marine reserves. The outcomes of this risk assessment were one of the inputs to deciding what activities would be allowed within the different zone types in the proposed marine reserves.
5. The government has undertaken an extensive public consultation process on the current proposals for marine reserves. They are designed for the primary purpose of biodiversity conservation. Commercial fishing activities are proposed to be allowed where they do not impact significantly on marine biodiversity and habitats. The aim of minimising socio-economic impacts has also resulted in the proposal to allow some other fishing methods to continue to be used in some parts of the proposed marine reserves under special purpose zoning.

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

Program: Division or Agency: 1.2: MD **Question No:** 028
Topic: Gulf of Carpentaria Commonwealth marine reserve
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question: Written

Senator Macdonald asked:

Gulf of Carpentaria Commonwealth Marine Reserve (submissions closed early October 2011)

1. How many submissions were received?
2. Was there a range of input from both stakeholders and community members?
3. Was there submissions made in relation to the affect on the local economy in Karumba? What has been the general feedback?
4. From the feedback is it already clear what operators will be the worst affected?
5. From the feedback so far – will this affect the supply of Australian prawns to the domestic market?

Some fishermen have expressed concern that excluding certain area could force commercial anglers over the top of one another.

6. Was this issue raised in the submissions?
7. Could this be the case once the zone is implemented?
8. What was the feedback and ideas put forward in relation to compensation packages to leave the industry?
9. Has a report been finalised / when will it be?

Answer:

Gulf of Carpentaria Commonwealth Marine Reserve (submissions closed early October 2011)

1. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) received 12,861 submissions on the Commonwealth marine reserve network proposal for the North Marine Region during the public consultation period that closed on 28 November 2011. None of the submissions received targeted the proposed Gulf of Carpentaria Commonwealth Marine Reserve in isolation from other proposed reserves in the region.
2. Yes. A diverse range of feedback on the North marine reserve network proposal was provided by representatives of all sectors with an interest in the North marine environment as well as wider community members.

3. Yes. A number of people from different sectors provided feedback on potential impacts of the proposed marine reserves on the community of Kurumba. In general, feedback raised concerns about possible social and economic impacts, including recreational opportunities and pressures on regional communities.
4. No. Final marine reserve boundaries and zoning are not yet determined. A number of commercial fishing operators made submissions detailing the area of their fishing activities and potential impacts of the proposed reserves on their businesses. The Australian Bureau of Agricultural Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) is undertaking a socio-economic analysis of the marine reserves proposal. This analysis has identified areas of high value to the commercial fishing industry as well as operators who fish within the boundaries of the proposed marine reserves.
5. Final marine reserve boundaries and zoning are not yet determined. Some submissions raised concerns about the impact of the proposed marine reserves on the catch of prawns.
6. Yes.
7. Feedback from all stakeholders, including commercial fishers, is being considered in the finalisation of the Commonwealth marine reserves network for the North Marine Region.
8. There was a range of feedback received from different groups during the public consultation period about potential impacts of the marine reserve proposal on commercial fishing operations. Feedback included different views on the scale and cost of any fisheries adjustment program, and the factors that should be taken into account in applying adjustment assistance.
9. A report providing an overview of the consultation activities undertaken by the department and summarising the feedback received for the North Marine Region has been finalised and is available on the department's website.

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

Program: Division or Agency: 1.2: MD **Question No:** 029
Topic: Shark fisheries
Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. In response to QON 124 October 2011, the Minister advised that the effective closure of two Western Australian shark fisheries was due to the WA Department of Fisheries not undertaking the process of assessment under the EPBC Act. Isn't there a matter of conflict between state and federal legislation and hasn't this matter been running for over 4 years?

Answer:

1. Since mid 2008 the Western Australian Government has not sought renewed export approval for the Western Australian Joint Authority Northern Shark Fishery. The decision on whether to seek export approval lies with the Western Australian Government.