

**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 2013

<b>Program: Division or Agency:</b>	DNP	<b>Question No:</b>	203
<b>Topic:</b>	DNP - Marine Bioregional Planning – extension of consultation timeframe		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	114 (11/2/13)		

**Senator Colbeck asked:**

Senator COLBECK: ...Is there any consideration being made of an extension of that time frame?

Mr Oxley: I am aware of media reports and press releases to that effect. There is no active consideration of an extension.

Senator COLBECK: ...So you have not had anything from the Commonwealth Fisheries Association or the Recreational Fishing Foundation, directly in relation to that?

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

**Answer:**

The Minister for Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the Minister) received letters requesting an extension of the public consultation period for comment on the draft Commonwealth Marine Reserves networks management plans from the Commonwealth Fisheries Association and the Australian Recreational Fishing Foundation.

On 14 February 2013, the Minister announced via media release that while the statutory consultation period would end as planned on 14 February 2013, the Minister would accept and consider comments made by those affected by natural disasters that were provided by 28 February 2013.

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<b>Program: Division or Agency:</b>	DNP	<b>Question No:</b>	204
<b>Topic:</b>	DNP – pest management in National Parks		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	103 (11/2/13)		

**Senator McKenzie asked:**

Senator McKENZIE: I just wanted confirmation that those feral pests are being managed and it is decreasing in our national parks, that the strategies you are employing are actually having an effect.

Mr Cochrane: In the main, yes.

Senator McKENZIE: Could you, on notice, highlight the ones where it is not and if so how and why?

**Answer:**

Each of the six National Parks which are the responsibility of the Director of National Parks maintains regular management programs for invasive species which, in the main, are effective in controlling numbers of those species. Each park, however presents particular challenges for the effective management of feral pest threats.

At Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park numbers of foxes, feral cats and rabbits fluctuate in response to seasonal conditions and control efforts concentrate on reducing numbers at key sites within the Park.

The numbers of feral cats and crimson rosellas in Norfolk Island National Park (which covers less than 15 per cent of Norfolk Island) remain high and will continue to pose a threat to the Island's endemic bird species. The Director of National Parks continues to press for an Island-wide approach to their control.

Areas of Kakadu National Park that are the subject of feral animal control (particularly for buffalo and pigs) are determined by considering a wide range of impacts on natural and cultural values and in consultation with Traditional Owners, as is appropriate in the management of a jointly managed National Park; the cost of feral animal control and the large size of the Park means Park-wide control programs are rarely possible and, instead, areas are prioritised to enable the most effective use of available resources.

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<b>Program: Division or Agency:</b>	DNP	<b>Question No:</b>	205
<b>Topic:</b>	DNP – National Reserve System – properties requiring gazettal		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	103 (11/2/13)		

**Senator Siewert asked:**

Senator SIEWERT: Yes. They are not all gazetted. How many are you holding that are not yet gazetted?

Mr Cochrane: I would have to take notice the question about how many properties remain to be gazetted, but there is a constant tail.

Senator SIEWERT: Yes. We have had this discussion before. Would you take on notice how many remain still to be processed.

**Answer:**

Since 1995/96, the Australian Government has provided funding support to enable 377 properties to be acquired by partners for inclusion in the National Reserve System. While all 377 properties are being managed as part of the National Reserve System, 142 properties are yet to be formally gazetted or covenanted. Reasons for the delay include: delays in relevant state/territory government approval for the change of land tenure from pastoral lease to formally support use of the land for conservation; and constraints within approving state/territory agencies that can lead to the formal declaration of conservation agreements being given lower priority.

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<b>Program: Division or Agency:</b>	DNP	<b>Question No:</b>	206
<b>Topic:</b>	DNP – Henbury Station – management plan		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	106 (11/2/13)		

**Senator Nash asked:**

Senator NASH: What happens if they come to you with a management plan that you do not think is going to be effective, having already given them \$9 million?

Mr Cochrane: That would go for any property that is purchased for the National Reserve System. We have not had that problem yet.

Senator NASH: Could you take that on notice for me?

**Answer:**

Henbury Station is currently being managed under Interim Management Guidelines that have been approved by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department). These Guidelines will continue in effect until the Plan of Management is approved by the department.

The Funding Deed for Henbury Station states that the Plan of Management must be developed, in consultation with the Steering Committee and through an appropriate public consultation process, within two years of the date of the property purchase.

The department will continue to work closely with R.M. Williams Agricultural Holdings to ensure that the Plan of Management developed for Henbury Station is comprehensive, of high quality and meets the requirements set out in the Funding Deed.

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<b>Program: Division or Agency:</b>	DNP	<b>Question No:</b>	207
<b>Topic:</b>	DNP – Henbury Station – funding deed		
<b>Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:</b>	106		
	(11/2/13)		

**Senator Nash asked:**

Senator NASH: Could you take that on notice for me and give me a detailed explanation of what circumstances the RM Williams Corporation, or whoever has it, would be enabled to sell Henbury Station without repaying the \$9 million of taxpayers' money to the Commonwealth.

**Answer:**

Any disposal (sale or transfer) of Henbury Station by R.M. Williams Agricultural Holdings would need to be approved by the Commonwealth Government. In the event of a sale, R.M. Williams Agricultural Holdings would be required to use any sale proceeds to refund the Commonwealth's funding with any shortfall being made up by R.M. Williams Agricultural Holdings.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** DNP **Question No:** 208  
**Topic:** DNP - Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park  
– photography and filming limits  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Why is it necessary to impose limits on photography or filming in the Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park?
2. How are these limits applied?
3. Has the Director of National Parks received any representations from tourism or media organisations expressing concern at these policies?
4. If so, what concerns?

**Answer:**

1. There are no limits on photography permits. Due to the high popularity of Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park as a destination for filming, it is necessary to place a quota on filming permits of four per month as filming in the park requires park staff to accompany all crews. Capacity for additional crews is considered on a case by case basis.
2. The Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park's Media Office manages the film crew booking system on a first come basis.
- 3-4. Yes. Individuals within the media industry have expressed concerns regarding the image capture requirements under the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* and the park guidelines for commercial image capture, use and commercial sound recording.

Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is jointly managed between Parks Australia and the Anangu Traditional Owners. Anangu have strong cultural protocols around sacred site management, including appropriate image capture. The park's image capture guidelines ensure images taken by commercial filmmakers and photographers protect Anangu cultural values. Also, responses to individuals who have written regarding image capture have highlighted that Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park is inscribed on the World Heritage list and environmental legislation is integral to the appropriate presentation and effective management of World Heritage values.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** DNP **Question No:** 209  
**Topic:** Commonwealth Marine Reserves network  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:** Written

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

The Commonwealth Government's own report into the State of Australian Fish Stocks found that 90% of Australian fish stocks were being fished sustainably.

There have also been suggestions that the changes to the Marine Reserves have eroded industry confidence so that even though the effects are not yet felt, operators are abandoning the sector.

1. Can the Department provide any specific data that demonstrated critical need for the scale of the Marine Park expansion?
2. Can the Department provide details of its own assessments of the need for fishery protections on the expanded protection zones?
3. Can the Department provide details of its consultation process with coastal communities and commercial fishing interests who were impacted by the creation of the expanded Marine Reserves?

**Answer:**

1. The new Commonwealth marine reserves have been established as part of Australia's National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas. In Australia and globally, the policy to establish representative systems of marine protected areas is a response to growing concerns about the effects of increasing human pressures on marine ecosystems and the long-term implications these might have on the ocean's biodiversity and ecological productivity. Setting aside viable examples of ecological communities and habitats primarily for protection and conservation (representative systems of marine protected areas) provides insurance against unintended and unforeseen consequences of human activities and against large scale impacts such as those arising from global climate change. Marine reserves, particularly when complemented by effective sectoral measures, can enhance ecosystem resilience and, in doing so, their capacity to withstand and adapt to pressures.

Within Australia's maritime jurisdiction, the central body of science upon which representative marine reserve design was based is IMCRA v4.0 – the Integrated Marine and Coastal Regionalisation of Australia. Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) and Geoscience Australia led an Australia-wide assessment of our oceans to classify Australia's marine environment into 41 provincial bioregions that are based on different assemblages of fish species and sponges that live at the seafloor as well as different types of deep water habitats and seafloor sediments.

The design of the Commonwealth marine reserves has been informed by the *Goals and Principles for the Establishment of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas in Commonwealth Waters*. The four goals and 20 principles set out what features should be included in a representative network and are available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/coasts/mbp/publications/general/goals-nrsmpa.html>.

The Commonwealth marine reserves network ensures that examples of all types of marine ecosystems and biodiversity are conserved and protected in the long-term. Examples of how scientific data has been employed include:

- IMCRA v4.0 data has been used for Goal 1 which states that each provincial bioregion occurring in a marine region should be represented in the marine reserves network.
- A species-based depth classification, produced by the then Commonwealth Environment Research Facility (CERF) Marine Hub for continental shelf waters and extended by the CSIRO to deeper waters that are off shore of the continental shelf, was used for Goal 2 which states that all ocean depths should be represented in the marine reserves network.
- Biological seascapes, produced by the CERF Marine Hub, and information about key ecological features, sourced from numerous scientists, were used for Goal 3 which states that examples of all types of benthic and demersal (that is, associated with the sea floor) biological features should be represented in the marine reserves network.
- The Geomorphic unit of Australia's Exclusive Economic Zone data set, produced by Geoscience Australia, was used for Goal 4 which states that examples of all different types of physical seafloor features should be represented in the marine reserves network.

Overall, the types of information that were used in the design of Commonwealth marine reserves are varied and cover scientific biophysical data, data on the location and distribution of human activities in a marine region and information provided by industry, managers/regulators, ocean users and stakeholders. A wide range of scientific reports have been commissioned and are available at <http://www.environment.gov.au/marinereserves/resources.html>.

2. As outlined above, the Commonwealth marine reserves network has been established to protect representative samples of the diverse range of ecosystems and habitats found in Australia's waters and the life they support.

Fisheries management is a matter for the respective State, Territory or Commonwealth fisheries management agency.



3. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities' (the department) has engaged stakeholders in each of the key steps in the marine bioregional planning process. For each marine region these steps included:
- development of a bioregional profile, including regional workshops and informal public comment;
  - identification of areas for further assessment for proposed marine reserves, including extensive stakeholder meetings;
  - 90 day consultation on draft marine reserves networks. (A list of all public information sessions on the draft marine reserve network proposals is at **Attachment A**);
  - 60 day consultation on a final marine reserves network proposal;
  - 30 day consultation on the preparation of management plans for the marine reserves networks; and
  - 30 day consultation on the draft management plans for the marine reserves networks.

To date, the department has received over 745,000 submissions for the draft and final marine reserves networks and associated management plans.

In addition to formal submission processes, the department held a total of 245 meetings around Australia during the public consultation phase on the draft marine reserves networks. These consisted of sector and multi-sector stakeholder meetings, public information sessions and targeted meetings with stakeholders.

The department also employs regional liaison officers based in Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory. Throughout the planning process, it was the role of regional liaison officers to inform and assist stakeholders.

The department developed regionally focused agreements with representative commercial fishing organisations in the South-west, North-west, North and East (Temperate East and Coral Sea) to facilitate coordinated engagement of this sector in finalising the proposed networks of Commonwealth marine reserves.

As part of the consultation process potentially displaced fishers were also surveyed regarding the potential socio-economic implications of the draft reserve proposal on their fishing business. This work was undertaken by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES). ABARES also consulted with stakeholder working groups, key industry associations and individuals.

## Public information session schedules - draft marine reserve network proposals

***South-west Marine Region:***

<b>Town</b>	<b>When</b>
Port Lincoln	Thursday, 19 May 2011.
Geraldton	Thursday, 19 May 2011.
Ceduna	Monday, 23 May 2011.
Jurien Bay	Monday, 23 May 2011.
Streaky Bay	Tuesday, 24 May 2011.
Bunbury	Thursday, 26 May 2011.
Kangaroo Island	Thursday, 26 May 2011.
Margaret River	Monday, 30 May 2011.
Albany	Thursday, 2 June 2011.
Esperance	Monday, 6 June 2011.

***North-west Marine Region:***

<b>Town</b>	<b>When</b>
Broome	Thursday, 25 August 2011.
Kalbarri	Monday, 29 August 2011.
Port Hedland	Monday, 29 August 2011.
Karratha	Tuesday, 30 August 2011.
Carnarvon	Wednesday, 31 August 2011.
Exmouth	Thursday, 1 September 2011.

***North Marine Region:***

<b>Town</b>	<b>When</b>
Darwin	Thursday, 1 September 2011.
Normanton	Tuesday, 6 September 2011.
Karumba	Thursday, 8 September 2011.
Weipa	Wednesday, 14 September 2011.

Nhulunbuy (Gove)	Monday, 19 September 2011.
Burketown	Tuesday, 4 October 2011.

***Temperate East Marine Region:***

<b>Town</b>	<b>When</b>
Port Stephens	Monday, 21 November 2011.
Forster	Wednesday, 23 November 2011.
Bermagui	Monday, 28 November 2011.
Ulladulla	Wednesday, 30 November 2011.
Jervis Bay	Thursday, 1 December 2011.
Norfolk Island	Saturday, 3 December 2011.
Coffs Harbour	Monday, 5 December 2011.
Lord Howe Island	Thursday, 8 December 2011.

***Coral Sea Marine Region:***

<b>Town</b>	<b>When</b>
Hervey Bay	Monday, 5 December 2011.
Cairns	Thursday, 8 December 2011.
Gladstone	Monday, 12 December 2011.
Mackay	Tuesday, 13 December 2011.
Townsville	Friday, 16 December 2011.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** DNP **Question No:** 210

**Topic:** DNP - control of feral animals in  
Victorian National Parks

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator McKenzie asked:**

1. Do you have estimates of feral animal density (and gross number) for each of Victoria's National Parks? This should include but not limited to brumbies, wild dogs, foxes, deer, cats, camels and pigs?
2. Could you provide a table listing each States National Parks and the total \$ spent on eradication or control for each species listed above?
3. Could you name the preferred method of control or eradication for each of the species listed above? Could you also list the last year a control program was carried out for each species for each of Victoria's National parks?

**Answer:**

- 1-3. Victoria's National Parks are managed by Victorian Government park management agencies which would hold information on feral animal control in National Parks in that state.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** DNP **Question 211**  
**No:**

**Topic:** DNP - Visitation rates in National Parks

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator McKenzie asked:**

Do you have estimates for the number of people visiting National Parks? If yes, could you provide them individually?

**Answer:**

Parks Australia supports the Director of National Parks in conserving Australia's biodiversity and cultural heritage through management of the Commonwealth's protected areas. This includes six terrestrial National Parks and two Botanic Gardens:

- Australian National Botanic Gardens.
- Booderee National Park.
- Christmas Island National Park.
- Kakadu National Park.
- Norfolk Island National Park and Botanic Gardens.
- Pulu Keeling National Park.
- Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park.

Other national parks within Australia are managed by the relevant State or Territory.

Commonwealth National Parks in which visitor numbers are monitored, are included in the following table.

<b>Park</b>	<b>Basis for Estimate Derived</b>	<b>Visitor Numbers Jan - Dec 2012</b>
Kakadu National Park (NT)	Figures based on traffic counters at park entrances	198,321
Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park (NT)	Figures based on ticket sales	257,761
Booderee National Park (NSW)	Figures based on traffic counter at park entrance	426,277

Australian National Botanical Garden (ACT)	Figures based on traffic counters at park entrances	436,197
Norfolk Island National Park and Botanical Garden	Figures based on a survey estimate which indicates that 95 per cent of visitors to the island visit the National Park.	*20,000

Note: \*Figures from Norfolk Island National Park and Botanical Gardens is an estimate only as the final visitor ending December 2012 are not available at this time.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** DNP **Question No:** 212

**Topic:** DNP – Commonwealth Marine Reserves network

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written

**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

1. Are marine reserves now considered part of the national reserve system?
2. If so will the NRS section also have carriage of marine reserve system planning and policy?

**Answer:**

1. Yes. The new Commonwealth Marine Reserves form the Commonwealth waters component of the National Representative System of Marine Protected Areas (NRSMPA), which has been under development since all Australian governments agreed to its development in 1998 (the NRSMPA forms part of the National Reserve System (NRS), which is Australia's network of protected areas, both land and sea).
2. The management of the Commonwealth Marine Reserves, including planning and policy, will be conducted by the Commonwealth Marine Reserves Branch of Parks Australia.