

**Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications  
Legislation Committee**

Answers to questions on notice

**Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities portfolio**

Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2011

**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 7

**Topic:** Acquisition of Bimblebox  
property under the National  
Reserve System

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 104-105 (17/10/11)  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: I am interested in a particular property called Bimblebox, which is partially protected under Queensland state laws, but also I understand some Commonwealth funding was provided under the National Reserve System back in 2000 for the acquisition of the property. It is 8,000 hectares near Alpha in Central Western Queensland. Can you confirm for me how much Commonwealth funding was provided in the acquisition, protection or management of Bimblebox?  
Mr Cochrane: I do not have that detail in front of me, so I would have to take that specific one on notice.

Senator WATERS: Yes, if you could. Do you understand what the purpose of that protection was? What qualities were recognised as part of that funding?

Mr Cochrane: I do, but I cannot recall specifically. Again, I would need to take that on notice, sorry.

Senator WATERS: Is the department aware of the massive 30 megatonne open cut coal mine proposal by Waratah Coal, which would directly destroy half of the property and turn the other half into a long wall mine?

Mr Cochrane: We are certainly aware of the proposal and that it is subject to an EPBC Act assessment, as I understand it.

Senator WATERS: Do you provide any advice to the EPBC assessment team on the propriety or otherwise of approving that application?

Mr Cochrane: We would provide advice on the values of the property, correct.

Senator WATERS: Has that advice been provided as yet?

Mr Cochrane: Yes, it would have been.

Senator WATERS: Are we able to see a copy of that advice?

Mr Cochrane: That is a good question.

Dr Grimes: I think you are referring to matters that are under consideration through the EPBC assessment process. If you have further questions, it may be appropriate to take it up tomorrow morning when we come to the EPBC matters. We will have to see what we could provide. But I would assume at this stage, if it is a matter under consideration, we would not be in a position to provide you with that information at this stage.

Senator WATERS: Okay, so that is a public interest claim of not appropriate?

Dr Grimes: I think it probably would be better to pick this up tomorrow morning when we have the officers who may be involved the matter.

Senator WATERS: Thanks, I will do.

Mr Cochrane: When we have done the assessment, and you have asked a question about the values of the property, that will probably substantially be our advice.

Senator WATERS: If you would be able to provide that, it would be helpful.

Mr Cochrane: We can identify why the property was purchased.

Senator WATERS: Thank you. Can you identify how a coalmine is consistent with the values of this Commonwealth-purchased property, using taxpayer funds?

Mr Cochrane: Again, it is a proposal that is under assessment.

Senator WATERS: Whatever you can give me would be great and I will wait for the rest when the time comes.

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**Answer:**

Bimblebox (formerly known as Glen Innes) was purchased with assistance of a \$314,600 grant from the National Heritage Trust (Australian Government funding) in August 2000. No Australian Government funding has been provided to support the management of Bimblebox.

Australian Government funding to support the purchase of Bimblebox Nature Refuge recognised the significant extent of original vegetation remaining on the property, its excellent condition and high biodiversity values. The property includes vegetation communities listed as 'of concern' under Queensland legislation including poplar box woodlands and silver leaf ironbark, and sites within the property contain the greatest understorey floristic biodiversity for these vegetation types within the Desert Uplands bioregion.

Information on the description of the values that underpinned the assessment of the property and the recommendation to support its acquisition has been provided as part of regular internal briefing on the issue.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 8  
**Topic:** Tourism activity or  
development in Kakadu  
National Park  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 98 (17/10/11)  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: I have a few questions about Kakadu National Park. Could you tell me the number, the type and the specific location of each tourism activity or development in Kakadu National Park since the introduction of the tourism master plan in 2010, including those areas that were within the former wilderness zone?

Mr Cochrane: Off the top of my head, there has been no new infrastructure development in the park since the tourism master plan was released. There are a number of proposals that traditional owners are exploring. I cannot think of whether any new businesses have been established since then. There are some new businesses that were establishing at about the same time as we finalised the tourism master plan, but I would be pretty confident there are no infrastructure developments that have followed since then. I would like to take that on notice so that I could be sure of my answer.

Senator WATERS: I would be very happy with that. Any tourism activity or development—so broader than just infrastructure.

**Answer:**

The Kakadu National Park Tourism Master Plan 2009-2014 was released in May 2010. The purpose of the plan is to provide a strategic framework under the Kakadu National Park Management Plan 2007-2014 to guide future tourism and to ensure that tourism is culturally appropriate, environmentally sustainable and provides for development of experiences which match the desires of the target market. The Board of Management and the Director of National Parks may approve actions and activities that are detailed in the Master Plan, such as new visitor infrastructure, providing they are consistent with other provisions of the Management Plan.

Since the Tourism Master Plan was released, visitor infrastructure improvements include a new foot bridge over Catfish Creek as part of repairs to the Bardedjilidji walk, a new foot bridge at Gunlom plunge pool, installation of a floating pontoon at Gungarre billabong to create a wetlands walk, and replacement and provision of additional picnic tables, BBQs and fire rings within several camp grounds and day use areas.

Work has commenced to upgrade the East Alligator Upper Boat Ramp Access Road and car/bus parking areas. The exhibition fishpond at Bowali Visitor Centre is being upgraded, and improvements are being made to upgrade floodways along the Jim Jim Falls Access Road. None of this infrastructure is within the former wilderness zone. New crocodile safety signage is progressively being rolled out through the Park.

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In terms of new commercial tourism activities, permits for tours to Ikoymarrwa (Lower Moline Rockhole) have been issued to several tour operators through a competitive application process. There have been no new tourism activities or developments within the former wilderness zone.

As provided by the Kakadu National Park Management Plan (p97) and Tourism Master Plan, a Bushwalking Strategy is currently being developed in close consultation with traditional owners and with relevant stakeholders.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 9  
**Topic:** Income from revenue generation  
**Proof Hansard Page and Date or Written Question:** 98-99 (17/10/11)

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Possibly time prevented us from getting to some issues under the PBS that I would have raised during budget estimates, but the income from your own revenue generation drops substantially from 2010-11 into the forward estimate years. The only explanation or statement in here is sale of goods and services will also reduce in 2011-12 by \$6.6 million, which is primarily a result of terminating agreements. Are you able to explain to us what those terminating agreements are and why you lose that income stream?

Mr Cochrane: Yes, but to give you an accurate answer let me just chase that. They are not actually a reduction. One of them is related to the Gunlom rehabilitation project, which is the rehabilitation project that we had to remedy the impact of those old uranium mines in the upper South Alligator River region. You may recall, we received \$7 million over four years to undertake that project. That project was completed and that money then terminated. That was a significant part of that drop. Again, I may need to take that on notice, because I must confess I came prepared for all of those questions at budget estimates but I do not have it in front of me. Can I take that one on notice, please?

Senator BIRMINGHAM: Yes, if you could, and just provide an outline, because even the one you highlighted strikes me as an unusual one to have been included in your own source revenue category, that would normally be from your own sales of goods and services, rather than necessarily grants for a particular environmental project of the type you identified.

Mr Cochrane: And in fact you are correct. Let me take this on notice to make sure you get the accurate answer on that.

**Answer:**

At the time of publishing the Portfolio Budget Statements (PBS), in May 2011, the Director of National Parks (DNPs) goods and services estimated actual for 2010-11 was \$19.898 million and the estimated budget for 2011-12 was \$13.214 million.

The estimates revenue for 2011-12 has actually increased overall, due to the re-signing of several agreements that were due to lapse, particularly the Christmas Island mine site rehabilitation project.

The three year Australian National Botanic Gardens Lake Burley Griffin Water Pipeline Project has come to an end. A one year project to provide services to the CSIRO has also drawn to an end, as has a one year program for the DNP to provide communication services on behalf of Caring for our Country.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD

**Question No:** 10

**Topic:** PAD Staffing

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Within The Director of National Parks how many divisions are there and what are their names?
2. How many staff are there in each of these divisions?
3. Where is each division located and what are their staffing numbers?

**Answer:**

1. The Director of National Parks is a corporation solely established under Division 5 of Part 19 of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999* ('EPBC Act'). The corporation is constituted by the person appointed to the office named the Director of National Parks.

The Director of National Parks is assisted in performing his functions by the staff of Parks Australia (a division of the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities).

2. Parks Australia has a total headcount of 581 staff. Of these, 537 assist the Director of National Parks in performing his statutory functions.

This data has been collated as at 31 October 2011 and is a headcount of the Principal Executive Officer (Director of National Parks) and all active ongoing, non-ongoing, full-time, part-time and casual (irregular or intermittent) employees. The data also includes employees on leave without pay (short and long term).

As part-time, casual staff and staff on leave without pay are included, the headcount number is not comparable to the "full time equivalent" number of employees more usually reported, for example, in the Director's annual report. Casual (irregular or intermittent) employees are often on a local staffing list for a 12 month period so they can be called in to assist with specific work tasks on a short term basis (sometimes for only a few days) to assist with activities such as fire reduction burns, species surveys or weed control.

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3. Parks Australia locations, with staffing numbers, are

<b>Location</b>	<b>Casual</b>	<b>Non-ongoing</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Grand Total</b>
<u>Parks Australia staff - departmental</u>				
Canberra	1	5	38	44
<b>Total staff -- departmental</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>44</b>
<u>Parks Australia staff - supporting the functions of the Director of National Parks (DNP)</u>				
Canberra	42	14	95	151
Jervis Bay	4	2	30	36
Christmas Island	5	12	16	33
Cocos (Keeling) Island			1	1
Norfolk Island	6	2	3	11
Darwin	2	1	18	21
Kakadu	158	10	62	230
Uluru	8	16	30	54
<b>Total staff - supporting the DNP</b>	<b>225</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>537</b>
<b>Total - all Parks Australia Staff</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>293</b>	<b>581</b>

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD

**Question No:** 11

**Topic:** PAD Accommodation

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. How many office locations are there within The Director of National Parks and where is each located?
2. What is the size of each of these offices and are they leased or owned?
3. If the office is rented, what is the amount and what is the breakdown of rent per square metre?
4. What is the value of the buildings owned and what is the depreciation of those buildings?

**Answer:**

1. Staff assisting the Director of National Parks to undertake his functions are in 8 locations. These are:
  - a) Canberra (Lovett Tower, Woden and Australian National Botanic Gardens)
  - b) Darwin
  - c) Kakadu National Park
  - d) Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park
  - e) Christmas Island National Park
  - f) Cocos (Keeling) Island
  - g) Norfolk Island National Park
  - h) Booderee National Park (Jervis Bay)

Please note: office accommodation for staff located in Canberra (Lovett Tower, Woden) and Darwin is managed by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities who will report all information for these locations.)

2.

<b>Location</b>	<b>No of Buildings</b>	<b>Size (Total sq metre by location)</b>	<b>Buildings Leased or owned</b>
Australian National Botanic Gardens	11	391	Owned
Booderee National Park	3	215.2	Owned
	1	103.77	Leased
Cocos (Keeling) Island	2	145	Leased
Christmas Island National Park	4	250	Owned
Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park	4	566	Owned
Kakadu National Park	8	1712	Owned
Norfolk Island National Park	1	100	Owned
		<b>3482.97</b>	



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3.

<b>Location</b>	<b>Square meters</b>	<b>Amount of Rent</b>	<b>Rent per square metre</b>
Booderee National Park	103.77	\$ 1 (if and when demanded)	-
Cocos (Keeling) Island	125	\$ 12,187.95 per year	\$ 97.50
	20	\$ 4,500	\$ 225.00

4. The Director of National Parks buildings were re-valued as at 30 June 2011. Consequently, the depreciation cost reported is only calculated over the period 1 July – 31 October 2011.

<b>Location</b>	<b>No of Buildings at location</b>	<b>Total Value of Buildings</b>	<b>Depreciation Value</b>
Australian National Botanic Gardens	11	1,690,000	30,000
Booderee National Park	3	432,000	5,217
Christmas Island National Park	4	548,625	7,035
Uluru-Kata Tjuta National Park	4	7,868,850	83,175
Kakadu National Park	8	10,298,000	117,564
Norfolk Island National Park	1	80,044	1,893
		<b>20,917,519</b>	<b>244,883</b>

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD

**Question No:** 12

**Topic:** PAD Expenditure

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. Provide details on expenditure for 2010-11 for The Director of National Parks on the following: advertising, travel (including breakdown: of business versus economy, domestic versus international), hospitality and entertainment, ICT, consultancy, education/training of staff, external accounting, external auditing, external legal and membership or grants paid to affiliate organisations?
2. Provide a further breakdown of the above expenditure for each division with the Director of National Parks: advertising (\$mn), travel (including breakdown: of business versus economy, domestic versus international) (\$mn), hospitality and entertainment (\$mn), ICT (\$mn), consultancy (\$mn), education/training of staff (\$mn), external accounting (\$mn), external auditing (\$mn), external legal and membership or grants paid to affiliate organisations (\$mn)?
3. Within each divisional area, provide a further breakdown of expenditure under each Executive Manager: advertising (\$mn), travel (including breakdown: of business versus economy, domestic versus international) (\$mn), hospitality and entertainment (\$mn), ICT (\$mn), consultancy (\$mn), education/training of staff (\$mn), external accounting (\$mn), external auditing (\$mn), external legal and membership or grants paid to affiliate organisations (\$mn)?
4. Please provide a breakdown over the forward estimates of each program or activity including: program title, program summary, is the program ongoing, lapsing, or terminating, breakdown of administered and departmental costs, program staffing numbers and location?

**Answer:**

1. 2010-11 Expenditure for the Director of National Parks;

<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>Amount \$(m)</b>
Advertising	0.05
Travel Expenses Domestic*	1.12
Travel Expenses International*	0.16
Hospitality & Entertainment	0.03
ICT	0.84
Consultancy	0.35
External Accounting	nil
External Auditing	0.08
External Legal	0.02
Memberships/Grants	0.03
<b>* Total Travel Expenses</b>	<b>1.28</b>

We are unable to provide a breakdown of travel expenses by business or economy ticket. Education/Training of staff costs are reported as part of the DSEWPaC response.

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2. The Director of National Parks is supported by the Parks Australia Division. The Division's costs are outlined at question 1.

3. Costs at Executive Manager (Branch) level are:

	<b>DNP Executive</b>	<b>Parks Biodiveristy &amp; Science Branch</b>	<b>Parks Operations &amp; Tourism Branch</b>	<b>Protected Area Policy &amp; Programs Branch</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	<b>\$(mn)</b>	<b>\$(mn)</b>	<b>\$(mn)</b>	<b>\$(mn)</b>
Advertising	0.001	0.042	-	0.003
Travel Expenses Domestic*	0.159	0.155	0.685	0.121
Travel Expenses International*	0.032	0.081	0.027	0.016
Hospitality/Entertainment	0.008	0.008	0.017	-
ICT	0.027	0.233	0.433	0.149
Consultancy	0.000	0.245	0.108	0.000
External Accounting	-	-	-	-
External Audit	-	-	0.081	-
External Legal	-	-	-	0.02
Memberships/Grants	0.025	0.005	0.001	0.00
<b>* Total Travel Expenses</b>	<b>0.191</b>	<b>0.236</b>	<b>0.712</b>	<b>0.137</b>

We are unable to provide a breakdown of travel expenses by business or economy ticket. Education/Training of staff costs are reported as part of the DSEWPaC response.

4. The forward estimates of departmental costs for the Director of National Parks are:

Funding Source	2012/13 (\$mn)	2013/14 (\$mn)	2014/15 (\$mn)
On-going funding	41.223	42.811	43.007
Terminating new policy funding	0.093		
Terminating Christmas Island Crazy Ants funding	0.930	1.385	0.793
Other own source revenue	16.757	16.767	16.673
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>59.003</b>	<b>60.933</b>	<b>60.473</b>

The Director of National Parks staffing numbers and locations are provided in our response to QoN 10.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD

**Question No:** 13

**Topic:** Tourism in Kakadu National Park

**Proof Hansard Page and Date  
or Written Question:** Written

**Senator Waters asked:**

1. In relation to Kakadu National Park, how many tourism ventures are being considered or proposed in the former 475,000ha wilderness zone? How many of these are being proposed by traditional owners?
2. What is the nature of each proposed tourism venture and where are they located within the former wilderness zone in Kakadu National Park?
3. Please advise how each of these proposed tourism ventures are consistent with protecting the wilderness values within the Kakadu National Park?
4. What public processes are available to members of the public who are interested in the protection of wilderness values in Kakadu National Park to ensure these concerns are taken into account in any assessment and determination of the proposed tourism venture in the former wilderness zone of Kakadu National Park?
5. Can you please advise what % of the park is off limits to any developments due to the protection of sacred sites registered under Northern Territory legislation. What other areas of the park are off limits to tourism activities and developments – please advice total percentage area as well as geographical areas.

**Answer:**

1. No tourism ventures are currently being considered by the Park or proposed in the former wilderness zone in Kakadu National Park as far as the Director of National Parks is aware.
2. Not applicable.
3. Not applicable.
4. As stated in response to Question 1, no proposed tourism ventures are currently being considered in the former wilderness zone.
5. The percentage of the park that is under the protection of the Northern Territory Aboriginal Sacred Sites Act 1989 (NT) is not known and not all sacred sites in the park are registered due to the sensitivity of this information. If a new development is proposed that may impact on sacred sites or sites of cultural significance in the park, the Northern Land Council and the Aboriginal Areas Protection Authority are consulted. The Tourism Master Plan 2009 2014 provides the strategic framework to consider tourism proposals that are consistent with the Kakadu Management Plan.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD

**Question No:** 14

**Topic:** Bimblebox nature refuge

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

1. What environmental qualities were recognised in providing Commonwealth funding to contribute to the purchase of the Bimblebox Nature Refuge?
2. Please provide a copy of the advice that the DNP had provided to SEWPAC EPBC Assessments area with regard to the current proposals to mine the Bimblebox Nature Refuge area. If confidentiality of this advice to the Department/ Minister is claimed, please detail the public interest grounds on which this claim is based.

**Answer:**

1. Australian Government funding to support the purchase of Bimblebox Nature Refuge recognised the significant extent of original vegetation remaining on the property, its excellent condition and high biodiversity values. The property includes vegetation communities listed as 'of concern' under Queensland legislation including poplar box woodlands and silver leaf ironbark, and sites within the property contain the greatest understorey floristic biodiversity for these vegetation types within the Desert Uplands bioregion.
2. Information on the description of the values that underpinned the assessment of the property and the recommendation to support its acquisition has been provided as part of regular internal briefing on the issue.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: Parks **Question No:** 15

**Topic:** Indigenous Protected Areas

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** Written  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Siewert asked:**

1. What is the current estimated area under declared IPAs now in Australia (in hectares or square kilometers)?
2. What has been the annual growth in area of declared IPAs over the last 10 years?
3. On the website it indicates that Indigenous Protected Areas now represent 23% by area of Australia's National Reserve System is that still correct?
4. What is the current annual cost to support all the existing declared Indigenous Protected Areas?
5. There are a number of IPAs still in consultation phase according to the maps on your website? Do you have enough resources to support their implementation?
6. Is any funding guaranteed beyond June 2013?

**Answer:**

1. 26,339,971 hectares.

2.

Year	Total IPA area declared
2000-2001	104434
2001-2002	0
2002-2003	10815846
2003-2004	4351
2004-2005	0
2005-2006	257031
2006-2007	4667282
2007-2008	1796740
2008-2009	330295
2009-2010	2613620
2010-2011	2363703
2011-2012 (Note: for the 4 month period of 1 July - to 31 October 2011 only)	136660

3. With the recent Indigenous Protected Area (IPA) declarations the area covered by IPAs now represents 24.73 per cent of the National Reserve System.
4. As at 17 October 2011 the annual cost of supporting all existing declared IPA projects is \$7,639,765

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5. Funding is available in the IPA program budget to continue to support the projects that are in the consultation phase and those that achieve IPA declaration during this time.

6. Funding for Indigenous Protected Areas has been boosted to \$50 million over five years through the Caring for our Country initiative. Significant funding has already been provided, with the Australian Government spending more than \$24 million in the first 3 years to expand the work of Australia's declared Indigenous Protected Areas and help develop new ones.

Funding beyond 30 June 2013 will be considered in the normal Budget context.

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**Program: Division or Agency:** 1.1: PAD **Question No:** 16

**Topic:** Government investment in  
Henbury Station

**Proof Hansard Page and Date  
or Written Question:** Written

**Senator Nash asked:**

In relation to Henbury Station:

1. On what grounds has the Government funded the investment by RMW Agricultural Holdings?
2. Who stands to profit from the Henbury Station/RMWAH investment?
3. How will the taxpayer benefit from the Governments RMWAH investment?
4. Will this type of Government investment opportunity (RMWAH) be available to other small private operators, in the Northern beef industry?
5. Does the Government intend funding further baseline audits to allow other organisations to develop similar proposals, such as the RMWAH deal, for their business?
6. Did the Government undertake any research into the likely impacts on profitability of the remainder of the beef industry in the same region as Henbury Station? Ie. Leaving those still operating in the area to bear a proportionately higher cost of service industry overheads. If research was conducted, can this be provided?
7. Did the Government research what impacts the Henbruy Station contraction of local industry may have on the capital value of the other properties in the same area? ie. Given that profitability will be reduced and that reduced social strength will make the region less attractive to investment by tradition food producers. Could this research be provided?

**Answer:**

1. The Government funding supported the acquisition of Henbury Station for long-term nature conservation.

2-7. For the response to questions 2 to 7, please refer to Senate Question No 915 tabled on 31 October 2011.