

**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:** 5.1: HWD

**Question No:** 166

**Topic:** Macquarie Island bird deaths

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 11

**or Written Question:** (18/10/11)

**Senator Abetz asked:**

Senator ABETZ: Can you give me a breakdown of the species as you have done before—not now but on notice, because time is very short?

Mr Hooy: I can certainly do that.

**Answer:**

TABLE 1: Bird deaths as at 29 September 2011

Year	Northern Giant Petrel	Southern Giant Petrel	Unknown Giant Petrel	Kelp Gull	Duck	Skua	Total
2010	298	16		385	22	226	947
2011	367	10	29	593	130	114	1243
Total	665	26	29	978	152	340	2190

**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:** 5.1: HWD **Question No:** 167

**Topic:** West Kimberley Heritage  
Listing – King Sound

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 12 (18/10/11)  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Siewert asked:**

Senator SIEWERT: Can I please ask about the listing and King Sound. Can you confirm where the boundary is on King Sound? Is it the high-water mark or the low-water mark?

Mr Burnett: I am sorry but I do not have a map with me so I cannot answer that question.

Senator SIEWERT: I am asking because we have been trying to get the maps. The minister's office has said they are not trying to stop us—but it is getting access to information, so I am not putting that on the record. But we are finding it very hard to find out whether it is the high-water mark or the low-water mark around the mangroves. I want to know what area of mangroves are in or out. To date we have not been able to find out. Is it possible for someone to find that out before I leave here today and not take it on notice please?

...

Mr Grimes: Yes.

**Answer:**

The relevant part of the West Kimberley National Heritage Place boundary in King Sound is the south-western boundary, which follows the “shoreline” from latitude 17.482S to longitude 123.103E. The shoreline boundary encompasses the national heritage value associated with the historical use of the *galwa* or double log raft.

The Australian Heritage Council found that the manufacture of the double log raft is a unique adaptation to the massive tidal variation of the west Kimberley and has outstanding heritage value to the nation under criterion (f) for demonstrating a high degree of technical achievement by Aboriginal people in the course of Australia's cultural history. The mangroves in King Sound were not identified as a national heritage value.

More information about the West Kimberley National Heritage Place, including maps and the listed heritage values, is available at:

<http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/places/national/west-kimberley/index.html>

**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:** 5.1: HWD **Question No:** 168

**Topic:** Proposed World Heritage  
Listing of Cape York

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 15 (18/10/11)  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Boswell asked:**

Senator BOSWELL: Please detail exactly the programs funded and other support provided. You put \$3 million in; where is that \$3 million going?

Mr Burnett: It is to support the process that Mr Murphy was outlining. As he said, Queensland have established two committees under the legislation. One is a general regional advisory committee; one is more a science based committee. Those committees are embarking on a process of consultation.

Senator BOSWELL: What funding or other support has been provided by the department to any non-government organisation in relation to the proposed World Heritage listing of Cape York?

Mr Burnett: None that I am aware of, other than the \$3 million.

Senator BOSWELL: So no other money has gone to any conservation group on World Heritage listings?

Mr Burnett: Not specifically to support a World Heritage assessment, to my knowledge.

Senator BOSWELL: Could you check that please?

Mr Burnett: Yes.

Senator BOSWELL: I find that very difficult to believe; I suspect there are. My next question was going to ask you the nature of the funding, the type of programs et cetera. If there are, would you take that one on notice too?

Mr Burnett: Yes.

**Answer:**

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) has not provided funding to any environmental non-government organisation or conservation group in relation to the proposed world heritage listing of Cape York Peninsula. The department has provided \$3 million to the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management, under the Caring for our Country program, to facilitate engagement and consultation with the Indigenous people of Cape York towards a potential future world heritage nomination.

**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:** 5.1: HWD **Question No:** 169

**Topic:** Proposed World Heritage  
Listing of Cape York –  
collaboration with non-  
government agencies

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 15 (18/10/11)  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Boswell asked:**

Mr Burnett: As a general proposition, yes. But I am not quite sure what you are driving at.

Senator BOSWELL: I am asking very clearly: does the department work with other Commonwealth departments on the proposed World Heritage listing, and does the department work collaboratively with any non-government agency on the pursuit of the World Heritage listing of Cape York?

Mr Burnett: In the course of a process like this we would talk to lots of different bodies and we would try to be as collaborative as possible. There are none that I am aware of where we have formally partnered up with them. The consultation process is being run principally by Queensland through the committee process that Mr Murphy referred to.

Senator BOSWELL: I ask you to take that question on notice.

**Answer:**

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities is working in partnership with the Queensland Department of Environment and Resource Management and its two ministerial advisory committees, the Cape York Peninsula Regional Advisory Committee and the Cape York Peninsula Region Scientific and Cultural Advisory Committee, to progress consultations on a potential world heritage nomination.

The regional advisory committee includes members of the Cape York Indigenous community and representatives from the tourism, local government, pastoral, mining, and conservation sectors. The science and cultural committee includes experts with scientific and cultural heritage knowledge of Cape York Peninsula.

**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:** 5.1: HWD **Question No:** 170

**Topic:** Heritage advice - Gladstone  
Harbour

**Proof Hansard Page and Date** 16 (18/10/11)  
**or Written Question:**

**Senator Waters asked:**

Senator WATERS: Okay. I am seeking a copy of the advice provided by the heritage officials to the minister in the course of making the approval decision to dump 11 million cubic metres into the harbour. Could that be supplied?

Ms Dripps: Certainly. As we indicated last night, we would need to check what was in the 20 boxes that were tabled in the Senate late last year. We suspect that it might be among that, but if it is not we will provide it.

Senator WATERS: Thank you. If you could facilitate that, it would be great.

Senator BOSWELL: I would like a copy of that too.

**Answer:**

Heritage officers within the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities were consulted in the development of advice to the minister relating to his decision to approve, with conditions, the Western Basin Dredging and Disposal Project. Consolidated advice was provided by the department to the Minister. Accordingly, heritage officers did not provide separate written advice relating to the offshore disposal component.

**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:** 5.1: HWD

**Question No:** 171

**Topic:** National Heritage List  
assessments

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

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. How many assessments for inclusion on the National Heritage List are being conducted this financial year? How does this compare with each of the past three financial years?

**Answer:**

1. An assessment for the National Heritage List by the Australian Heritage Council is usually conducted over more than one financial year. In recent years, the council has given higher priority to large and complex assessments, such as the national heritage values of the Tarkine and Kimberley areas, than to more numerous assessments of smaller areas. The Minister has also asked the council to consider the world heritage values of the Burrup Peninsula in response to a request from the Senate. This financial year work has continued on assessing places on the Council's workplan, including Canberra, Jordan River Levee and The Tarkine.

The number of new assessments for inclusion in the National Heritage List added to the work plan of the Australian Heritage Council in this financial year, as of 1 November 2011, and the past three financial years is given in the table below:

Assessment periods	Number of new assessments added to the work plan of the Australian Heritage Council
2008-09	13
2009-10	11
2010-11	7
2011-12	1

**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:** 5.1: HWD

**Question No:** 172

**Topic:** Development of Heritage  
Management Plans

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

**Senator Birmingham asked:**

1. How many heritage management plans are being developed this financial year? How does this compare with each of the past three financial years?

**Answer:**

1. The responsibility for the development of heritage management plans rests with the relevant agency or its portfolio department. The following table shows the numbers of heritage management plans considered by financial year by the Australian Heritage Council (AHC):

Year	Number of heritage management plans considered by the AHC
2011-12	0 (as of 2 November)
2010-11	8
2009-10	6
2008-09	3

**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:** 5.1: HWD

**Question No:** 173

**Topic:** World Heritage Listing

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

**Senator Rhiannon asked:**

1. How many applications for world heritage listing is your department currently handling?
2. Approximately how long is the process for your department to pursue world heritage listing for a national park?
3. Which other agencies would you have to work with?
4. How is the decision made to prioritise applications for world heritage listing? What criteria is used to determine the priority that an application is given by your department?
5. What are the administrative costs for your department to pursue world heritage listing for a national park?
6. Are there any additional capital or recurrent costs for a national park once it receives world heritage listing?
7. How can your department assist community groups in their campaign to get world heritage listing for the Royal National Park in Sydney?
8. What challenges do you foresee in gaining world heritage listing for the Royal National Park?

**Answer:**

1. The Australian, state and territory governments have agreed to four properties being on or considered for Australia's Tentative List. The list is used to give the World Heritage Committee notice about properties that may be nominated for inscription on the World Heritage List.

The four properties are: an extension to the Gondwana Rainforests of Australian World Heritage Area and an extension to the Fraser Island World Heritage Area, both of which have been added to the Tentative List; and Cape York and the West MacDonnell Ranges, which require further stakeholder consultation prior to being added to the Tentative List.

2. The process for world heritage listing is guided by the 2005 National Heritage Protocol, the 2009 Australian World Heritage Intergovernmental Agreement and the *Operational Guidelines for the Implementation of the World Heritage Convention*.

Nominations may be submitted at any time during the year but only those submissions that are complete and received by the Secretariat on or before 1 February will be considered for inscription by the World Heritage Committee during the following year. The assessment cycle normally lasts one and a half years between the submission by 1 February in Year 1 and the Committee's decision in Year 2.

3. The agencies to be involved in the development of nominations will be determined by the nature of the property and the stakeholders involved.



**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

4. The Australian Government consults with the states and territories to determine which properties are submitted to the World Heritage Committee as part of Australia's World Heritage Tentative List. Priority of a place is determined by a range of factors including:

- Developing an Australian Tentative List which is representative, balanced and credible;
- Consideration of thematic reports by the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) identifying gaps on the World Heritage List;
- An examination of the Tentative Lists of other State Parties; and
- Consideration of requests made of Australia by the World Heritage Committee.

5. The administrative costs to the department of pursuing a World Heritage listing for a national park depend on a number of factors including the commitment of the relevant jurisdiction to the listing, the number of values the place has, the complexity of the assessment and whether the place is already included on the National Heritage List.

6. Future costs would be determined by the requirements to manage and protect the outstanding universal value of the property as inscribed on the World Heritage List.

7. As indicated previously, the identification of places for inclusion on the Tentative List and nomination to the World Heritage List is undertaken in consultation with state governments. The department is always happy to meet community groups to discuss the World Heritage List.

8. Royal National Park is on the National Heritage List and as such is recognised as a place of outstanding heritage significance to Australia. In order for it to be inscribed on the World Heritage List the World Heritage Committee must consider that the Royal National Park is a property which has cultural heritage and/or natural heritage, as defined in Articles 1 and 2 of the *Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage*. The test of the Convention is available at <http://whc.unesco.org/en/conventiontext/>. Properties are assessed against the criteria defined by the Committee for the inscription of properties on the World Heritage List.

**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:** 5.1: HWD

**Question No:** 174

**Topic:** Impact of funding cut on  
Heritage Division

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

**Senator Waters and Wright asked:**

1. Past answers to Estimates questions have indicated the total staffing for the Heritage Division has reduced from 102 in 2010-11 to 78 in the current financial year. Is this still correct?
2. What are the positions that have been lost, in particular has there been a reduction in expert heritage positions in natural or cultural heritage? If such positions have been cut, how many positions related to natural, Indigenous and historic heritage?
3. Has there been a reduction in the number of sections in the Division dealing with natural or cultural heritage and, if so, how many sections have been cut and what were they?
4. What work will be affected by the reduced staffing? Will heritage assessments or the provision of statutory or non-statutory advice be impacted?
5. Given the Heritage Division staffing of 78 (or final figure as advised in response to question 1), how many of these positions are funded from non-recurrent sources?

**Answer:**

1. In October 2011 the total staffing in the heritage branches of Heritage and Wildlife Division was 87.
2. The following table details the numbers of ongoing positions in natural, Indigenous and historic heritage sections in June 2011 and October 2011.

Date	Natural	Indigenous	Historic	Total Staff
June 2011	22	20	27	69
Oct 2011	20.5	18.5	18	57
Reduction	1.5	1.5	9	12

3. The Heritage Division transitioned into a new structure on 1 July 2011. It is now known as the Heritage and Wildlife Division and includes two sections dealing with natural heritage matters and two dealing with Indigenous and historic heritage matters. In the former structure, each of the three areas of responsibility had two sections.

**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

4. There has been a reduction in the division's international world heritage work, which follows the expiry of Australia's term on the World Heritage Committee. Fewer new assessments have been included on the Australian Heritage Council's work plan. The division has adopted a more efficient approach to the preparation of conservation management plans by providing a comprehensive range of resources through the department's web site, particularly in relation to Commonwealth Heritage Places. The Division continues to meet its statutory responsibilities in regard to heritage.

5. Currently there are 19 positions that are funded from non-recurrent sources, as follows:

<b>Positions funded from non-recurrent sources</b>	<b>Number</b>
World heritage grants administration	7
Kokoda Track	10
Pacific world heritage	1
World heritage international coordination	1
Total	19

**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:** 5.1: HWD

**Question No:** 175

**Topic:** Heritage performance under  
the EPBC Act

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

**Senator Waters and Wright asked:**

1. In answer to previous questions on notice, information has been provided about:
  - a. the number of heritage assessments completed which have stalled awaiting a decision, some for years;
  - b. the slow progress with completion of heritage strategies by Commonwealth agencies, despite the deadline being 2006 for such strategies; and
  - c. the slow progress with finalisation of management plans for Commonwealth Heritage places, with only one being finalised since 2004.
2. Has there been any progress in these areas, and how are the recent staff cuts expected to impact on progress?

**Answer:**

1-2. Consultations with interested parties and management agencies regarding possible listings are ongoing and current staff numbers are sufficient to progress these consultations. Current staff numbers are also sufficient to provide assistance and advice to agencies on the development of heritage strategies and management plans.

**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:** 5.1: HWD

**Question No:** 176

**Topic:** Australian Heritage Strategy

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

**Senator Waters and Wright asked:**

1. Can you provide an update on the development of the Australian Heritage Strategy, including when a draft will be publicly released and when it will be completed?
2. How are the recent staff cuts expected to impact on progress with the strategy?

**Answer:**

1. The Australian Heritage Strategy is being prepared in consultation with all jurisdictions, key stakeholder groups and has the support of the Australian Heritage Council and the Heritage Chairs and Officials of Australia. A workshop was held with the Heritage Officials of Australia on 24 August 2011. The Australian Heritage Council held a workshop with key stakeholders on 15 September 2011.

It is anticipated that a draft strategy will be released before the end of June 2012.

2. The recent restructure of heritage responsibilities in the department has not impacted upon the development of the Australian Heritage Strategy.

**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:** 5.1: HWD **Question No:** 177

**Topic:** Tarkine – National Heritage  
Listing

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

**Senator Waters asked:**

1. For the current heritage assessment of the Tarkine, how do the terms of reference for this assessment differ from those for the emergency heritage listing assessment, that was completed in October 2010?
2. The Council has advised the Minister that finalising the current assessment has been delayed because more time is needed to assess heritage values and to determine boundaries. Why is more time needed to assess the values, given they have already been assessed as part of the 2010 emergency listing? Part of that report that appeared on the AHC website before being removed outlines those values in extensive detail and shows conclusively that the area has well known heritage values – in fact the report states: “The natural and cultural values of the Tarkine are well recognised and include” and goes on to list over a page of values that meet National Heritage criteria... So what is the delay – what specific values are taking more time to assess?
3. Please provide information on the proposed boundaries of the heritage area – what boundary changes are being considered now – what will be the total area protected, what is being looked at being excised?
4. The Tarkine has priceless Aboriginal heritage, which has some documentation along the coast, but our understanding is that little work has been done on Aboriginal heritage in the inland and rainforest sections. What steps are the Council and/ or the Department taking to assess Aboriginal heritage in areas like Mt Lindsay, where there is now proposed to be anywhere between 5 – 34km<sup>2</sup> of open cut tin mining?

**Answer:**

1. Both assessments are made under the national heritage criteria in accordance with the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*.
2. The Australian Heritage Council has undertaken further consultation with owners and occupiers and the general public in 2011. The council completed its formal consultation on 19 August 2011 and is considering the additional information provided in relation to the values and boundary.
3. The boundary of the place is currently under assessment. The area that the council considers “might have values” is published on the council’s website at <http://www.environment.gov.au/heritage/ahc/national-assessments/tarkine/values.html>.
4. Aboriginal heritage values are currently under assessment in consultation with the Tasmanian Aboriginal Centre and the Tasmanian Aboriginal Land and Sea Council. The Tasmanian Government recently provided a map of the known Aboriginal heritage sites within the area being considered by the Australian Heritage Council. This information is being taken into account by the council in its assessment.

**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:** 5.1: HWD **Question No:** 178

**Topic:** Regional Forestry Agreements

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

**Senator Rhiannon asked:**

1. On what basis has the Government decided to continue exempting Regional Forest Agreement areas from the EPBC Act, in the absence of any evidence from the Hawke review, RFA reviews or independent scientific research that RFAs are effective in protecting threatened species?
2. Do you have any plans to review this decision?
3. What work has your department undertaken to review the protection of threatened species under RFAs?

**Answer:**

1. The Australian Government remains committed to RFAs as an appropriate mechanism for effective environmental protection, forest management and forest industry practices in regions covered by RFAs. The Government is also committed to working with state governments to improve the review, audit and monitoring arrangements for RFAs, including their timely completion, and clearer assessment of performance against environmental and sustainable forestry outcomes.
2. No.
3. The Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry has portfolio responsibility for administering the performance of the Regional Forest Agreements. The day to day operation of the forest practices accredited under the Regional Forest Agreements is the responsibility of the states.

**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:** 5.1: HWD **Question No:** 179

**Topic:** UNESCO assessment of Great Barrier Reef World Heritage area

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

**Senator Waters asked:**

1. I note that the State and Federal Governments are to undertake a strategic assessment of coastal development on the Reef, in response to the World Heritage Committee's urgings - what advice has or will the Department provided to the Minister regarding whether any applications which may impact on the GBR's World Heritage values should be progressed or should be placed on hold pending the completion of the Strategic Assessment? What advice has the Department provided, or will the Department provide, about whether development of existing approved CSG activities should be suspended pending the completion of the Strategic Assessment? If nil to either, what will be left to be strategically assessed?
2. Did the Department provide any advice to the Minister regarding the need to alert UNESCO of the risk to the Great Barrier Reef's world heritage values, when it was proposed to approve multiple LNG export facilities and accompanying dredging as part of those projects? (including considering the increased commercial shipping throughout the reef associated with these projects)?
3. Does the Department agree with the decision of the World Heritage Committee at its meeting of June 2011 regarding the impact of LNG facilities on the Outstanding Universal Values of the Great Barrier Reef? Does the Department share the "extreme concern" of the World Heritage Committee regarding LNG development along the Great Barrier Reef coast? Was the Department surprised by UNESCO's recommendation that expressed 'extreme concern' about the impact of LNG development on the GBR world heritage area?
4. Given the WHC has expressed 'extreme concern' regarding the impact of LNG development on the GBR world heritage area, what if any additional actions has the Department taken to ensure that current approved projects will be properly managed? Can you provide details of the specific management interventions that are planned to protect the Outstanding Universal Values of the GBR and what if any federal funding is being invested for each intervention?
5. Which Department or agency is the lead negotiator with UNESCO on the Gladstone harbour issue? Did Australia pressure UNESCO to tone down their initial draft resolution which called for Curtis Island development to be halted until the World Heritage Committee had assessed the environmental impacts?

**Answer:**

1. A comprehensive strategic assessment of the entire Great Barrier Reef World Heritage Area will identify planned and potential future development that could impact on the outstanding universal value. This will enable long-term planning for sustainable development that will protect the outstanding universal value of the property. The additional elements of the question appear to ask the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (the department) to comment on matters of policy and speculate on future advice. As such, the department is unable to comment further.
2. No. Impacts associated with dredging activities and ship movements were rigorously assessed and conditions imposed to ensure that impacts are not unacceptable.



**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

3. The World Heritage Committee's decision did not establish any conclusions about the impacts of approvals on the property's outstanding universal value.

4. Approved projects have been rigorously assessed and appropriate conditions applied. Australia continues to invest significantly to monitor and protect the reef, and increase its resilience in the long term, while allowing sustainable use of this important world heritage property.

The Australian Government is investing \$200 million dollars over five years (2008-2013) under the Reef Rescue initiative. The five year outcomes for the initiative are to reduce the discharge of dissolved nutrients and chemicals from agricultural lands to the Great Barrier Reef lagoon by 25 per cent, and to reduce the discharge of sediment and nutrients by 10 per cent. The outcomes will be achieved through a number of programs.

In addition to the Reef Rescue Initiative, the Government is also investing over \$12 million over four years on research to increase our understanding of the Great Barrier Reef and to inform policy and management into the future. This is being funded through the National Environmental Research Program.

The Government is also investing \$1.8 million per year to implement the Great Barrier Reef Climate Change Action Plan.

The Government is also working collaboratively with the Queensland Government to address the impacts of recent extreme weather events, particularly on dugongs and green turtles.

5. The Australian Government Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has the lead role in engaging with UNESCO on world heritage matters. Australia did not pressure advisory bodies to UNESCO to change their advice.