

Senate Standing Committee on Environment, Communications and the Arts

Answers to questions on notice

Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts portfolio

Supplementary Budget Estimates, October 2008

Outcome:	1	Question No:	76
Output:	1.4		
Division/Agency:	Heritage Division		
Topic:	Commonwealth Funding - Heritage		
Hansard Page ECITA:	129 (21 Oct)		

Senator Ludlum asked:

It appears from the budget statements that the comparable total heritage budget in 2001 was \$57.6 million. In 2008 it was \$45 million. Can you confirm that that is an accurate assessment and can you explain whether that is a significant reduction in core Heritage Division funding or whether funding has been displaced into different areas?

Is it your sense that funding has been reduced relatively sharply in the last six or seven years?

Perhaps I can put that on notice. The answer that I am seeking really is whether there has been an actual decline in Commonwealth funding since 2001—we can use that as a benchmark—or whether funding has been displaced into different portfolio areas or different agencies.

Answer:

Funding for heritage activities across all Commonwealth agencies in 2000/01 was \$56.4 million. This figure includes funds provided to the then Department of Environment and Heritage, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission, the Department of Defence, the Australian Heritage Commission and the Department of Transport and Regional Services.

Funding for heritage activities across all Commonwealth agencies in 2007/08 was \$84.7 million. This includes an amount of \$29.6 million for the Sydney Harbour Federation Trust, which was not in existence in 2000/01. If this funding is excluded, funding for heritage activities across all other Commonwealth agencies was \$55.1 million in 2007/08.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	77
Output:	1.4		
Division/Agency:	Heritage Division		
Topic:	EPBC – Review of Commonwealth and national heritage lists		
Hansard Page ECA:	130 (21 Oct)		

Senator Ludlam asked:

Is there any requirement under that section for public consultation in that regard?

Answer:

No. The requirements for the review and reporting on the National Heritage List and the Commonwealth Heritage List are set out in sections 324ZC and 341ZH respectively of the *Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999*. There is no requirement for the reviews to include consultation with the public. The sections require the Minister to ensure that a review of each list is carried out at least once in every 5 year period and that a report of each review is tabled in each House of the Parliament. The sections also list the topics that must be addressed in each review report.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	78
Output:	1.4		
Division/Agency:	Heritage Division		
Topic:	Ministerial advisory forum on cultural heritage		
Hansard Page ECITA:	131 (21 Oct)		

Senator Ludlam asked:

When we would expect to see some announcement as to the form of this working group, its make-up and constituency, the role it will play and whether it will have funding going forward?

Answer:

Minister Garrett, in a letter dated 16 September 2008 to the Chair of the former National Cultural Heritage Forum, advised that the government will establish a Heritage Working Group to assist the Minister in more strategically addressing a wide range of issues affecting Australia's heritage. This group will include individuals who bring with them experience in economics and tourism, in addition to expertise in natural, Indigenous and historic heritage. A public announcement will be made shortly regarding the role of this group and its membership.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	79
Output:	1.4		
Division/Agency:	Heritage Division		
Topic:	Indigenous Heritage Program – Indigenous War Graves Inc		
Hansard Page ECITA:	Written Question on Notice		

Senator Adams asked:

1. Would Department please provide a copy of both funding guidelines and criteria of the Indigenous Heritage Program?
2. Regarding the letter (dated 16 September) sent to HIWG, signed by Terry Bailey, Assistant Secretary, Natural and Indigenous Heritage. The letter says:
"... in recognition of the good work that your organisation does, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts, the Hon Peter Garret AM MP, has approved six months funding to provide the opportunity for you to explore alternative funding."
a) Is this a normal procedure?
b) If so, how many projects from where have received how much extended funding for how long?
3. The letter further says that ...
"If by December, Honouring Indigenous War Graves has been unable to find alternative funding sources, the Minister has indicated he will review his decision and consider providing additional funding until the end of the financial year."
a) Is this a normal procedure?
b) If yes, provide detailed information on how many organisations from where have been positively re-assessed after their funding claims originally had been denied?
4. Regarding the newspaper article "Funding hit to champion of Aboriginal war veterans" published in the West Australian (4/10/2008 P58), which stated:
"Mr Schnaars wrote to Prime Minister Kevin Rudd and Veterans Affairs Minister Alan Griffin late last year but by June he had not received a response. Eleven days after receiving question from THE WEST AUSTRALIAN in early July, the Minister's office responded by saying he had asked the department to explore ways to provide support to the group."
a) I understand from this information and from my conversations with Mr Schnaars that journalists received information about a possible funding review, however, Mr Schnaars was not informed. Is this correct?
b) Is it sheer co-incidence that Mr Bailey wrote to HIWG offering a possible funding review after they have been contacted by the media?

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Answers:

1. A copy of the guidelines can be found on the department's website at <http://environment.gov.au/heritage/programs/ihp/pubs/guide-08-09.pdf>. The *Guide for Applicants* includes the six criteria and guidance for applicants on how to respond to the criteria.
2. a) Yes. Over the last three years transitional funding has been offered to eight organisations that had previously received Indigenous Heritage Program funding over a number of years but whose most recent applications were not as competitive against other applications in that funding round and, without the transitional funding, would have abruptly ceased.
2. b) In 2005–06 transitional funding totalling \$219,424 was provided to five organisations in Victoria, NSW, Western Australia and Queensland.
In 2006–07 no organisations required transitional funding.
In 2007–08 three Queensland organisations were offered transitional funding, totalling \$108,705.
3. a) Yes.
3. b) As noted in 2 b), in the 2007–08 funding round, the Minister approved transitional funding for three organisations, totalling \$108,705. An additional \$121,955 was set aside for these organisations.
4. a) No. The department wrote to Mr Schnaars on 16 September 2008 advising of the potential review of the funding decision. In subsequent discussions with the department, Mr Schnaars advised he had not received the letter and a copy was resent on 17 October 2008.
4. b) Yes.

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Outcome:	1	Question No:	80
Output:	1.4		
Division/Agency:	Heritage Division		
Topic:	Fraser Island Dingo Fences		
Hansard Page ECITA:	Written Question on Notice		

Senator Siewert asked:

1. Prior to electrification which Queensland departments and other bodies have sought indemnity from any future legal actions resulting from the electrification and injuries from the grids themselves?
2. Has QPWS investigated the cause of the death of a Fraser Island dingo found dead on the beach just south of Eurong in the evening in early July 2008?
3. Now that the townships of Eurong and Happy Valley are fully fenced with the modified cattle grids in place proposing to be electrified, what procedures are in place to remove any dingoes which may be trapped inside the fence?
4. What procedures are in place to assist dingoes trapped or injured on the electrified angle iron grids?
5. How many recorded dingoes are there on Fraser Island? How many recorded family groups are there on Fraser Island?
6. How many dingoes have been destroyed on Fraser Island since 2001?
7. Please supply the sex, age and location of the destroyed dogs along with the incidents they were responsible for. Who is responsible for their destruction and how were they destroyed?
8. Are there anymore dingo fences planned for Fraser Island. If yes, where are they to be located and what is the timetable for establishment?
9. Who is responsible for establishing the ground work for these fences? What are the estimated costs?
10. Are maintenance costs included or budgeted for? Are any maintenance costs being provided by the Commonwealth?

Answer:

- 1-10. The questions asked relate primarily to issues that are the responsibility of the Queensland Environmental Protection Agency as the day to day manager of the Fraser Island World Heritage Area. The questions have therefore been discussed with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Agency has indicated that it would provide responses to you upon request. It is recommended that the questions be directed to Mr Terry Wall, Director General, Environmental Protection Agency, through the Hon Andrew McNamara MP, Minister for Sustainability, Climate Change and Innovation, PO Box 15155, City East, Queensland, 4002.

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Regarding the second part of question 10, the Australian Government has not provided funding towards maintenance costs of the dingo fences around the Fraser Island townships of Eurong and Happy Valley.