

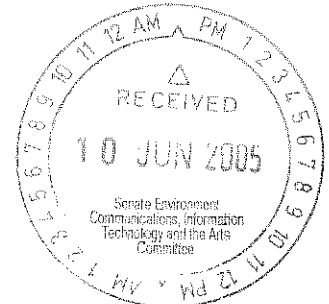


Australian Government

Department of the Environment and Heritage

Office of the Secretary

CC: ECITA
SECRETARIAT



Our reference: 2005/04441 RE

Senator Alan Eggleston

Chair

Senate Environment, Communications, Information and the Arts Legislation Committee

Parliament House

CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Senator Eggleston

CLARIFICATION OF EVIDENCE – ESTIMATES HEARING 26 MAY 2005

I wish clarify evidence provided to the Committee at the hearing of 26 May 2005.

Mr Tony Slatyer (First Assistant Secretary, Land Water & Coasts Division) responded to a question from Senator Wong relating to organisations being advised they are getting funding under the 'Protecting Australia's Biodiversity Hotspots' programme (page 79 of the Proof Hansard). Mr Slatyer replied in the negative. However, after checking the status of the programme, Mr Slatyer wishes to advise that, as at the date of the hearing, a clearer answer is:

“For 2004-05 funds, the organisations who will be delivering the Daintree and Mt Lofty initiatives have been advised they are receiving funding. An organisation has also been advised of funding approval for the acquisition of a property. For this acquisition, a contract has been finalised though property settlement is still pending.”

During further discussion about other grants of money under the programme, on page 80 of the Proof Hansard, Senator Wong asked how many contracts had been finalised. Mr Slatyer responded that he understood one had been finalised. After checking the details, Mr Slatyer wishes to advise that, as at the date of the hearing, a clearer answer is:

“Both contracts have been finalised, but property settlement on one of the acquisitions is still pending.”

In discussion at the bottom of page 81 of the Proof Hansard, Mr Slatyer said he believed that an independent biodiversity assessment committee had advised the Minister in relation to three contracts for the purchase of land under the Biodiversity Hotspots programme. After checking the details, Mr Slatyer wishes to advise that the correct answer is:



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“The Ministers’ Expert Advisory Committee for the programme has not provided advice on these expenditures.”

At page 93 of the Proof Hansard, there was some discussion about a statement apparently made by the Turkish Prime Minister in relation to listing Anzac Cove as a heritage site. Minister Campbell and I undertook to track down a copy of the statement and provide it to the Committee. After checking the details I now wish to advise that the correct answer is:

“The Turkish Prime Minister did not make any statement following his meeting with the Prime Minister. However Prime Minister Howard released a statement following the meeting which outlines the key outcomes of the meeting. I have attached a copy of the Prime Minister’s statement.”

At page 95 of the Proof Hansard, Senator Bishop asked a question about terms of reference for a new project to investigate heritage and environmental issues relating to Anzac Cove. Mr David Young (First Assistant Secretary, Heritage Division) indicated that the terms of reference for historical studies had not been developed. After checking the details, Mr Young wishes to advise that the correct answer is:

“Terms of reference for the historical studies are broadly outlined by the Prime Minister in his statement following his meeting with Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan.”

I regret any inconvenience to the Committee as a result of these errors and wish to assure the Committee that all evidence was given in good faith at the time of the hearing.

Yours sincerely



David Borthwick
Secretary

8 June 2005

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Media Releases**MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER OF TURKEY**

At a meeting with Prime Minister Erdogan today, we reaffirmed the warm and longstanding friendship between Australia and Turkey and our commitment to strengthen and develop ties between our countries, including further cooperation on ANZAC-related issues, economic and defence agreements, and people to people contacts. We recognised the benefits to Turkey, the European Union, and to regional stability and security, of Turkish accession to the EU and an effective resolution to the Cyprus issue. We also exchanged views on the current situation in the Middle East and progress in the international fight against terrorism.

Prime Minister Erdogan and I reaffirmed our shared understanding of the profound mutual significance of Gallipoli to the national identities and historical experience of Turkey and Australia. The annual commemorations of those events which take place in each country each year attest to their continuing relevance to our peoples and to our nations today. On behalf of the Australian people, I expressed deep appreciation for Turkey's stewardship of the ANZAC area and the warm welcome extended to the many thousands of Australian visitors there each year.

I noted with appreciation the extensive protections already afforded by Turkey to the area, including its declaration as a National Park in 1973 and its designation as a Heritage site in 1980. We agreed that Australia would continue to consult closely with Turkey over our desire, fully consistent with Turkish sovereignty over the area, to symbolically recognise the historical importance of the ANZAC area. This process will be informed by the joint historical survey mentioned below.

We agreed to further enhance cooperation on ANZAC issues, including the preservation of sites and the environmental and historical values of the area. Mr Erdogan agreed with my proposal that there be a joint historical survey of the ANZAC area (including archaeological aspects) to provide a clear basis for balancing development plans for the park with the preservation of key sites. We also agreed to a joint engineering review to ensure the roadworks, including measures to control erosion, in the ANZAC Cove area are completed in a way as sympathetic as possible to the landscape. We noted the large and growing number of visitors from many nations and that plans for the future of the Park aimed to provide a safe environment for visitors whilst protecting important historic sites. I noted the cooperation to date and welcomed the opportunity to provide further assistance in the future.

An enduring legacy of the Gallipoli experience has been the forging of people to people links between our two countries. In this context, we agreed to an

Australian funded exchange scholarship program to assist students and scholars from both countries to advance their studies in areas of mutual interest to Australia and Turkey.

Also with a view to enhancing people to people links, we agreed to explore a work and holiday visa arrangement to facilitate travel by young people between the two countries.

We noted that negotiations for a treaty-level Framework Agreement on Military Cooperation are progressing. The Agreement will provide greater scope to develop defence relations between the two countries, including negotiations for a Defence Materiel and Procurement Agreement.

We also noted the impending conclusion of Investment Promotion and Protection, which seek to protect investments in either country by ensuring that such investments enjoy fair and equitable treatment and imposes an obligation on each country to accord the other Most Favoured Nation status. Progress is also very well advanced towards finalising a Double Taxation Agreement.

Finally, Prime Minister Erdogan accepted an invitation to visit Australia as a guest of government at a mutually convenient time. I look forward to welcoming Mr Erdogan and showing him first hand the important place that the ANZAC tradition occupies in Australian national life.

26 April 2005

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