

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 01

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Camels

Hansard Page: 50 (08/02/2010)

Senator Nash asked:

Dr O’Connell—I was looking to what the minister said. Whether or not there is an association to another document is something I would have to look at and take on notice. Obviously I do not have that in front of me. As I say, this division is not the relevant division for the camels issue. The relevant division is the sustainable resource management division.

Senator NASH—But it is the relevant division for climate change as it relates to agriculture. Obviously there is some relativity there, because a couple of officers went over to Copenhagen. There is obviously some relativity here for agriculture and climate change. I am merely trying to determine whether or not there is a conflict between your minister—it is quite appropriate to ask a question about your minister here—and the minister for climate change, Penny Wong. Very simply, one is saying that the emissions from camels do count—indeed, that they cost \$3.73 million—and the other is not.

I am merely trying to determine whether or not there is a conflict between your minister—and is it quite appropriate to ask a question about your minister here—and the Minister for Climate Change and Water, Penny Wong. Very simply, one is saying that the emissions from camels does count—indeed, it is \$3.73 million—and the other is not.

Senator Sherry—As it goes to a claimed ministerial view, I will take it on notice and ask the minister for you.

Answer:

The Media Release issued by Ministers Garrett and Burke on 2 July 2009 headed “\$403 million investment for the Australian Environment and Sustainable Agriculture” included:

“Feral camels cover an estimated 3.3 million square kilometres and cause an estimated \$14 million in damage, including to fences, water troughs, bores, buildings and vegetation.”

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 01 (continued)

The information on the costs of the damage caused by feral camels was drawn directly from the Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre's report:

Edwards GP, Zeng B, Saalfeld WK, Vaarzon-Morel P and McGregor M (Eds). 2008. *Managing the impacts of feral camels in Australia: a new way of doing business*. DKCRC Report 47. Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre, Alice Springs.

Available on the web

at: <http://www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/publications/contractresearch.html>

This report provides the breakdown of the \$14M costs, including

“Contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and hence impact on global climate change: assessed in this report as \$3.73 million per year, assuming a value of \$15 per ton of CO2 emitted”.

Minister Wong's reported comments were made in the context of Australia's international greenhouse gas abatement commitments which are expressly built around anthropogenic emissions. In this context, only the emissions of managed camels are accountable. As the overwhelming proportion (>99%) of camels in Australia are feral and by definition are unmanaged, greenhouse gas emissions from feral camels are not counted towards Australia's international commitments under the Kyoto Protocol and are not relevant to the question asked of the Minister.

Both statements are correct in the context in which they were made.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 02

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Camels

Hansard Page: 72 (08/02/2010)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—I want to ask a few questions about camels. Mr Thompson, are you my camel man?

Mr Thompson—We can answer some questions on camels.

Senator NASH—I want to make this point absolutely clear. How much do camels emit?

CHAIR—Emit in relation to what?

Senator NASH—How much do they emit in methane flatulence?

Dr O'Connell—Senator, I am not sure that we are in a position here to be precise about the emissions from camels.

Senator NASH—Do you have a rough ballpark figure?

Dr O'Connell—I do not think I have a rough ballpark figure for the camels overall, but it is possibly one that we could get from the climate change department.

Senator NASH—Thank you, Dr O'Connell. I would appreciate it very much if you could do that. I ask this question for clarity. There would be no difference in the flatulent emission from a camel whether it is feral or domestic. Would that be correct?

Answer:

This question should be referred to the Department of Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 03

Division: SRM

Topic: Camels

Hansard Page: 73 (08/10/2010)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—Excellent. If you could take that on notice for me and provide an answer that would be extremely useful. I do not think you were here earlier, Mr Thompson, when I was referring to a joint ministerial media release on 2 July last year from your Minister Burke and Mr Garrett relating to a \$403 million investment for the Australian environment and sustainable agriculture. The media release states:

Feral camels cover an estimated 3.3 million square kilometres and cause an estimated \$14 million in damage, including to fences, water troughs, bores, buildings and vegetation.

Would you have given the minister advice—perhaps by way of a background brief—relating to that media release?

Mr Thompson—We would have provided the minister with some background to that media release and we would have given him some information about the impacts of camels on the Australian environment.

Senator NASH—Would it be fairly safe to assume that you would have given him a breakdown on what the \$14 million went across, just for his understanding and knowledge of what it would go to?

Dr O’Connell—We would have to take that on notice to recall exactly what the information was rather than second guessing what we did at the time.

Senator NASH—Nicely done, Dr O’Connell. Mr Thompson, if you could take that on notice and perhaps provide for the committee the exact breakdown of the \$14 million that you provided to the minister at that time that would be useful. I wish to continue to referring to camels but I will refer to closer ground than emissions, which, according to you, are questions for Climate Change. Last time we had some discussion about the management of camels. I refer to Ninti One. Is that where the proposal came from?

Answer:

1. Briefing on the proposal’s aggregate costs and benefits was provided to the minister in the context of the Natural Heritage Ministerial Board meetings in June and July 2009.
2. The proposal came from and was developed by Ninti One Ltd.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 04

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Camels/Ninti One Ltd

Hansard Page: 73 (08/02/2010)

Senator Nash asked:

Senator NASH—In answer to a question on notice you kindly broke that down to reveal the proposal prepared by Ninti One. If I am not reading this correctly please tell me, but there is a \$2,882,000 component for administration for this proposal. Could you give the committee a breakdown of that? Will well over half a million dollars a year be spent on administration?

Mr Thompson—I do not have that detail with me. That would be something that we could take on notice.

Senator NASH—In the proposal that has been put forward how many staff are involved in this project

Mr Thompson—I am not familiar with the exact detail of it.

Senator NASH—Does anybody have the detail?

Dr O'Connell—Do you mean our staff or do you mean people on the ground putting the project together?

Senator NASH—Sorry; I should have been much clearer—people on the ground that Ninti One is providing to the proposal.

Mr Thompson—I do not have that number. Clearly, a small number of staff is involved and they will be contracting staff to do the culling.

Senator NASH—So you would only expect a small number?

Mr Thompson—I would expect a small number of administrative staff.

Senator NASH—Why would it cost over half a million dollars a year to administrate?

Mr Thompson—As I said, I am not sure of the detail of that, but a range of costs are possibly involved in managing contracts for the harvesters, and for arranging transport and training.

Senator NASH—It seems to me to be quite an extraordinarily high figure. I am happy for you to take that question on notice, but as it will be in a project proposal document somewhere perhaps before the end of this evening you could undertake to find the details of that administration.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 04 (continued)

Answer:

The feral camel management project budget includes the allocation of \$2,882,000 over four years for project administration and coordination. An indicative breakdown of the administration/coordination component of the project is:

partner coordination/stakeholder engagement (including relationship management and partnership building, support for Steering Committee, exploring potential partnership or commercial opportunities, and associated travel)	45%
contracting/financial management	20%
corporate governance (including compliance with statutory/corporate obligations, auditing, ethics, etc.)	15%
operational planning	10%
office facilities	5%
admin support	5%

The total employment component will be around 2.5 FTE per annum. Depending on the specific tasks the key Ninti One Ltd staff involved in the delivery of the project include: Managing Director, General Manager- Operations, Stakeholder Manager, Communications staff, and Finance Manager. Other Ninti One Ltd staff and specialist consultants will also contribute on an as-needs basis to financial management, corporate government, HRM and other support functions.

The project is large and complex, covering four jurisdictions (Western Australia, South Australia, Northern Territory and Queensland) and three land tenures (crown Land, Indigenous land and pastoral land) across remote desert regions of Australia. Ninti One Ltd has 19 partners, including government agencies, Indigenous organisations, pastoral interests, regional NRM bodies, and community and research interests.

The project depends partly on the complementary camel management activities from third parties (particularly State agencies and the pastoral industry) that Ninti One Ltd is able to stimulate. They will effectively be coordinating on-ground camel management activities worth well in excess of the Caring for our Country's \$19 million.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 05

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Expressions of interest in large-scale proposals under the 2009-10 Caring for our Country business plan

Hansard Page: 74 (08/02/2010)

Senator Nash asked:

Referring to the process, does the department then write to those proponents who put in an expression of interest and explain why they were not successful in going further down the process?

Mr Thompson—I think we wrote to all proponents advising them of the outcome of the process. We certainly made it available to all proponents to seek advice and feedback on their applications.

Senator NASH—After they had been told that they were not going any further in the process?

Mr Thompson—Yes. All proponents were able to seek further advice.

Senator NASH—Did any of them choose to do that?

Mr Thompson—I would have to take that question on notice; I do not know.

Senator NASH— It would be great if you could also take that question on notice, Mr Thompson. If you can get any of this to us by the end of the day it would be very useful, given the length of time it has taken to get back questions on notice. If you could do that by the end of today it would be much appreciated.

Answer:

Nine proponents who developed expressions of interest for large-scale proposals under the 2009-10 Caring for our Country business plan sought and were provided with feedback on their proposals.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 06

Division: SRM

Topic: Assessment process for proposals under the 2010-11 Caring for our Country business plan

Hansard Page: 75 (08/02/2010)

Senator Siewert asked:

Senator SIEWERT—Thank you for that useful information. However, I will try again: when will you finalise your assessment process? I am referring to the process that will be used and not the assessment itself.

Mr Thompson—As I have said, I do not have that data with me. We expect to have that process finalised in the next couple of weeks.

Senator SIEWERT—I will have to wait until May to find out, or can you take that question on notice and as soon as you have finalised it you can send it out to us? I will be asking this question again at the May estimates committee hearings. You know why I am asking this question; I am looking for an acknowledgement that there will be improvement in the process and I would like to know what that will be.

Dr O'Connell—Referring to the timeframe, Senator, I think we can probably successfully take that question on notice. It will probably be finished by the time our questions on notice are being returned to you, so we should be able to tell you when it is sorted out. You are looking at the timeline for finishing that process?

Senator SIEWERT—I am looking at the timeline for finishing that process and I am also looking at the actual process.

Mr Thompson—Perhaps, as the secretary said, if we take that question on notice, it should be in the timeframe of questions on notice.

Answer:

An overview of the open call assessment process under the 2010-11 Caring for our Country business plan, incorporating a diagram of the overall assessment process, including the non-open call components, is attached.

[Attachment to SRM 06 follows]



CARING
FOR
OUR
COUNTRY

ATTACHMENT A

Caring for our Country
2010–11

2010 Open Call Assessors Kit

Part 1: Assessment Process Overview

2010–11 CARING FOR OUR COUNTRY

BUSINESS PLAN OPEN CALL ASSESSMENT PROCESS OVERVIEW

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2010–11 Caring for our Country business plan assessment process

Preliminary Screening Panels

7 members:

- 2x Community members (one is Chair)
- Scientific/technical expert
- At least 4xAGLC people covering state and policy expertise (including Indigenous knowledge/expertise)
- Supplemented with additional member(s) e.g. staff from Landcare and Sustainable Practices Branch to advise on sustainable practices and Landcare proposals.

NSW/ACT

Victoria

South Australia

Western Australia

Tasmania

Queensland

Northern Territory

Joint assessors

Landcare assessors

National Moderating Panel

10 members:

- Independent chair (new community)
- Community Chairs of Preliminary Screening Panels (7)
- 2 SES from AGLC – providing Landcare and sustainable practices expertise and biodiversity expertise.

State team Directors (observers)

Natural Heritage Ministerial Board

Considers panel recommendations and makes decision on all Caring for our Country proposals

Executive Panel 4 members

DAFF SES

Executive manager and one other DEWHA SES First Assistant Secretary and one other

Additional input from Caring for our Country (SES for Water, Heritage, Parks)

National Reserve System & Indigenous Protected Area Projects
Sustainable Practices EOIs
Regional base-level funding

Quality Assurance Group

3 members – independent of the process

INTRODUCTION

These guidelines have been compiled for members of Preliminary Screening Panels convened to assess applications for funding under the 2010–11 Caring for our Country business plan. The Preliminary Screening Panels' task is to assess only those proposals submitted through the open call which is the principal way in which funding for projects can be sought under this year's business plan.

Preliminary Screening Panels will not be required to assess land acquisition projects under the National Reserve System; the expression of interest proposals developed for the Environmental Stewardship Program; the Great Barrier Reef water quality research and development component and other Protecting the Reef targets; the expression of interest proposals under the Sustainable Practices priority area or proposals developed under the base-level investment component for regional natural resource management organisations. Proposals developed for these components of Caring for our Country are being assessed under separate processes. Details are provided in the Proposal Processing and Assessment Plan.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Caring for our Country business plan

The 2010–11 Caring for our Country business plan was launched on 7 January 2010 with the associated call for applications. Proposals being assessed by Preliminary Screening Panels were required to be submitted by 15 April 2010.

The Caring for our Country 2010–11 business plan will provide up to \$171 million in 2010–11. This funding is available for single or multi-year proposals to address targets as identified in the business plan within the six national priority areas of:

- National Reserve System
- Biodiversity and natural icons
- Coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats
- Sustainable farm practices
- Natural resource management in northern and remote Australia
- Community skills, knowledge and engagement.

1.2 Priorities for Investment

The targets for which proposals being assessed by the Preliminary Screening Panel were sought are listed in the business plan under each of the priority areas. A summary list of the targets is at pp. 14-17 of this kit. The targets include a variety of time frames (one, two and three years) to a total value ranging from \$20 000 to \$1.5 million. Proponents submitting through the open call were asked to nominate up to a maximum of three targets and submit proposals seeking to either deliver against multiple targets in an integrated way, or deliver against a single target.

1.3 Investment Process

The business plan outlines the process for submitting a proposal including eligibility requirements, assessment process and investment principles (see Section 3 page 96).

The following investment principles are to be considered when assessing proposals for Caring for our Country investment:

- demonstrated clear and measurable achievements against the 2010–11 Caring for our Country target(s) the proponent has chosen to address. In assessing this, the following will be taken into account:
 - demonstrated capacity of the proponents and/or partnership to deliver results and manage contractual obligations
 - demonstrated technical feasibility
 - relevance of proposed activities to the chosen target
 - engagement with relevant stakeholders and partners
 - the most effective delivery mechanism(s)
 - the scale and degree of intervention proposed
 - the likely degree of adoption where relevant
 - potential to raise community awareness and enhance skills, including for Indigenous groups where appropriate
 - that the proposal is based on the best available science at the time and builds on the collective knowledge of what works best
 - the maintenance of benefits into the future (where appropriate).
- alignment to national strategies where appropriate, such as the National Biodiversity Strategy or Australian Weeds Strategy.
- the risk of activities not being able to proceed as planned and the risk mitigation plan in place.
- the public or broader community benefit derived from the project:
 - proponents seeking to work on private land should be prepared to contribute to the cost of their project. Cost sharing arrangements need to take into account the levels of public and private benefits to be obtained.
- value for money:
 - proposals that achieve the greatest benefit against Caring for our Country target(s), for every dollar invested, will receive a higher priority.
- additional selection criteria may apply for proposals which address specific targets. The relevant target information in Section 2, commencing page 23 of the business plan, details any additional specific criteria.

The Australian Government is particularly keen to support projects delivered by parties having complementary skills and interests and working together to more effectively deliver projects.

In order to ensure that all prospective proponents had the necessary information to submit a well planned and targeted proposal, the following documents were made publicly available on the website (www.nrm.gov.au):

- Caring for our Country 2010–11 business plan
- Caring for our Country outcome statements 2008–2013
- Caring for our Country 2010–11 business plan target information sheets
- Caring for our Country 2010–11 investment and site investment guides
- Business plan 2010–11: frequently asked questions
- Business plan 2010–11: Information session presentation
- Business plan 2010–11: Supporting maps
- Business plan 2010–11: Guide to online open call applications

2. PROPOSAL PROCESSING AND ASSESSMENT PLAN

The *Proposal Processing and Assessment Plan* details a five phased assessment process based on eligibility and merit using a combination of departmental staff and community members.

The aim of this plan is to ensure that all proposals submitted under the 2010–11 business plan are subject to due process by ensuring that:

- clear criteria have been established to provide guidance and direction for all phases of the assessment process
- appropriate resources have been allocated to the assessment process
- processes are in place to ensure that all proposals are appraised consistently and fairly
- the assessment process is fully documented, with decisions and rationales recorded.

Assessors are required to read and agree to the plan and then sign the master copy before commencing assessments.

2.1 Assessment Process and Timing

The five phases of the assessment process are as follows:

Phase 1: Proposal receipt, logging and processing

Phase 2: Eligibility and merit assessment by Preliminary Screening Panels

Phase 3: Consideration, standardisation and moderation of rankings by the National Moderating Panel to consolidate the preliminary screening information into recommendations for a national portfolio of best quality projects which represents an appropriate mix and balance of projects. This panel will also consider and recommend a small number of co-investment proposals. Members include the Community Chairs from each of the Preliminary Screening Panels, an independent (community) Chair and two senior departmental representatives. The set of decision rules that will guide the panel's considerations are on page 12 of the *Proposal Processing and Assessment Plan*.

Phase 4: Overall quality check by a senior executive panel

Alongside this will operate a Quality Assurance Group to provide external assurance and validation of the process.

Phase 5: Final consideration and recommendation by Ministers.

Merit assessment by Preliminary Screening Panels (Phase 2) will be undertaken in May 2010. Face to face meetings will be held in the week commencing 17 May 2010.

3. PRELIMINARY SCREENING PANELS

Seven preliminary screening panels will consider open call proposals within a jurisdiction and will score and rank them using the Panel Merit Assessment Tool against a number of assessment criteria.

The seven panels are:

- New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory
- Queensland
- South Australia
- Northern Territory
- Tasmania
- Victoria
- Western Australia.

Each panel will have two community members, one of whom will chair the panel; a scientific expert, and a number of departmental staff (including officers with Indigenous knowledge). State Team Directors will be responsible for coordinating secretariat support for their respective panels.

The departmental panel members will be nominated from state teams as well as from various branches across the Australian Government Land and Coasts team and the wider departments as appropriate.

To support the Preliminary Panel Assessors, a number of additional technical experts will be available to advise on specific issues. Assessment Advisory Sheets have also been prepared by policy areas for Caring for our Country targets.

Induction programs for the Preliminary Screening Panels will provide training in the use of the individual scoring sheet and the *Panel Merit Assessment Tool*, the assessment process, the criteria, and scoring methods to ensure consistency across the assessors. Panel Chairs will be responsible for ensuring consistency in the assessment through regular monitoring of the assessors.

Recommendations from the Preliminary Screening Panels, including rankings and comments, will be forwarded to the National Moderating Panel.

3.1 Role of the Preliminary Screening Panels

Assessors will be provided with the open call proposals from the jurisdiction for which their panel is responsible and will be required to read, assess and score them on the electronic scoring sheet provided.

Panels will also be provided with multi-jurisdictional proposals relevant to their jurisdiction for their information, to enable them to understand the full range of linkages and synergies across the state. Responsibility for final assessment of these will normally rest with the Panel for the jurisdiction in which the majority of the proposed project's activities will take place.

3.2 Responsibilities of Assessors

Assessors are required to:

- (a) identify any conflicts of interest, by completing and signing the Conflict of Interest Form prior to commencing assessments. If, during the assessment process, additional conflicts come to the assessor's attention, they will need to contact the Chair and add this information to their Conflict of Interest Form;
- (b) attend an assessors training session prior to undertaking any assessments. At the training sessions assessors will receive a memory stick containing the electronic individual scoring sheet and the proposals to be assessed. Hard copies of applications will be provided where necessary. Assessors will be required to return the memory stick at the final Preliminary Screening Panel meeting;
- (c) treat all proposals, assessment advice and discussions, the individual scoring sheet and the Panel Merit Assessment Tool as confidential, and ensure:
 - that documents are secure at all times;
 - that, except for the provisions outlined in (k) below, the content of proposals, assessments and rankings are not discussed externally;
- (d) as an individual assessor, read, assess and score each application that they are designated to assess within the allocated assessment timeline. These scores and comments are to be recorded on the individual Scoring sheet provided and sent to the Panel Secretariat and will form part of the Panel discussions;
- (e) follow the structured and transparent assessment process that has been developed, including correct use of the individual scoring sheet;
- (f) attend the panel meeting to discuss and agree on the scores, comments and recommended conditions of funding for each project;
- (g) refrain from contacting project proponents individually. Any requests for clarification of information in proposals must be directed to the Chair of the Panel. When requested by the Chair of the Panel, the Panel Secretariat, will contact proponents for specific pieces of information. The questions asked and answers provided must be recorded and provided to the Business Planning Section.;
- (h) identify and record any duplicated proposals and synergies and linkages between proposals, especially where they are reliant on another proposal's success or otherwise;
- (i) draw on their skills, experience and knowledge in the assessment of these proposals and may draw on the skills of the nominated Technical Advisers and staff members of the AGLC through direct questions (not the distribution of proposals); and
- (j) adhere to the 'Health and Safety Advice in the Workplace' guidelines provided to assessors.

3.3 Responsibilities of the Chair

The roles and responsibilities of Preliminary Assessment Panel Chairs are to:

- (a) undertake all of the above;

- (b) ensure all assessors in the panel for which you are responsible, read, assess and score the proposals in the timeframe allocated, correctly use the individual scoring sheet and forward scores to the Panel Secretariat by the due date;
- (c) chair the panel meeting to ensure there is an agreed score per criterion, comment and recommended conditions of funding (where relevant) for each project;
- (d) receive requests for clarification from other panel members and forward to the Panel Secretariat for action;
- (e) produce a brief report outlining final advice including rankings and recommendations about each proposal and submit it to the Panel Secretariat;
- (f) participate in the National Moderating Panel in Canberra.

3.4 Responsibilities of the Panel Secretariat

The roles and responsibilities of the Panel Secretariat are to:

- (a) receive and collate the scores for each proposal from each assessor for discussion at the panel meeting;
- (b) ensure that any decision made is justified and recorded in detail;
- (c) organise an appropriate venue and catering for the panel meeting;
- (d) distribute the hard copies of maps of the targets (as on the internet) relevant to deliberations at the meeting;
- (e) where meetings are being held outside of Canberra, liaise with AGLC IT staff in advance to ensure access to the Panel Merit Assessment Tool has been arranged;
- (f) when requested by the Chair, contact applicants to seek clarification on proposals; any communication with applicants must be recorded and a copy sent to the Business Planning Section;
- (g) provide the Director of the Business Planning Section with the agreed scores (by criteria), comments and recommended conditions of funding for each proposal within your panel's jurisdiction on or before 12 noon 24 May 2010;
- (h) if not already submitted, collect community panel members' tax file declaration, vendor creation and sitting/reading recording forms and forward to the Business Planning Section; and
- (i) collect the evaluation questionnaire from panel members.

3.5 The roles and responsibilities of the Business Planning Section:

- (a) coordinate initial data capture;
- (b) deliver training and assessment information to assessors on 28 April and 6 May 2010;
- (c) provide the individual scoring sheet and electronic and/or hard copies of proposals to assessors;
- (d) provide the Panel Merit Assessment Tool to Preliminary Screening Panels for use at the face to face meeting;

- (e) collect agreed panel scores, comments and recommended conditions from Chairs and collate for the National Moderating Panel and the Executive Panel;
- (f) coordinate and manage the preparation of maps by ERIN'
- (g) arrange for a sample of application forms and scores to be provided to the Quality Assurance Group;
- (h) when requested by the Panel Secretariat, follow up proponents for specific pieces of information. It is envisaged this will generally be limited to correct contact and project location information, and to confirm any outstanding final reports.

3.6 Moderation of Panel Scores

It is expected that each proposal will be assessed by *at least* three departmental and one community member of the respective Preliminary Screening Panel. The Panel meeting will form the moderation process across assessors, as all panel members will convene in person to discuss and agree on the score, comments and recommended conditions for each proposal. The National Moderating Panel will form the moderation process across the Preliminary Screening Panels.

Each panel as a group is to agree on the score, ranking and recommendation for each proposal decide and to provide comment to justify its recommendation. Recommendations from the Preliminary Screening Panels, including rankings and comments, will be forwarded to the National Moderating Panel (Phase 3).

3.7 Conflict Of Interest Guidelines

All assessors and panel members must demonstrate impartiality and equitable treatment of all applicants. A conflict between a panel member and their personal or private interests may occur. These conflicts will be properly identified and managed to ensure the assessment process is carried out in a fair and transparent manner. *Conflict of Interest Guidelines* have been developed for this purpose.

A *Declaration of Conflict of Interest* form is to be signed by assessors prior to participating in the assessment process. Any conflicts of interest will be identified and dealt with in accordance with the *Conflict of Interest Guidelines*.

4. ASSESSMENT TOOLS

The assessment process will be conducted using specially designed assessment tools that ensure all proposals are considered in a fair, transparent and repeatable manner.

4.1 Recording individual assessments

Assessors will be provided with an electronic scoring sheet designed to record their initial individual views. Metrics tailored to each target have been developed to cover the general assessment criteria listed on pages 102–103 of the business plan as well as the target specific criteria listed in Section 2 of the business plan.

The individual scoring sheet records the scores for each metrics only and does not weight the metrics to produce a total score.

Assessors will forward scores for each proposal to the Panel Secretariat for collation and subsequent discussion at the face to face meeting.

4.2 Recording the Panels Assessment

Once the Panel agrees on the score for each metric, it will be entered into the Panel Merit Assessment Tool.

This tool will record the Preliminary Screening Panel's consensus view and their justification for that view. Access to ranking and diagnostics for proposals will be available to allow the Panel to refine its views and to provide advice to the National Moderating Panel on issues that the Moderating Panel will be considering.

4.3 Consistency of Assessments

Both the individual Scoring sheet and the Panel Merit Assessment Tool have been designed to assist greater consistency and transparency of assessments across assessors. A training program will be carried out prior to the assessments being undertaken to ensure that each assessor understands how to correctly use the individual tool. It is the Chair's responsibility to check that their assessors are using it in an efficient and consistent manner. This may include, for example, spot audits of completed assessments; discussions with the Director Business Planning Section and/or Chairs of other Primary Assessment Panels.

5. ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE MATERIAL

5.1 Guiding Information

Section 2 of the business plan provides guiding information on targets under each of the priorities for investment. Additional guiding information has been placed on the web page. Assessors are expected to be across this detail and aware that applicants should have used all the available information when developing their proposals.

5.2 Assessment Advice Sheets

Assessment advice sheets have been developed by policy sections within the Land and Coasts Division to assist with assessing proposals. All applicants were advised to carefully consider this information, together with copies of the *Site Investment Guides* and *Target Information Sheets* published on the Caring for our Country website, when developing their project applications.

5.3 Supporting maps

A range of maps is available to assist assessors. Available on the website, these maps contain the best information currently available Australia-wide on the location of the areas and issues targeted for Caring for our Country investment. The maps have been produced at three different spatial scales, appropriate to the range of investments, the target focus under Caring for our Country and the data available. For some targets there are specific geographic locations, such as Ramsar wetlands. Maps are available on CD and can be provided on request. State Team Directors will also bring a set of the maps published on the website to assessment panel meeting.

6. ADDITIONAL SUPPORT

6.1 The Assessment Coordination Team

The Business Planning Section of the Australian Government Land and Coasts team is overseeing and providing support for the assessment process. Any questions, concerns or requests for guidance should be directed to your Panel Chair, Lee Drummond (Acting Director), Jeannette Heycox, Phil Strickland, or Tamara Hall (Assessment Coordinators).

6.2 Technical Advisors

To support assessors, a list of technical advisors who will advise on specific issues has been included with the Target Advisory Sheets in the *Assessment Guidelines*.

7. EVALUATION OF ASSESSMENT PROCESS

An appraisal of the assessment process will be undertaken to assist with evaluating the 2010–2011 Caring for our Country investment assessment process. This information will be used to help develop the 2011–12 and future assessment processes

Questions are provided as part of this training manual to allow panel members to begin to consider the evaluation questions in the context of their assessment task and the roles and responsibilities described. The questions will be documented on a standard template completed in hard copy. The State Director assigned to each panel will be responsible for distributing the template, collecting responses and arranging to input the data into a standard panel table. The hard copy original completed forms will also be provided back to the Business Planning Section.

8. OTHER INFORMATION

- Audits will be undertaken periodically to ensure consistency, and if necessary, training refreshers or updates will be delivered.
- All departmental assessors are released from their normal duties.
- All documents and proceedings of the assessment process including panel meetings are IN - CONFIDENCE and are to be secured when not in use by administrative staff, assessors or panel members.

8.1 Additional information about targets found in the business plan and on the NRM Website

No.	Target	Information Available
	National Reserve System	
1	5 million ha per year increase in area of reserves	Target Information (business plan pg. 26) NRS – Priorities for investment Further information: National Reserve System Scientific framework for National Reserve System selection of areas to be included in the National Reserve System Directions for the National Reserve System Guidelines for establishing the National Reserve System Map: Bioregions under-represented in the National Reserve System (PDF - 2.3 MB)
2	2 million ha per year increase in Indigenous Protected Areas	Target Information (business plan pg. 30 and 91) IPA Priorities for investment Guidelines for preparing an IPA proposal Further information: Indigenous Protected Areas
3	Increasing Indigenous best management practice	Target Information (business plan pg. 30 and 91) Indigenous participation – Target Information Sheet
	Biodiversity and natural icons	
4	600 000 ha increase in area of native habitat managed to reduce critical threats by 2013	Target Information (business plan pg. 34) Increasing native habitat – Priorities for investment Increasing native habitat Target Information Sheet Further information: Native Vegetation Framework

		<p>Threatened species and ecological communities listed under the <i>Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999</i></p> <p>Map: Threatened ecological communities by NRM region (Excel – 51 KB)</p>
5	Reducing the impact of vertebrate pest animals (specifically rabbits, feral pigs and wild dogs) – over 3 years	<p>Target Information (business plan pg. 42) Vertebrate pest animals – priorities for investment</p> <p>Further information: Invasive Animals CRC</p> <p>Supporting data and information: Rabbits: threatened species by NRM region Rabbits – Threat Abatement Plan Pigs – Threat Abatement Plan</p>
6	Reduce impact of weeds of national significance – over 3 years	<p>Target Information (business plan pg. 47) WONS – Priorities for investment Reducing WONS – Target Information Sheet</p> <p>This site includes links to distribution maps for each weed.</p> <p>Further information: Weeds in Australia Australian Weeds Strategy Weeds of National Significance</p>
7	Mitigate threats to ten state-managed World Heritage Areas by 2013	<p>Target Information (business plan pg. 50) WHA Target Information Sheet</p> <p>Further information: Australia's World Heritage: Australia's places of outstanding universal value World Heritage Areas</p> <p>Map: World Heritage Areas (PDF – 1.4MB)</p>
	Coastal environments and critical aquatic habitats	
8	Protecting the Reef – by 2013, 1300 more farmers adopt farm practices that improve Reef water quality 1500 more pastoralists using improved practices for Reef water quality	<p>Target Information (business plan pg. 56) Protecting the Reef – Target Information Sheet</p> <p>Further information: Reef Rescue Great Barrier Reef</p>
9	Address identified key threats to the ecological character of priority Ramsar listed wetlands by 2013	<p>Target Information (business plan pg. 61) Ramsar – Priorities for investment Ramsar – Target Information Sheet</p> <p>This site includes links to Site Investment Guides for each of the 14 priority Ramsar wetlands</p> <p>Further information: Australia's Ramsar sites National framework and Guidance for describing the ecological character of Australian Ramsar wetlands Water for the Future</p>
10	Address identified key threats	Target Information (business plan pg. 64)

	to the environmental values of priority high conservation value aquatic ecosystems through implementing on-ground management actions by 2013	HCVAE – Priorities for investment HCVAE -Target Information Sheet This site includes links to Site Investment Guides for each of the 12 priority HCVAE sites Further information: Activities that include a weed or pest animal control component should be consistent with the guidance for invasive species projects and the individual weed or pest animal targets. Supporting data and information: HCVAE project: identifying, categorising and managing HCVAE HCVAE Map- (PDF – 974 KB)
11	Address threats contributing to poor or declining water quality of priority coastal hotspots through implementing on-ground management actions identified in Water Quality Improvement Plans by 2013	Target Information sheet (business plan pg. 67) Coastal Hotspots – Priorities for investment Coastal Hotspots – Target Information Sheet This site includes links to Guides of each of the 7 priority Coastal Hotspot sites Coastal Hotspots Map Further information: Acid sulfate soils Coastal hotspot locations
12	Engage at least 500 community organisations in coastal and marine rehabilitation, restoration and conservation actions from July 2010 to June 2012	Target Information sheet (business plan pg. 70) Coastal community engagement – Priorities for investment Coastal community engagement – Target Information Sheet
Sustainable practices		
13	42 000 more farmers using improved management practices (including aquaculture farmers) to reduce risk of soil acidification, soil loss through wind & water erosion and increase the carbon content of soils or improve water quality (aquaculture only). Improved management practices have been applied to an additional 70 million ha of land under cropping, horticulture, and grazing (including dairy). To increase by 250, commercial fishers who have improved practices by 2013 to optimise sustainability	Target Information sheet (business plan pg. 76) Sustainable farm practices – Priorities for investment This site contains links to numerous maps, spreadsheets and reports that provide information about how priority locations for this target were identified. Sustainable farm practices – Target Information Sheet Sustainable farm practices investment guide – Soil Sustainable farm practices investment guide – Aquaculture Sustainable farm practices investment guide – Commercial fisheries Supporting data and information: Regional comparisons for agricultural industry by NRM region (Excel – 284 KB) Hillslope erosion by NRM region – regional assessments spreadsheet (Excel – 49 KB)
19	Landscape scale conservation – 6700 more farmers adopting activities by 2013 that contribute to the	Target Information (business plan pg. 76) Sustainable farm practices investment guide – Landscape scale conservation

	ongoing conservation and protection of biodiversity	
20	42 000 more land managers/farmers with improved NRM knowledge and skills by 2013	All proposals must contribute to the improving knowledge and skills target through extending the knowledge or experience gained from the project (business plan pg. 76).
	Community skills, knowledge and engagement	
22	Increase the recruitment & retention of volunteers in community groups involved in managing natural resources over the next three year, in particular youth	Target Information (business plan pg. 88) Increasing participation in NRM – Priorities for investment Increasing participation in NRM – Target Information Sheet
25	Resource at least 10 projects by 2013 that will systematically record traditional ecological knowledge at a cultural landscape scale in a way that records Elders' knowledge and can be used to support biodiversity, coastal and other conservation outcomes for Caring for our Country	Target Information (business plan pg.91)
26	Implement at least 10 existing land and sea management plans by 2013	Target Information (business plan pg. 91) Further information: Caring for our Country – Indigenous Land Management Facilitators

8.2 Preliminary Screening Panel Evaluation Questions

The following questions have been developed to assist with evaluating the 2010–11 Caring for our Country investment assessment process. This information will be used to help develop the 2011–12 and future assessment processes. The questions should take no longer than 20 minutes to complete. Information provided will remain confidential.

Please ensure that you provide your responses back to the Chair of your primary assessment panel using the template provided.

Training and Assessor Information

Q 1 – What additional information or training would have been useful to have/include to assist Assessors?

Assessment process

Q 2 – Did you find the individual scoring tool easy to understand and use?

Q 3 – Did the assessment tool and process provide sufficient scope to allow you to effectively assess the range of investment proposals?

Q4 – What additional criteria would be useful to include in future?

Technical advisors

Q 5 – How did the technical advisors assist you in assessing investment proposals?

Q 6 – Would you recommend using technical advisors in future assessment processes?

Role of panels

Q 7 – How effective do you think the Preliminary Screening Panel process has been?

Q8 – Would you suggest using Preliminary Screening Panels in this way for future assessment?

Other Suggestions

Q9 – Do you have any other suggestions or comments?

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 07

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: CMS Meeting in Rome Dec 2008

Hansard Pages: 84-85 (08/02/2010)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—What about consultations prior to the CMS meeting in Rome in December 2008?

Mr Pittar—I do not have information going back that far I am afraid. I presumed you were talking about consultation post the meetings of the CMS in late 2008.

Senator COLBECK—That is where damage was done, or the actual decision at an international level to list them was made. Obviously Australia went into that with a position. I am interested to know what consultation your department had with DEWHA going into that decision.

Mr Pittar—I would have to take that on notice; I do not have that information in front of me.

Senator COLBECK—That is my perspective as a critic at this point in time. Was the department consulted in relation to the makeup of the delegation?

Mr Pittar—I do not have details about the nature of consultations between DEWHA and DAFF in the lead-up to that November 2008 meeting. I will have to take that on notice.

Senator COLBECK—Can you give me dates of consultations post the December 2008 meeting?

Mr Pittar—We can include that in our answer.

Senator COLBECK—And since the tabling of the listing in November? I hope you are taking notice of this Professor Hurry, because they are all coming your way as well, unless you would like to chime in now on that initial round. Did you have any consultations prior to December 2008 with DEWHA on the potential listing?

Prof. Hurry—I would have to go back and check that. I remember a discussion about white sharks at about the same time. I cannot remember whether that was CMS or CITES. But in regard to porbeagles and makos, I thought the discussions we had were just prior to this last round. I will check that and come back formally.

Senator COLBECK—By white sharks do you meant big ones—great whites?

Prof. Hurry—Yes. There was a listing of them some time ago. I thought that would have been around 2008. But I do not remember any prior discussion on porbeagles and makos. I will check and come back to you formally.

Senator COLBECK—You cannot remember so you obviously cannot answer this next question. What consultations have either of you had with the commercial and recreational fishing sectors prior to December 2008 and post the announcement of the listing?

Mr Pittar—We will have to take that on notice.

Senator COLBECK—I understand that you will have to take that on notice, because you cannot remember whether you were consulted. Obviously that question provides some memory issues.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 07 (continued)

Mr Thompson—It is not just a memory issue; it actually goes back before our time and we would have to consult the records.

Prof. Hurry—I will have to do the same.

Answer:

Please refer to QoN SRM 15 answer two and three for dates and details of consultation on this matter.

In relation to the question on the composition of the Australian Delegation, no correspondence was found relating to the composition of the Australian delegation to the Ninth Meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Migratory Species in Rome on 1–5 December 2008.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 08

Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Listing of three shark species as migratory species

Hansard Page: 86 (08/02/2010)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Given that there is a management plan in place to oversight the catching of those sharks, that provided the circumstance under section 13 for an exemption under the EPBC Act, but the management plan has to be modified to incorporate that live sharks be released?

Dr J Findlay—That is right.

Senator COLBECK—That is essentially the effect. Can you provide us—perhaps best on notice—with some of that catch information? I am happy for that to be on notice.

...

Senator COLBECK—The indication to me from professional fishermen is that they prefer to be in waters where there are not large numbers of them because they cut their gear off and it is expensive to get it back. When you provide that information can you break it down by region to give us the capacity to assess that?

Dr J Findlay—I caution that there are some limitations on the scale at which we can provide you data. We have a policy that prevents us data publicly below five boats. With that caution we can go to as fine a scale—

Senator COLBECK—I do not necessarily want it to that level of detail. I am looking for some overall numbers and perhaps some regional numbers. I do not know whether that creates any sensitivity based on who fishes in what areas. But I am happy to work within the parameters that you might have to provide some data. I am interested in getting a sense of the broader data.

Dr J Findlay—We will do our best.

Answer:

The attached table sets out the catches of porbeagle, shortfin mako and longfin mako sharks by fishery for the period 2004 to 2009 reported in AFMA logbooks. Information is based on numbers of porbeagle, shortfin mako and longfin mako sharks retained and released. Information is provided on numbers rather than weight as the weight of released sharks is not normally estimated or recorded.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 08 (continued)

Catches of longfin mako, porbeagle and shortfin mako - 2004 to 2009

Year	Fishery	Data	Name			Grand Total
			Longfin mako	Porbeagle	Shortfin mako	
2004	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	GHT	Sum of No. retained			139	139
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	HSN	Sum of No. retained			4	4
		Sum of No. discarded			1	1
	SET	Sum of No. retained		0	0	0
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0	0
	WTF	Sum of No. retained		0	19	19
		Sum of No. discarded		1	236	237
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	3	27	2335	2365
		Sum of No. discarded	0	40	527	567
2004 Sum of No. retained			3	27	2497	2527
2004 Sum of No. discarded			0	41	764	805
2005	CSF	Sum of No. retained			1	1
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	GHT	Sum of No. retained		1	250	251
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0	0
	SET	Sum of No. retained			0	0
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	WTF	Sum of No. retained		0	15	15
		Sum of No. discarded		6	74	80
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	1	12	2013	2026
		Sum of No. discarded	0	9	508	517
2005 Sum of No. retained			1	13	2279	2293
2005 Sum of No. discarded			0	15	582	597
2006	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	GHT	Sum of No. retained			232	232
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	SET	Sum of No. retained			0	0
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	WTF	Sum of No. retained		1	48	49
		Sum of No. discarded		7	158	165
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	3	13	1229	1245
		Sum of No. discarded	0	10	263	273
2006 Sum of No. retained			3	14	1509	1526
2006 Sum of No. discarded			0	17	421	438
2007	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	GHT	Sum of No. retained			178	178
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0

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	HSN	Sum of No. retained		1	1
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0
	SET	Sum of No. retained	0	0	0
		Sum of No. discarded	0	0	0
	WTF	Sum of No. retained		3	3
		Sum of No. discarded		8	8
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	1	13	1126
		Sum of No. discarded	0	5	130
	WTBF	Sum of No. retained		2	18
		Sum of No. discarded		2	348
2007 Sum of No. retained			1	15	1326
2007 Sum of No. discarded			0	7	486
2008	GHT	Sum of No. retained		4	195
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0
	HSN	Sum of No. retained		3	3
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0
	SET	Sum of No. retained		0	0
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	1	2	1614
		Sum of No. discarded	0	0	150
	WTBF	Sum of No. retained		9	3
		Sum of No. discarded		0	50
2008 Sum of No. retained			1	15	1815
2008 Sum of No. discarded			0	0	200
2009	GHT	Sum of No. retained	0	8	184
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0
	HSN	Sum of No. retained		4	4
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0
	SET	Sum of No. retained		1	20
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	2	4	2814
		Sum of No. discarded	1	1	468
	WTBF	Sum of No. retained		0	16
		Sum of No. discarded		0	575
2009 Sum of No. retained			2	13	3038
2009 Sum of No. discarded			1	1	1043
Total Sum of No. retained			11	97	12464
Total Sum of No. discarded			1	81	3496

Fishery

CSF	Coral Sea Fishery
GAB	Great Australian Bight Trawl Sector of the SESSF
GHT	Gillnet, Hook and Trap Sector of the SESSF
HSN	High Seas Non-trawl
SET	South East Trawl Sector of the SESSF
ETBF	Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery
WTBF	Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 08 (continued)

The **attached maps** present the same information on a regional basis covering the period 2004 to 2009 as whole and presenting retained and released catches of each species in 5 degree grids.

Observer records show that a total of 57 porbeagle sharks have been taken in the Heard Island and McDonald Islands Fishery since fishing operations began in 1997. All were discarded.

[SRM 08 – Attachments A-G]

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 09

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Schedule of past stakeholder consultations of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee

Hansard Page: 88 (08/02/2010)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Senator COLBECK—Okay. So there may be further consultations through the policy review committee process on potential government responses?

Mr Pittar—We would anticipate that there would be some further public consultation over the draft document that the committee has prepared, but they are ultimately decisions for government.

Senator COLBECK—I would like a schedule of the consultations to a date. I am happy to put that on notice as part of the process.

Answer:

Schedule of formal stakeholder consultations for the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee

Date	Location
25-26 February 2009	Canberra
31 March – 2 April 2009	Brisbane
7-8 May 2009	Adelaide
4-5 June 2009	Perth
8-9 July 2009	Melbourne
10 July 2009	Hobart
13-14 August	Townsville
17-18 August 2009	Brisbane
20-21 August 2009	Darwin
14-15 September 2009	Canberra
16-17 September 2009	Sydney
29-30 September 2009	Sydney

Members of the Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee (RFAC) and secretariat have also met informally with stakeholders throughout the process.

The government would expect to implement some recommendations prior to 30 June 2011.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 10

Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Listing of three shark species as migratory species

Hansard Page: 91 (08/02/2010)

Senator Macdonald asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay. I do not want to spend too much time on the Coral Sea fishing permits, but you introduced a new permit on 1 November—this is AFMA, I think.

Prof. Hurry—Yes.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—It coincided, unfortunately, with Environment doing what some might say is ‘pew’ process. What additional obligations have been imposed upon both recreational and commercial fishermen in the Coral Sea section of the eastern tuna and billfish fishery since 1 November that were not there before?

Dr J Findlay—As a result of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone declaration, there has been no change as a direct result of that with regard to our permits. The only condition put on us was to preclude further development to additional permits being issued or new fisheries being developed in that area. There are no permit conditions that we impose to deal with the issue. We are awaiting the assessments, and those things will eventuate further down the track, I suspect.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—Okay, but AFMA did require a Coral Sea permit. Is that right?

Prof. Hurry—If it was the Coral Sea, we would have had permits for all those fisheries for some time. They probably would not be new within the 12 months.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—But was this not something new that happened from 1 November?

Prof. Hurry—No.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—That does not ring a bell?

Prof. Hurry—No. Let me have a look.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—What the question on notice would be is whether you can assure me that since, say, 1 July last year there have been no additional requirements imposed on commercial or recreational fishermen from your point of view.

Prof. Hurry—Yes, I will check. I will also check if there are any WTO restrictions that might have come through for the fishery—any model of trade restrictions. But I am sure it would have just been a rollover of the previous permit.

Answer:

The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and the Arts declared the Coral Sea Conservation Zone on 19 May 2009 at the same time as the release of the East Bioregional Profile.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 10 (continued)

Commercial fishing operators authorised under Commonwealth or state law are not subject to additional regulation as a result of the declaration of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone.

Fishing permits allowing operations in the Coral Sea Fishery were regranted on 1 July 2009. They contained no additional requirements as a consequence of the declaration of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone.

The first season of the hook effort system commenced in the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery (ETBF) on 1 November 2009, and will run for 16 months until 28 February 2011. After the first season, all fishing seasons will commence annually on 1 March. This process was not affected by the declaration of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone. The conditions on the statutory fishing rights were not altered as a consequence of the Coral Sea Conservation Zone.

Recreational fishing is allowed within the conservation zone, and is not subject to any additional restrictions on equipment or take. Recreational fishing in the Coral Sea Conservation Zone remains subject to Queensland fisheries laws.

Certain activities within the Coral Sea Conservation Zone require a permit under the Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Regulations 2000. These activities include:

- commercial tourism activities - including charter fishing, sightseeing tours, SCUBA diving and snorkelling tours (but not including commercial fishing)
- scientific research

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 11

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC)

Hansard Pages: 92 & 93 (08/02/2010)

Senator Ian Macdonald asked:

Mr Thompson—We are still pursuing the same objectives in the Indian Ocean. We trying to get international cooperation on sustainably managing fish stock out of it. That is the broad picture.

Dr O'Connell—Senator, your point made about the difficulties in the IOTC are well made and understood. We are working to do something constructive to address them.

Senator IAN MACDONALD—But they have been well understood for the last four to six estimates committee hearings. What I am trying to ascertain is what the Australian government is doing towards addressing it. It would involve a bit of DFAT work as well. But it was being handled out of this department in the past. As I recall, Dr Kalish was very much involved in it. I do not seem to detect the same sort of enthusiasm, expertise or interest in that. I am asking someone to assure me I am wrong rather than just saying, 'Ah yes, it's complex, and we're looking into it.' Nobody can give me any comfort. Perhaps it is something I should take up with the minister. I will not ask Senator Sherry to do it because he does not seem to be with me.

Senator Sherry, I am just expressing that my assumption that the Australian government seems to have lost its enthusiasm and expertise in this area. I was asking someone to assure me that that is not right and correct. There has been a bit of silence. I do not blame the officers: they can only do what they can do. Is it something that you could refer to the minister for me, Senator Sherry? Perhaps I will also write, but perhaps you could refer the minister to this part of the estimates. You might like to take that as a question on notice to which you could respond to the whole committee in relation to.

Senator Sherry—I will.

Answer:

Taiwan is unable to participate in the Indian Ocean Tuna Commission (IOTC) because it is not a member of the United Nations framework and the IOTC was established under the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). In 2007, Australia joined a consensus on draft amendments to the IOTC Agreement to remove the Commission from the FAO framework in an effort to make gains in efficiency / effectiveness, and to include Taiwan in the management of Indian Ocean tuna species. The amendments were ultimately rejected.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 11 (continued)

Australia encourages the Fishing Entity of Chinese Taipei to participate fully in data collection and reporting. Indeed, we consider that it would be highly desirable for the Fishing Entity of Chinese Taipei to be bound by the IOTC, given the capacity of Chinese Taipei to act as a major player in the fishery in a short space of time.

Australia is committed to ensuring that any fishing entity that conducts fishing activities in the IOTC Area of competence should be properly regulated. Fishing entities should be subject to the same reporting, monitoring and compliance requirements and, in the event of non-compliance, sanctions, as members.

Australia continues to discuss options with the FAO for IOTC participation by Taiwan.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 12

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organization, gillnets

Hansard Page: 93 (08/02/2010)

Senator Colbeck asked:

Mr Pittar—Senator, in the context of the South Pacific Regional Fisheries Management Organisation discussions, which took place late last year, there were a series of resolutions relating to interim arrangements that would be in place prior to the formal establishment of the SPRFMO. Some of those interim arrangements related to the use of gill nets. Those resolutions were carried, which would essentially, if I recall correctly, require countries either to state that they would not enforce a ban of gill nets or, alternatively, would enforce a ban on gill nets. I think the date for that was either the beginning or the end of February. I cannot remember whether it was 1 or 28 February. The intention would be that there would be bans in place for gill netting in that area which would be covered by the SPRFMO agreement.

COLBECK—Has that directly raised with the EU and Spain?

Mr Pittar—It has been. I would need to take on notice the precise detail of that, but my understanding is that the European commission has now agreed that that ban on gill netting would apply in the interim until establishment of the SPRFMO. If I am not entirely correct, I will correct that on notice.

Answer:

Please refer to answer to question on notice AFMA 04.

Senate Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Additional Estimates February 2010

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 13

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Dingo preservation

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Adams asked:

1. What assessment has been made of wild dog infusion in the pure breed dingo population?
2. Is the increasing wild dog population a threat to the pure dingo breed?
3. To what extent is the spread of the wild dog population being monitored?
4. At what rate is the pure breed dingo habitat being reduced, due to the spread of the wild dog population?

Answer:

1. The management of both dingoes and wild dogs is primarily the responsibility of states and territories and research on dingo genetics is undertaken by the relevant jurisdictions.
2. See Question One above. At the national level, conservation of the dingo is the responsibility of the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts.
3. The spread of wild dog populations has been monitored nationally through work undertaken by the IACRC and the National Land and Water Resources Audit (reported in 2008). DAFF, through the Bureau of Rural Sciences (BRS), provided funding for development of monitoring techniques for wild dogs, which assisted the 2008 report. The Australian Pest Animal Management Program (administered by BRS) provided funding in 2009-10 to support the position of the National Wild Dog Management Facilitator, whose role is the facilitation of strategic management of wild dogs throughout Australia, raising the profile of cooperative wild dog management across Australia; develop and promote management planning consistent with best practice; create national networks among management groups, managers and researchers for a more rapid flow of information; identify priority areas for management and research; and identify and develop education programs and extension material.
4. DAFF does not monitor the rate at which pure bred dingo habitat is being reduced due to the spread of wild dog populations.

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 14

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Camels

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Back asked:

I refer to a Joint Ministerial Media Release from Mr Burke and Mr Garrett issued on the 2nd of July, "\$403 million investment for the Australian Environment and Sustainable Agriculture."

The Media Release states; "Feral camels cover an estimated 3.3 million square kilometres and cause an estimated \$14 million in damage, including to fences, water troughs, bores, buildings and vegetation."

1. Can the department please provide a breakdown of how the Government arrived at the figure of \$14 million in damage? Did the Department verify the \$14 million economic damage figure prior to the Minister releasing the Media Release? Isn't it a fact that the "Camel fact sheet" on the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts website states;
"The economic costs of feral camels has been estimated at over \$14 million per year, comprising:
 - \$5.51 million per year in damage to infrastructure, property, and people:
 - pastoral lands suffer major damage to fences, yards, and water troughs
 - government agencies and remote settlements suffer major damage to buildings, fixtures, fences, bores and
 - individuals suffer damage primarily through vehicular collisions.
 - \$2.35 million per year in direct control and management costs,
 - \$3.42 million per year in impacts on livestock production through competition with stock for food and other resources, and
 - \$3.73 million per year contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and impact on global climate change. "
2. How was the figure \$3.73 million per year contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and impact on global climate change derived?
3. Can you please explain why the Minister for Climate Change, Penny Wong told the Australian Newspaper that greenhouse gas emissions from feral camels 'don't count' because they are not counted under the Kyoto Protocol, yet the Ministers for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Environment are including a figure of \$3.73 million per year contribution to greenhouse gas emissions and impact on global climate change?
4. Did the Ministers make a false and misleading claim in the Media Release issued on the 2nd of July about the economic costs of feral camels?
5. Who is right - the Ministers for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and the Minister for the Environment or The Minister for Climate Change and Water?

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Question: SRM 14 (continued)

Answer:

1. Refer to SRM 03.
2. Refer to SRM 03.
3. The origin of the Minister for Climate Change's comments are a matter for that Minister. Refer to SRM 03 for the origin of the Minister for Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry's comments.
4. No.
5. Refer to SRM 03.

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 15

Division: Sustainable Resource Management

Topic: CMS, Mako

Hansard Page: Written Question on Notice

Senator Colbeck asked:

1. Can you give me a run-down of DAFF/AFMA's role in the listing of the mako and porbeagle sharks under the EPBC Act?
2. When was DAFF/AFMA consulted about this listing:
 - prior to the Rome meeting of CMS in December 2008?
 - following the meeting?
 - since the tabling of the listing in November?
3. What consultations has DAFF/AFMA had with the commercial and recreational fishing sector over these shark species listings?
4. Did DAFF offer any advice to DEWHA about this issue? What was the nature and content of that advice?
5. With respect to commercial fishermen in Australian waters, what is currently their position in the fishing of these species – either targeted or as by-catch?
6. Do you have information on the annual catch of these species by the commercial sector? Broken down by region?
7. Is DAFF aware of further potential listings through the Convention for Migratory Species or CITES (Convention for International Trade of Endangered Species)?
8. What role has DAFF played in the planning for these potential listings?

Answers:

- 1–4. In the lead up to CoP 9, DAFF participated in three inter-departmental meetings on 3 September 2008, 22 October 2008 and 30 October 2008 to discuss the inclusion of longfin mako, shortfin mako, porbeagle and spiny dogfish sharks to Appendix II of the Convention on Migratory Species (CMS).

The principal advisory committee concerned with these species was the Eastern Tuna and Billfish Management Advisory Committee (Eastern Tuna MAC). Officers from the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA) provided advice to the Eastern Tuna MAC about the possible listing of these species on 31 October 2008. AFMA updated information on the proposed listings to stakeholders via the *AFMA Update* Vol 7, Issue 2, 3 February 2010. In October 2008,

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Question: SRM 15 (continued)

DEWHA consulted directly with the national peak industry association, the Commonwealth Fisheries Association (CFA) seeking views on the proposed amendments to the Appendices to the Convention prior to CoP 9.

At CoP 9, convened 1–5 December 2008, Appendix II of the CMS was amended to include longfin mako, shortfin mako, porbeagle and spiny dogfish sharks.

DEWHA further notified the CFA on 17 March 2009, that longfin mako, shortfin mako, porbeagle and spiny dogfish sharks had been listed on Appendix II of the CMS and that they must now be listed under the EPBC Act as migratory.

- 5–6. Porbeagle, shortfin mako, longfin mako and spiny dogfish sharks are taken as bycatch and byproduct in a number of Commonwealth fisheries. The attached table and maps set out the catches of porbeagle, shortfin mako and longfin mako by fishery for the period 2004 to 2009. Information, as recorded in AFMA's logbook database is based on numbers of porbeagle, shortfin mako and longfin mako sharks retained and released. Information is provided on numbers rather than weight as the weight of released sharks is not normally estimated.
7. No.
8. N/A.

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Source: AFMA's logbook database

Catches of Longfin Mako, Porbeagle and Shortfin Mako - 2004 to 2009

Year	Fishery	Data	Name			Grand Total	
			Longfin Mako	Porbeagle	Shortfin Mako		
2004	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	GHT	Sum of No. retained			139	139	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	HSN	Sum of No. retained			4	4	
		Sum of No. discarded			1	1	
	SET	Sum of No. retained		0	0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0	0	
	WTF	Sum of No. retained		0	19	19	
		Sum of No. discarded		1	236	237	
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained		3	27	2335	2365
		Sum of No. discarded		0	40	527	567
2004 Sum of No. retained			3	27	2497	2527	
2004 Sum of No. discarded			0	41	764	805	
2005	CSF	Sum of No. retained			1	1	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	GHT	Sum of No. retained		1	250	251	
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0	0	
	SET	Sum of No. retained			0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	WTF	Sum of No. retained		0	15	15	
		Sum of No. discarded		6	74	80	
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained		1	12	2013	2026
		Sum of No. discarded		0	9	508	517
2005 Sum of No. retained			1	13	2279	2293	
2005 Sum of No. discarded			0	15	582	597	
2006	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	GHT	Sum of No. retained			232	232	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	SET	Sum of No. retained			0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	WTF	Sum of No. retained		1	48	49	
		Sum of No. discarded		7	158	165	
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained		3	13	1229	1245
		Sum of No. discarded		0	10	263	273
	2006 Sum of No. retained			3	14	1509	1526
	2006 Sum of No. discarded			0	17	421	438
2007	GAB	Sum of No. retained			0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	GHT	Sum of No. retained			178	178	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	HSN	Sum of No. retained			1	1	
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0	
	SET	Sum of No. retained		0	0	0	
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0	0	
	WTF	Sum of No. retained			3	3	
		Sum of No. discarded			8	8	
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained		1	13	1126	1140

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		Sum of No. discarded	0	5	130	135
	WTBF	Sum of No. retained		2	18	20
		Sum of No. discarded		2	348	350
2007 Sum of No. retained			1	15	1326	1342
2007 Sum of No. discarded			0	7	486	493
2008	GHT	Sum of No. retained		4	195	199
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0	0
	HSN	Sum of No. retained			3	3
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	SET	Sum of No. retained			0	0
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	1	2	1614	1617
		Sum of No. discarded	0	0	150	150
	WTBF	Sum of No. retained		9	3	12
		Sum of No. discarded		0	50	50
2008 Sum of No. retained			1	15	1815	1831
2008 Sum of No. discarded			0	0	200	200
2009	GHT	Sum of No. retained	0	8	184	192
		Sum of No. discarded		0	0	0
	HSN	Sum of No. retained			4	4
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	SET	Sum of No. retained		1	20	21
		Sum of No. discarded			0	0
	ETBF	Sum of No. retained	2	4	2814	2820
		Sum of No. discarded	1	1	468	470
	WTBF	Sum of No. retained		0	16	16
		Sum of No. discarded		0	575	575
2009 Sum of No. retained			2	13	3038	3053
2009 Sum of No. discarded			1	1	1043	1045
Total Sum of No. retained			11	97	12464	12572
Total Sum of No. discarded			1	81	3496	3578

Fishery

CSF	Coral Sea Fishery
GAB	Great Australian Bight Trawl Sector of the SESSF
GHT	Gillnet, Hook and Trap Sector of the SESSF
HSN	High Seas Non-trawl
SET	South East Trawl Sector of the SESSF
ETBF	Eastern Tuna and Billfish Fishery
WTBF	Western Tuna and Billfish Fishery

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ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

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Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: SRM 16

Division: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: EPBC Act Review

Hansard Page: Written

Senator Colbeck asked:

The EPBC Act review was completed and released in December last year.

1. What input has or will DAFF have from this point?
2. Has DAFF provided any briefs to DEWHA re the Hawke Review recommendations?
3. What is the nature of these?
4. Does DAFF have any particular concerns about any of the final report recommendations?
Which ones?

Answer:

The department has provided input to the review through an Inter-Departmental Committee process and bilateral meetings with officers from the review team in the Department of Environment Water, Heritage and the Arts.

The policy matters and recommendations within the EPBC Act review are still under consideration.