

**Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Legislation Committee**  
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Additional Budget Estimates February 2010  
**Infrastructure, Transport, Regional Development and Local Government**

**Question No.:** ONA 01

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** Release of the National Australia Land and Water Science Review to *The Australian*

**Hansard Page/s:** 90 (09/02/10)

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—I well appreciate Senator Heffernan’s expertise and enthusiasm, as he was the original chairman of this. In fact, it is really his baby, and I will be relatively brief before handing over to Senator Heffernan for half an hour or so later on. Who authorised its release to the *Australian*?

**Senator Conroy**—Look, I am not sure anyone at the table is in a position to give you any information on that, Senator Macdonald. Those pesky journalists in the gallery often have many ways of obtaining documents, but I am happy to take that on notice and see if there is any information that Minister Albanese, Parliamentary Secretary McKew or Parliamentary Secretary Gray have for you.

**Answer:**

The Department has no knowledge of the release of the report to *The Australian* newspaper.

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**Question No.:** ONA 02

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia  
**Topic:** National Water Initiative No-Dams Policy  
**Hansard Page/s:** 93 (09/02/10)

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Mr Chairman, I might ask just one more question and then Senator Heffernan can have a go and perhaps I will come back later. Can I ask the minister: is it accurate, as Dr Cresswell is reported as saying, that the Australian government has a no-dams policy? It is a policy issue.

**Senator Conroy**—I have never heard that. Mr Mrdak has never heard that.

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—You would be the first to say to me, ‘It’s a policy issue; you can’t ask Mr Mrdak’, and nor should I.

**Senator Conroy**—No, but he may be aware of a government policy on that. I am not aware of one but I am happy to come back to the committee if that is an incorrect answer.

**Answer:**

The Australian Government does not have a no-dams policy.

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**Question No.:** ONA 03

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia  
**Topic:** Northern Australia Forums re: Water Quality Standards  
**Hansard Page/s:** 107 (09/02/10)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Can you table the details of all those meetings, observations and briefings and who attended, when, where and how?

**Mr Mrdak**—We can certainly provide that.

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Face-to-face, phones, written, whatever—the whole lot.

**Mr Mrdak**—We can certainly provide detail of which consultations, where, and who attended.

**Answer:**

The dates and locations of meetings between Taskforce members and stakeholders are outlined below. Unless otherwise indicated meetings were for Taskforce members only.

**NORTHERN AUSTRALIA LAND AND WATER TASKFORCE MEETINGS**

- Canberra, 12-13 November 2008
- Brisbane, 2 February 2009
- Weipa, 20-23 April 2009
- Broome, 1-3 July 2009
- Darwin, 19-21 August 2009
- Brisbane, 8-9 November 2009

**Canberra, 12-13 November 2008**

Hon Gary Gray AO MP - Parliamentary Secretary for Regional Development and Northern Australia

Ms Alicia Miriklis - Parliamentary Staff

Ms Christine Schweizer - Assistant Secretary, Environmental Water and Natural Resources Branch, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Ms Georgina Usher - Environmental Watering Policy section, Environmental Water and Natural Resources Branch, Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

Dr Richard Cresswell - CSIRO

**Brisbane, 2 February 2009**

Dr Richard Cresswell - CSIRO

Ms Kerry Olsson - National Water Commission

Mr Angus MacGregor - Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts

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**ON SITE CONSULTATIONS**

20 April 2009 - Rio Tinto Alcan Mine

Tom Crothers - Department of Natural Resources and Water (QLD Government)  
Scott Buchanan - Department of Natural Resources and Water (QLD Government)

21 April 2009 - Mapoon and Wenlock River

Richard Aken - Indigenous Community Water Facilitator  
Laurie Booth - Indigenous Wild Rivers Ranger  
Nicholas Woodley - Indigenous Wild Rivers Ranger  
Craig Wheeler - Indigenous Wild Rivers Ranger  
Cecil Woodley - Indigenous Wild Rivers Ranger  
Kerry Olsson - National Water Commission  
Tom Crothers - Department of Natural Resources and Water (QLD Government)  
Scott Buchanan - Department of Natural Resources and Water (QLD Government)

01 July 2009 - Broome

Mr Peter Yu

01 July 2009 - Roebuck Plains Station

Doug Miller - Manager, Roebuck Plains Station  
Peter Cunningham - Indigenous Land Corporation (ILC) Perth

02 July 2009 - Kilsto Station

Susie Williams - WA Water Reps  
Patrick Seares - WA Water  
John Ruprecht - WA Water  
Michael Douglas - Tropical Rivers and Coastal Knowledge  
Russell Taylor - Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies  
Anne Poelina - FitzCAM / Nyikina Mangala Rep  
Jim Motter - FitzCAM / Pastoralists and Graziers Assoc  
Keith Anderson - FitzCAM / PGA  
Phillip Hams - FitzCAM / Irrigator  
Gary Scott - FitzCAM / Environs Kimberley  
Karen Dayman - FitzCAM / Coordinator  
Peter Kneebone - FitzCAM / Shire of Derby West Kimberley  
Sandra Vanvreeswyk - FitzCAM / Dept of Agriculture  
Kevin May - FitzCAM / Dept of Agriculture  
Chris Hams - FitzCAM / Dept of Agriculture  
Lillian Chestnut - FitzCAM / Aboriginal Reference Group support officer  
Rosemary Carey - FitzCAM / Jaru representative  
Rosita Shaw - FitzCAM / Ngarinyin representative  
Annie Milgin - FitzCAM / representative  
Mervyn Street - FitzCAM / Gooniyandi representative  
Edna Cherele - FitzCAM / Walmajarri representative  
David Banjo - FitzCAM / Mangala representative

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Redbeard - FitzCAM / recreational fisher  
Annette Kogolo - NAILSMA Indigenous water facilitator  
Martin Pritchard - Environs Kimberley  
June Davis - Gooniyandi representative  
Julie Melbourne - Former CEO, Mirrawong Gadjerong Corp  
Trish Terry - Rangelands NRM

Thursday 20 August 2009 - Naiuyu, Daly River

Biddy and Albert Lindsay - Traditional owners  
Rob Lindsay - Malak Malak Rangers  
Harold Sinclair and Gary Higgins - local residents  
Mona Liddy and Wagiman women - Traditional owners

20 August 2009 - Midway Station NT

Mr David Warriner - General Manager, Tipperary Station  
Mr Peter O'Brien - Manager, Douglas Daly Research  
Mrs Sue O'Brien - Manager, Douglas Daly Research  
Mr Phill Howie - Farmer, Maneroo Station  
Mrs Annette Howie - Farmer, Maneroo Station  
Mr Gordon Coward - Forestry  
Mr Dan Thomson - Turf  
Mr Sam McBean - Farmer, Ruby Downs Station  
Mrs Sarah Jane McBean - Farmer, Ruby Downs Station  
Mrs Margot Black - Melon Producer  
Mr Sam Timmers - Great Southern  
Mr Brett Gill - Malilangwe  
Mrs Suzanne Gill - Malilangwe  
Ms Fiona McBean - Bonalbo Station  
Mr Ian McBean - Bonalbo Station  
Mrs Kay McBean - Bonalbo Station  
Mr Petter Shotton - Douglas Daly Research Farm  
Mrs Sue Shotton - Douglas Daly Research Farm  
Mr Richard Galton - CEO, Dept of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources.  
Mr Jim Grant - Chief Executive, Dept of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport  
Mr Alistair Trier - Director of Pastoral Production, Dept of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources  
Mr Bruce Sawyer - Director of Research and Demonstration Farms, Dept of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources  
Mr Rob Gobbey - Executive Director of Primary Industry, Dept of Regional Development, Primary Industry, Fisheries and Resources  
Mr Ian Lancaster - Director, Water Management Branch, Dept of Natural Resources, Environment and the Arts

5-6 August 2009 - Northern Australia Indigenous Experts Water Futures Forum, Mary River

**From NT**

Biddy Lindsay - Malak Malak Traditional owner

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Damien Pracy - Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association, Li-anthiwirryarra Senior Ranger  
Darryn Wilson - Batchelor Institute of Indigenous Territory, Lecturer NTNRM  
Graham Friday - Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Association: Li-anthiwirryarra Senior Ranger  
Hmalan Hunter - School of Environmental Research, Research Associate-Indigenous Engagement  
Jack Green - Northern Land Council – Borrooloola, Gulf Region Fire Coordinator  
John Christophersen - Consultant, Land and Sea Rights  
Justine Yanner - Northern Land Council, Manager, Land and Sea Management Branch  
Linda Ford - Charles Darwin Uni, Senior Lecturer - SAIKS  
Liza Schenkel - NRETAS  
Mandaka Marika - Dhimurru Aboriginal Corporation, Managing Director  
Michael Schmid - Natural Resources Division (NRETAS), Water Resource Planner  
Mona Liddy - Wagiman Assoc, Aboriginal Reference Group  
Rob Lindsay - Malak Malak, Ranger Facilitator  
Robert Dalton - Northern Land Council, Water Policy Advisor  
Sam Bush-Blansi - Northern Land Council, Deputy Chairman  
Steve Johnson - Mabunji Aboriginal Resource Assoc, Coordinator  
Wanyubi Marika - Laynhapuy Homelands Assoc, IPA Coordinator  
Wendy Brady - School of Australian Indigenous Knowledge, Head of School

**From QLD**

Damien Miley - Torres Strait Regional Authority  
David Hinchley - Carpentaria Land Council, Land and Sea Projects Manager  
Gerry Turpin - Environmental Protection Agency  
Marceil Lawrence - Western Yalangi Corporation  
Meg McLoughin - Cape York Land Council, Policy Officer  
Richard Jenkins - Balkanu – Cape York Development, Property Planning and Land Tenure  
Richie Ah Mat - NAILSMA: Chairman  
Robbie Morris - Pormpuraaw Aboriginal Council, Ranger Coordinator  
Rod Burke - Dept Of Environment and Resources  
Ron Archer - Northern Gulf Indigenous Savannah, Coordinator/Lecturer  
Samaul Savage  
Toby Accoom - Cape York Land Council, Lockhardt  
William Busch - Mapoon Aboriginal Shire Council, Representative

**From WA**

Andrew Wungundin - Kimberley Land Council  
Anne Poelina - Madjulla Incorporated, Managing Director  
Button Jones - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong  
Chris Griffith - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong  
David Newry - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong  
Dean Matthews - Dept Of Water (Kimberley Region), Indigenous Liaison with Water Quality Monitoring  
Des Hill - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong, Ord Final Agreement Projects Implementation Officer  
Dillon Andrews  
Dorothy Spry - Kimberley Aboriginal Reference Group  
Edna O'Malley - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong, Chairperson MG Corp  
Elizabeth Lulu - Walmajarri Aboriginal, Paruku IPA

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Howard Pedersen - Kimberley Institute, Researcher/Author/Historian

Lloyd Nulgit

Mary Aitken

Merle Carter

Mervyn Mulardy - Karragi PBC

Nolan Hunter - Kimberley Land Council, Deputy Director

Patrick Dodson - Lingiari Foundation, Chairman

Paul Lane - Lingiari Foundation, CEO

Philip Duckhole

Rohan Nulgil

Rosemary Carey

Shirley Brown

Teddy Carlton - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gajerrong, Chairman

Victor Hunter

**National**

Ameyalia Ramos - Intern UNU - IAS TKI

Brad Modggridge – CSIRO, Indig. Water SE Aust. Coordinator

Katie Kiss - Aust. Human Rights Commission, Senior Policy officer Native Title Unit

Matthew Rigney - Murray Lower Darling Rivers Indigenous Nations (MLDRIN), Chairman

Russel Taylor – AIATSIS, Executive Officer

**Supporting Staff**

Annette Kogolo - Kimberley Land Council, Indigenous Community Water Facilitator - Fitzroy Catchment

Dean Yibarbuk - Warddeken Land Management, Senior Ranger

Lillian Chestnut - Kimberley Land Council, FitzCAM Indigenous Liaison Officer

Richard Aken - Indigenous Community Water Facilitator, Wenlock Catchment

Tonya Murray - Carpentaria Land Council Aboriginal

Trish Rigby-Christophersen - Northern Land Council, Executive Officer, Caring for Country Unit

Paul Josif - Savvy Community Development Consultants, Facilitator

Michael O'Donnell - Barrister for Legal Research

Hugh Wallace Smith - NAILSMA, Coordinator ICWFN

Joe Morrison - NAILSMA, CEO

Kalem Ronberg - NAILSMA, Project Officer

Lorae McArthur - NAILSMA, Coordinator IWPG

Michael Storrs - NAILSMA, Coordinator TRaCK Theme 6

Samara Erlandson - NAILSMA, Operations Manager

Margaret Ayre - CSIRO Sustainable Ecosystems, Research Fellow

Sonia Leonard - Yawoorroong Miriuwung Gejerrong, Indigenous Community Water Facilitator - East Kimberley

**Observers**

Jim McColl - CSIRO

John Ward - CSIRO

Margie Thomson - Rural Industries Research and Development, General Manager

Murray Radcliffe - National Water Commission, Manager Water Planning and Management

Peter O'Brien - Rural Industries Research and Development, Managing Director

Sue Jackson – CSIRO, Research Scientist

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Tom Hatton – CSIRO, Director – Water for a Healthy Country Flagship  
Joe Ross - NALWT: Chairman  
Rosemary Hill - NALWT  
Stuart Blanch - NALWT

**OUT OF SESSION CONSULTATIONS**

12 November 2008 - Canberra

Mr Barry Hasse MP  
Mr Damian Hale MP  
Hon Bob Katter MP  
Mr Jim Turnour MP  
Hon Wilson Tuckey MP  
Ms Kirsten Livermore MP  
Senator Trish Crossin  
Senator the Hon Nigel Scullion  
Senator the Hon Ian MacDonald  
Senator the Hon Bill Heffernan  
Senator the Hon Jan McLucas  
Senator Glenn Sterle  
The Hon Peter Garrett AM MP

21 April 2009 - Weipa

John Graham - Rio Tinto Alcan - Community Relations Manager (Acting GM)  
Mat Lengerich - Rio Tinto Alcan - Planning and Environment Manager  
Ian Pressley - CEO Weipa Town Authority  
Scott Buchanan and Tom Crothers - Queensland Dept of Environment and Resource Management  
Ms Annie Bandicootcha - Napranum resident  
Kerry Olsson - National Water Commission  
Dr Brian Keating - CSIRO, Director of Agriculture Sustainability Initiative  
Dr Peter Stone - CSIRO, Deputy Chief of Sustainable Ecosystems  
Dr Marcus Lane - CSIRO - Program Leader of Social and Economic Sciences

1 July 2009 - Broome

Graham Campbell - Shire President  
Wayne Bergmann - CEO - Kimberley Land Council  
Mike Dunnett - Australia's North West  
Kenn Donohoe - Shire of Broome  
Vic Justice - Port of Broome  
Martin Prichard - Environs Kimberley  
Gary Scott - Environs Kimberley  
Elsia Archer - Shire of Derby / West Kimberley  
Tony Proctor - Chamber of Commerce  
Susie Williams - WA Dept of Water Reps  
Patrick Seares - WA Dept of Water Reps  
Dr Brian Keating - CSIRO



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Dr Peter Stone - CSIRO  
Karl Plunkett - Eco Constructions  
Donna Van Niekerk - Eco Constructions  
Russell Taylor - Principal, AIATSIS  
Gary Kairn - KLC - Manager Land and Sea management unit  
Murray Radcliffe - National Water Commission

19 August 2009 - Darwin

Mr Rohan Sullivan - President, Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association  
Mr Luke Bowen - Executive Director, Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association  
Mr Tony Searle - Chairman - Top End Northern Territory Cattlemen's Association  
Mr Tim West - Environmental Development Officer - NT Horticultural Association  
Mr Scott Perkin - CEO, NT Resources Council  
Mr Chris Makepeace - Executive Officer, Amateur Fishermen's Association of the Northern Territory (AFANT)  
Mr Fergle O'Garra - Principal Project Officer, NT Agriculture Association  
Mr Mike Clark - Chairman - Natural Resource Management Board  
Roy Chisholm  
John Underwood - Riveren Station

20 August 2009 - Darwin

Joe Morrison - CEO North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (NAILSMA)  
Samara Erlandson - Operations Manager NAILSMA

2 September 2009 - Northern Australia Sustainable Water Forum - Darwin

Kate Andrews  
Terry Bowring  
Melanie Bradley  
Hannah Brodie-Hall  
Peter Care  
Matt Darcey  
David George  
Chris Makepeace  
Kate Peake  
John Pudney  
Tony Sherer  
Paul Sparke

3 September 2009 - Northern Australia Sustainable Water Forum - Cairns

Jeremy Blocky  
Moni Carlisle  
Annie Clarke  
Jann Crase  
Christine Cousins  
Bruce Corcoran

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Donald Coventry  
Warren Devlin  
Peter Elliot  
Glen Graham  
Andrew Harnden  
Louise Hateley  
Bood Hickson  
Tim Hoogwerf  
Trevor Jackson  
Nigel Kelly  
Rob McAlister  
John Maloney  
Charlie Martens  
Paul Messenger  
Nicky Moore  
Joe Morro  
John Nucifora  
Lyn O'Connor  
Sean O'Neill  
Robert Zigterman  
Lawrence Stonehouse  
Daniel Stemomchiw  
Kate Sutcliffe  
Colleen Taylor  
Henry Taylor  
Julie Tsatsaros

30 October 2009 - Canberra

Don Henry - Australian Conservation Foundation, Executive Director

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**Question No.:** ONA 04

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** Northern Australia Forums re: Water Quality Standards – Meeting Attendees

**Hansard Page/s:** 107 (09/02/10)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Can you tell us who attended that meeting?

**Mr Mrdak**—We will get that detail for you.

**Answer:**

Refer to ONA 03.

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**Question No.:** ONA 05

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic: Tendering Process: Waringarri Arts Centre and Warmun Early Learning Centre**

**Hansard Page/s:** 112 (09/02/10)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Is that a competitive tender?

**Ms Foster**—I do not have with me the details of the tendering process.

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Could you get the details?

**Ms Foster**—Certainly, Senator.

**Answer:**

The Department is implementing the Waringarri Arts Centre project and the Warmun Early Learning Centre project. These projects were identified through a Joint Assessment report on the East Kimberley Development Package compiled by the Australian Government (led by Parliamentary Secretary, the Hon Gary Gray AO MP) in conjunction with the Western Australian Government (led by the Hon Brendon Grylls MP, Minister for Regional Development). The projects identified in the Joint Assessment report were approved by the Prime Minister and the Premier of Western Australia on 26 June 2009.

The Department is implementing the Waringarri Arts Centre project through a funding agreement with the Waringarri Arts Aboriginal Corporation. The Department is implementing the Warmun Early Learning Centre project through a funding agreement with Warmun Community (Turkey Creek) Inc.

Both funding agreements include a project implementation plan schedule. The Department has assessed the project implementation plans, including for them being an effective and efficient use of public monies. The Waringarri Arts Aboriginal Corporation and Warmun Community (Turkey Creek) Inc project implementation plans include milestones for conducting competitive tender processes.

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**Question No.:** ONA 06

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** East Kimberley Development Package – Administration of Funds

**Hansard Page/s:** 112-113 (09/02/10)

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Apart from the East Kimberley, could you take that question on notice, as we have run out of time? Could you give me the other areas where Mr Gray administers the money as in the East Kimberley package? I think you mentioned one other but you gave them as examples. Perhaps there are others around.

**Answer:**

The \$195 million East Kimberley Development Package is currently the only administered funding program falling within the responsibilities of Parliamentary Secretary Gary Gray.

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**Question No.:** ONA 07

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** East Kimberley Development Package – Number of Projects

**Hansard Page/s:** 113 (09/02/10)

**Senator Macdonald asked:**

**Senator IAN MACDONALD**—Could you take my question on notice and tell me—I assume it is not a hugely long list—what the projects are and how much money is allocated to them? This is money that comes through your department that is oversighted by Mr Gray.

**Mr Mrdak**—We can do that.

**Answer:**

A list of the projects funded under the East Kimberley Development Package and the amount allocated to each project can be found on the Department's website.

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**Question No.:** ONA 08

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** East Kimberley Development Package –Assessment Process

**Hansard Page/s:** 113 (09/02/10)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—I am happy for you to supply me with the paper trail that arrived as a result of that decision.

**Mr Mrdak**—Let us come back to you, Senator, with details of how that was determined.

**Answer:**

The Australian Government's investment of \$195 million in the East Kimberley Development Package was conditional on a joint Commonwealth and Western Australian Government assessment of the most effective infrastructure projects to meet the social and economic development needs of the region.

The Australian Government's involvement in the Joint Assessment was led by the Hon Gary Gray AO MP, Parliamentary Secretary for Western and Northern Australia. Western Australia's involvement was led by the Hon Brendon Grylls MLA, Minister for Regional Development.

The Joint Assessment was approved by the Prime Minister, the Hon Kevin Rudd MP, and the Western Australian Premier, the Hon Colin Barnett MLA on 26 June 2009.

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**Question No.:** ONA 09

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** East Kimberley Development Package – Tender Process

**Hansard Page/s:** 113 (09/02/10)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Was that a competitive tender? Who estimated the cost of the refurbishment? Did three locals apply, or a company in Perth or a Melbourne company, as they did with some of the Aboriginal housing? You will come back to the committee with that information?

**Mr Mrdak**—Yes, we will come back to the committee.

**Answer:**

Refer to ONA 05.



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**Question No.:** ONA 10

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** World Heritage Listing Process

**Hansard Page/s:** 113-114 (09/02/10)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—There is a question. According to the Queensland government and the Australian Wilderness Society, the wild rivers legislation is a procedural step towards World Heritage listing for a lot of the Cape York peninsula to take it completely out of production. Does the department have a role to play in the World Heritage process?

**Mr Mrdak**—To be honest, I am not familiar with the World Heritage listing process, Senator. I would have to take some advice on that and come back to you.

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Will you come back to us?

**Mr Mrdak**—I am not aware whether or not our department has been involved in that process in the past. Let me come back to you.

**Answer:**

Queensland's wild rivers legislation is not a procedural step in the process for developing a World Heritage nomination for appropriate areas of Cape York.

Within the Australian Government, prime carriage for the Cape York Peninsula World Heritage nomination process rests with the Department of the Environment, Water, Heritage and the Arts (DEWHA).

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**Question No.:** ONA 11

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** World Heritage Listing - Wild River Legislation

**Hansard Page/s:** 114 (09/02/10)

**Senator Heffernan asked:**

**Senator HEFFERNAN**—Thank you for that. My question to the minister is: is the government in favour of a World Heritage listing for the regions taken up by wild rivers legislation which, to the great distress of Indigenous people in that region, is removing economic opportunities from them?

**Senator Conroy**—That is an excellent question, Senator Heffernan. I am sure you understand that I want to make sure that I reflect the minister's view on this. I will take that question on notice and provide you with any information.

**Answer:**

The Government has a commitment to pursue World Heritage listing for appropriate areas of Cape York. The Government is also committed to involving, and seeking the consent of, Traditional Owners. A World Heritage nomination will require the thorough assessment of the heritage values of Cape York Peninsula. This assessment has not yet been conducted.

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**Question No.:** ONA 12

**Division/Agency:** Office of Northern Australia

**Topic:** Upgrading of the Tanami Road

**Hansard Page/s:** 115 (09/02/10)

**Senator Eggleston asked:**

**Senator EGGLESTON**—I do. My question goes to whether or not the Office of Northern Australia is prepared in some way to give consideration to the economic desirability of upgrading the Tanami Road.

**Mr Mrdak**—Certainly, Senator. As I have indicated, the government provides considerable funding for local government for road expenditure. I am not familiar with any recent proposals for upgrading the Tanami Road, but perhaps I could check with our relevant infrastructure area to see whether any proposals have been provided to us and I can then come back to you. Like you, I am very aware of the increasing traffic on Tanami Road—both tourist and business traffic traversing that area. There is no doubt that that road has had an increase in traffic.

**Answer:**

The Australian Government has committed \$52 million under the NT Community, Beef and Mining Roads package in partnership with the Northern Territory Government which will contribute \$29 million to remote communities for better roads. Under this program of works the Australian Government has approved \$6 million to upgrade the Tanami Road. This project will address the poor condition of sections of the road. Works include; upgrading and sealing, raising the pavement elevation, shape correction and drainage improvements and will provide a seven metre wide sealed pavement and nine metre wide formation. The full carriageway width will also be sealed at floodways and culvert crossings. The Northern Territory Government has committed an additional \$9 million to fund this project.

The project commenced in August 2009 and is due to be completed mid 2010. To date approximately 60% of the works have been completed.