

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 60

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Input into the threat abatement plan for dieback or review

Proof Hansard page: 105-106 (21/05/2012)

Senator SIEWERT asked:

Senator SIEWERT: So maybe you could take on notice, if you cannot tell me now, whether you have had input into the TAP yet—or reviewed it, sorry. I think that is what you said.

Ms Ransom: There has been a threat abatement plan in place for *Phytophthora cinnamomi* specifically.

Senator SIEWERT: There is not.

Ms Ransom: Are you sure?

Senator SIEWERT: I am positive, because I am the one that moved the disallowance motion. So, yes, I know very definitely there is not and there is a new one being developed. So there is a very old one in place, but the new one was disallowed through the Senate.

Senator SIEWERT: Then SEWPaC finally started developing a new threat abatement plan, which is why I am asking about whether you have had input into it yet.

Ms Ransom: I am pretty confident that we will have. We have certainly had exposure to the old one, but, yes, I think perhaps our forestry colleagues may have more information.

Dr O'Connell: We will take it on notice and, particularly if we have got something useful to add tomorrow in terms of forestry, we will let you know.

Answer:

No, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has not provided input to the Threat Abatement Plan for dieback yet. The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Populations and Communities has sent a copy of the current draft threat abatement plan for dieback to DAFF and advised that it is expected to go to the Threatened Species Scientific Committee in September 2012, for their decision on releasing it for public comment.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 80

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Financing of Caring for our Country

Proof Hansard page: 32 (22/05/2012)

Senator SIEWART asked:

Senator SIEWERT: I am obviously going there next. What I am trying to find out—thank you for that, Mr Thompson—is how much of the Caring for our Country money is used to deliver that and how much is used on the ground. Maybe what I will do is ask for the last financial year—

Senator Ludwig: I was going to say you might want to just do historical data.

Senator SIEWERT: That is what I am going to ask. For the last financial year, could you please take on notice how much was used on the ground, how much was for project funding and how much was used for other parts of delivering against DAFF deliverables?

Mr Thompson: We can answer that on notice, Senator.

Answer:

Almost \$423 million was spent in 2010–11 under the Caring for our Country initiative, jointly administered by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) and the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities. A total of \$381.3 million was spent on projects and on the ground activities and the remaining \$41.7 million was spent on administration. \$2.195 million of these administration expenses were included in the DAFF Departmental appropriation to support DAFF's delivery of Caring for our Country – Landcare.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 81

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: Camel culling and wild dog populations and funding
Proof Hansard page: 37 (22/05/2012)

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Senator EDWARDS: You have killed 70,000 camels. The target is 350,000 camels. It rained. It became harder to kill the camels. Based solely on the Commonwealth's financial contribution for the first two years of \$10.6 million and the culling of 36,340 camels, this works out to be \$291.69 per head based on the figures provided at the February estimates. That is one that you might want to check with me. If you then include the states' and territories' contribution over two years, the figure then rises to \$418 per head. This does not include Western Australia's contribution, as this is uncoded in your answer. So you are going to take that on notice and try and explain the differences for me?

Ms Lauder: Yes.

Answer:

The 'fully absorbed cost accounting' figure of \$212 per camel removed that was provided in response to the Question on Notice from the February 2012 Additional Estimates hearing was correct for the Caring for our Country Feral Camel Management Project at the time of preparation – the reported culls had increased from 36 340 at the date of the February hearing to approximately 50 000 when the response was prepared.

The identified state/territory commitments to feral camel management are managed separately from the Caring for our Country project and, while we were able to report on announced state/territory commitments over the four-year period (2009–13), we have no detail on their expenditure.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 82

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: Discussions with Ninti One about export of camel meat
Proof Hansard page: 38 (22/05/2012)

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Senator EDWARDS: You are getting what I am saying here? We have a few issues. Ninti One, as it is, is operating. We are hearing anecdotally that they are engaging with camel meat manufacturers. But we actually know most of them and they have not heard from Ninti One. Are you able to provide any information as to who these discussions are taking place with to try to take advantage of what industry has found to be, I suspect, quite a lucrative camel meat export market to the Middle East?

Mr Thompson: We would have to take on notice the exact details of who Ninti One are meeting with and engaging with. But they have informed us that they have met with a number of them and are working with a number of them.

Answer:

We are aware that Ninti One Ltd has, over the life of the project, met with representatives of the major commercial use industry entities to discuss integration of commercial and non-commercial options for the management of feral camels. These entities include Meramist Pty. Ltd. Samex Australian Meat Company (operating out of the Peterborough abattoir), Territory Camel Pty. Ltd., Magdiens Australia Pty. Ltd. Windy Hills Australian Game Meats Pty. Ltd. and the Australian Camel Industry Association.

The commercial use industry is formally represented on the project Steering Committee by Ms Lauren Brisbane, nominated by the Australian Camel Industry Association.

Ninti One Ltd. funded and hosted an industry-landholder workshop in Alice Springs in 2010 to facilitate communications between landholders who controlled the access to feral camels and the commercial interests with interests in processing camels. Ninti One Ltd has also financially supported the development of a Strategic Plan for the Australian camel industry.

Ninti One Ltd. does not have the authority under the Caring for our Country project to be an active participant in developing markets for camels or their products. However, they do endeavour to bring together people from the supply and processing elements of the camel industry for the immediate benefit of the project as well as the benefit of future feral camel management.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 83

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Opportunities for Indigenous communities

Proof Hansard page: 38 (22/05/2012)

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Senator EDWARDS: So does that Indigenous interaction include mustering and making available for commercial purchase the fruits of their mustering?

Ms Lauder: It definitely provided assistance in developing skills and capacities in Indigenous communities to do mustering. Further than that, we would have to take it on notice and I would have to check it out.

Answer:

Yes.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 84

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Duration of compilation of report about Gwydir Border Rivers

Proof Hansard page: 38 (22/05/2012)

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: At the moment, the Border Rivers Gwydir Catchment Management Authority is working with the DPI to look at how the sand slope could be removed. The study is being funded by a \$10 000 grant. I commend Paul Hutchings and his team at the CMA. They are doing a great job and are really keen to get on with this. Mr McNamara, once a feasibility study is completed, probably later next month, how long would you expect the report to take to be compiled?

Mr McNamara: From the CMA, Senator?

Senator WILLIAMS: Yes.

Mr McNamara: I am not sure. I will have to take that on notice. I would imagine it would be a number of weeks or perhaps a couple of months.

Answer:

The Catchment Management Authority has advised that the report will be finalised by 31 December 2013.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 85

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Applications for Community Action Grants

Proof Hansard page: 40 (22/05/2012)

Senator WILLIAMS asked:

Senator WILLIAMS: Applications have closed for community action grants for 2012-13. How much funding was set aside for this program?

Mr Thompson: Five million dollars.

Senator WILLIAMS: How many applications were received, do you know?

Mr McNamara: Yes. 711 applications were received.

Senator WILLIAMS: There were 711 for \$5 million. Do you know how many were received from the New England area? Do you have an idea regarding regions?

Mr McNamara: I have it by state. I could get that information to you.

Senator WILLIAMS: If you could take it on notice that would be good. I suppose it is difficult for you to answer this, but, of those applications, how many are likely to be funded? You are looking at 711 applications out of the \$5 million. Do you have any idea of how many would be likely to be funded?

Answer:

Approximately 103 applications were received from the New England area.

Minister Ludwig has approved funding of 293 projects valued at approximately \$5 million.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 87

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Budget for Reef Rescue

Proof Hansard page: 45 (22/05/2012)

Senator MACDONALD asked:

Mr Thompson: We expect to spend \$51.5 million in 2012-13 for reef rescue. That will complete the first five-year phase.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: Just to bring it into perspective, what was last year's allocation for that—much the same?

Mr Thompson: We will just get that. We do have it. We expect to spend this financial year—that is, 2011-12, and 2011-12 is not yet over—\$45.7 million, so pretty much the same.

Senator IAN MACDONALD: A bit of an increase next year. The ongoing auditing processing: has anyone been able to quantify the successes of the reef rescue program? I have just come from the other estimates committee where some people, usually the same group of people, are all saying that the reef is finished and dead and dying and woe is me. That is not my view. Do we have a quantifiable—

Mr Thompson: I would have to take the detail on notice, but we do have quantifiable data about where our grants for reef rescue activities on-farm were placed, how many farms have changed practice and we have modelled expectations of changed nutrient and chemical outflow into the Great Barrier Reef from that changed practice. So we have a model outcome of what effect the program has had on the reef. As I have said, though, it is modelled. The complication that arises is that, clearly, water quality in the reef fluctuates quite dramatically, particularly with a couple of really big wet seasons. We have had to use model data to get an average over the year. But we do have very good data on the areas where we have applied grants, the changed practice over those areas and the expected water quality outcome for them. Also, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority is continuing with its whole-of-reef monitoring. While people may well have views about other things that may be affecting the reef, including climate change, the impact of cyclones and all those sorts of things, we have very good data about the effectiveness of the interventions we have been making.

Answer:

The Reef Rescue program has provided financial assistance to more than 2500 land managers over 3.2 million hectares to date and is on track to meet Caring for our Country – Reef Rescue targets. More than 1100 farmers have undertaken projects to improve fertiliser, pesticide and soil management on over 500 000 hectares of land, representing 75 per cent of the five year farmer engagement target achieved after three years. Additionally, 480 graziers have improved groundcover management over 2.7 million hectares of land, representing 74 per cent of the five year grazier engagement target achieved after three years.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 87 (continued)

Progress towards Reef Plan (including Reef Rescue) goals and targets will be reflected in future report cards, the first of which is due later this year.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 88

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Catch data for migratory tuna species

Proof Hansard page: 47 (22/05/2012)

Senator MACDONALD asked:

Senator IAN MACDONALD: AFMA, I understand, have been and gone. If you do not have the detail they may have it, but could you perhaps take on notice the catch of the migratory tuna species associated with the central and western Pacific? What is the Australian data on the catch and where is it caught?

Mr Neil: It is mostly caught in the ETBF. Total allowable catches were set last year in that fishery based on the catch records for the fishery. There is a small amount beyond our EEZ but not a large amount. Certainly we have that information and we can give you that in detail.

Answer:

For all fleets that report to the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission the total catch in the Commission Area in 2010 of skipjack tuna was 1 706 166 metric tonnes. The total catch of yellowfin tuna for 2010 was 470 161 metric tonnes, for bigeye tuna the total catch for 2010 was 108 997 metric tonnes and the total catch for albacore tuna for 2010 was 129 670 metric tonnes. The total catch figures from the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Area for 2011 will be finalised at the Scientific Committee meeting in August 2012. Most of this catch comes from equatorial waters.

Australia's catch within the Western and Central Pacific Fisheries Commission Area for 2011 across the four main tuna species was 639.9 tonnes of albacore tuna, 381.6 tonnes of bigeye tuna, 2 tonnes of skipjack tuna and 1 809.5 tonnes of yellowfin tuna. For each tuna species more than 99 per cent of the catch by Australian boats was taken in the Australian Fishing Zone.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
 Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 90

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Workplans for harvest strategy

Proof Hansard page: 51(22/05/2012)

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: Let's go back to the harvest strategy. What resources have been put into that?

Mr Neil: ABARES are dedicating some effort to that. They will have some people working on it. As for CSIRO, we expect to involve them heavily in it because a lot of it is technical and scientific. It is about revising the decision rules that underpin harvest strategy and ensuring that the science that underpins it is the latest science and reflects international standards and the latest knowledge. I can give you what we have. It is the top priority in the domestic policy area for one of the sections, and for the other one their top priority is the bycatch. So between the two of them they are our two highest resourced exercises at the moment. We have not specifically allocated budgets to either of them, but there are plans in place for projects to underpin both sets of work and I can give that to you in writing if you wish.

Senator COLBECK: If you could take that on notice, that would be good. Is FRDC doing any work for you on the harvest strategy?

Answer:

Estimates of staff resources allocated by the Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences (ABARES) and the Sustainable Resource Management (SRM) Division for the review of the *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines* are provided in the table below:

ABARES Staff 2012–13	
Level	FTE
SES2	0.05
EL1 (Science)	0.05
EL2 (Science)	0.40
EL1 (Economist)	0.15
EL2 (Economist)	0.15
SRM Division Staff 2012–13	
EL2	0.6
EL1	0.6
EL1	0.3
APS 5	0.8
TOTAL	3.10

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 90 (continued)

The department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry is also funding three projects to provide expert technical work to support the review of the *Commonwealth Fisheries Harvest Strategy Policy and Guidelines* to a total of \$130 000. This includes \$22 000 for a literature study and review of world's best practice fisheries harvest strategy policy approaches by the Australian National Centre for Ocean Resources and Security (ANCORS) within the University of Wollongong; \$33 000 to extend an existing Fisheries Research and Development Corporation (FRDC) project (number 2011/251) that assesses the robustness and application of risk based approaches for managing bycatch, to other data poor situations; and a \$75 000 contribution to a Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation and ABARES application to FRDC for a project to review best practice science and economics for harvest strategies.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 91

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Aerial survey

Proof Hansard page: 52 (22/05/2012)

Senator COLBECK asked:

Mr Thompson: If it is the SBT aerial survey, we can provide some information. CSIRO actually manages that survey, as contracted by DAFF.

Senator COLBECK: We are getting close to the time for release of the data. Is it still being compiled? I am just interested to know what the results are. Can you give us the vibe of the thing—to quote a phrase?

Mr Thompson: I have not heard anything about the vibe of it at this time. I think in previous years there has been a bit of information out. We always prefer to wait until the data has been analysed by CSIRO so that it takes into account all the factors. But my understanding is that the survey is still running on time and being completed in the normal manner.

Dr O'Connell: Perhaps we could take it on notice for—

Answer:

The 2011–12 Southern Bluefin Tuna Aerial Survey is being undertaken by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) on behalf of the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF). The results of the 2011–12 Southern Bluefin Tuna Aerial Survey will be presented to the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna Extended Scientific Committee meeting to be held on 27–31 August 2012 in Tokyo, Japan.

The final report is due to the DAFF on 30 November 2012.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
 Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 92

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy
Proof Hansard page: 53 (22/05/2012)

Senator COLBECK asked:

Mr Neil: The recreational industry development strategy is being implemented largely through research which is being managed by FRDC. There are some 10 projects and they are all progressing, but they are all still not at a point of reporting.

Senator COLBECK: When are they due?

Mr Neil: They have various dates. I can give you that in detail but I do not have it with me.

Senator COLBECK: If you take it on notice, that will be fine. There was something else in relation to tuna, but I just cannot think exactly what it was. When is the next decision-making timetable around quotas for southern bluefin?

Answer:

1. Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy projects:

Project Title	Expected completion date
A coordinated national data collection for recreational fishing in Australia	June 2013
National recreational fishing education program	July 2014
Identifying the health and wellbeing benefits of recreational	August 2012
Expanding the future leaders program in recreational fishing	December 2012
National recreational fishing conference	April 2013
Implications of climate change for recreational fishers and the recreational fishing industry	July 2013
A national program for the roll-out of angel rings	November 2013
Improved consultations between government and the recreational fishing sector	Complete
Developing a methodology for obtaining regular, statistically robust estimates of recreational and charter fishing catch of southern bluefin tuna in Australian waters	Project has combined with a larger project expected to be completed in mid 2014
Monitoring the recreational take of shark species in Australian waters	August 2012

2. The 2013 stock assessment, performed by the Commission for the Conservation of Southern Bluefin Tuna Scientific Committee, will guide the decision-making process for southern bluefin tuna quotas for 2014 and the management procedure output for setting quotas for 2015–2017.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 128

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Budget projections for mercury testing in fish and crustaceans

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator HEFFERNAN asked:

UNEP Global Binding Mercury Instrument. Australia is involved in the International process of finalizing a Binding Global Mercury Instrument to remove mercury from the environment.

Many research papers over the last 30+ years have identified mercury in fish in various areas:

- State of Habitat Availability and Quality in Inland Waters 1997 page 39;
- Mercury and Mining Pollution in the Upper Goulburn River – Monash University 1982;
- Vic EPA report 153 – Mercury in the food web of raspberry creek 1983;
- VicEPA report 195 – Mercury Survey of the Upper Goulburn River 1984;
- CSIRO Gippsland Lake Environmental Audit 1998

1. Can you please provide your budgetary projections for the next 10 years for the quantification of mercury in fish and crustaceans around Australia, and your separate budget provisions for signposting areas at risk similar to those that have been in place in the USA since 1980's? If not, why not, please provide details?

Answer:

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities (DSEWPaC) is the lead government agency for international negotiations to develop a global legally binding instrument on mercury, under the United Nations Environment Program. DSEWPaC also includes the National Pollutant Inventory, which tracks and reports on the environmental impacts of pollutants, including mercury.

The National Residues Survey, within the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF), undertakes testing for mercury in some species of fish and crustaceans. This testing is funded through levies. Its purpose is to maintain market access.

DAFF has no budget allocation for mercury testing for environmental reporting purposes.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 232

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Marine Bioregional Planning

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. A Fisheries Adjustment Policy and associated package is being developed, does DAFF or DSEWPaC have carriage of the policy and associated package?
2. Are you aware if there is any money allocated in the current budget papers for the Fisheries Adjustment Policy and associated package?

Answer:

The Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities has carriage of the application of the Fisheries Adjustment Policy and associated package to the proposed system of marine reserves.

The current Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry budget does not make provisions for the Fisheries Adjustment Policy and associated package. Questions about the current budget of other portfolios would need to be directed to the particular portfolio.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 233

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: National Weeds and Productivity Research Program

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. With the demise of the National Weeds Productivity Program, how will invasive plants in agriculture, forests, pastures and native vegetation be managed?
2. How will the Commonwealth deliver a national coordinated approach to weed control without this program?
3. What will be the management structure, will it report to the Minister?

Answer:

1. Invasive plants in Australia will continue to be managed at the national, state, territory, regional and individual landowners' level under the strategic framework provided by the Australian Weeds Strategy.
2. The Australian Government, along with all state and territory governments, will continue to discuss and review national weed management initiatives through the Australian Weeds Committee.
3. The Australian Weeds Committee provides policy advice on national weed matters to the National Biosecurity Committee, which reports up to the Primary Industries Standing Committee. In turn the Primary Industries Standing Committee supports the Council of Australian Governments' Standing Council on Primary Industries on priority matters including reform of the national biosecurity system.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 235

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Caring for our Country – impact of fishing

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. How much of the Caring for our Country budget will be allocated to fishing related activities?
2. How much of the Caring for our Country budget will be allocated to fishing industry?
3. One of the stated aims of the increased funding is to reduce the impact of fisheries on the resource base. What is the current impact of fisheries on the resource base?
4. What level of reduction of this impact is planned through this Caring for our Country funding?
5. How will the funding be delivered to fishers?

Answers:

1. Details of the arrangements and budget detail for the second phase of Caring for our Country are yet to be decided by the government. Targeted consultation with stakeholders on program design is currently underway.
2. Please refer to the answer to question 1.
3. The resource base refers to the overall marine environment that is essential to provide for a productive and sustainable fishery. Commercial fishing practices interact with the wider marine environment in a variety of ways including: increased mortality of non-target marine species; degradation of seabeds; and increased marine debris of various types. Such impacts will vary within the marine environment in any particular fishery and with the fishing practices applied within that fishery. As such, there is no single measure for the impact of fisheries on the resource base.
4. Please refer to the answer to question 1.
5. Please refer to the answer to question 1.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 239

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

Recreational Fishing Industry Development Strategy program included \$140 000 in additional estimates. Provide details of how this money has been spent, including specific activities and cost of each activity.

Answer:

The \$140 000 relates to two additional recreational fishing industry development strategy projects:

- \$100 000 for developing a methodology for obtaining regular, statistically robust estimates of recreational and charter fishing catch of southern bluefin tuna in Australian water.
- \$40 000 for monitoring the recreational take of shark species in Australian waters.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 255

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Caring for our Country

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. In light of reading the community submissions into the Caring for our Country review, where the majority of community and Landcare Groups submissions said the regional process had ignored them, or they felt they were not part of the process, or they felt they were disengaged, why is it that the overview written by your Department and clearly authorised by the Minister does not articulate those community views?
2. For the new Caring for our Country program, how will priorities be determined?
3. For the new Caring for our Country program, how will Landcare be involved in priority setting and delivery?
4. Has an independent financial analysis and comparison of all regional NRM bodies in Australian, including fixed costs, wages, staff numbers, full and part time, outstanding expenditure, outstanding debt, and transaction costs for delivery of projects been undertaken.
5. If so, please provide details.
6. What specific outcomes from the expenditure of the Caring for our Country program will be able to be included in the next State of Environment Report?

Answers:

1. A number of statements in the Executive Summary reflect the diversity of community views about the regional process. These include:
 - ‘The evidence suggests that generally, regional natural resource management organisations are effectively building and maintaining relationships with natural resource management groups in their regions; and are providing leadership, valuable knowledge and on-going engagement of stakeholders in regional prioritisation and decision making. That said, the review noted uneven standards of governance and community engagement among regional natural resource management organisations’ (p6).
 - ‘Stakeholder feedback has suggested that more consultation should accompany the setting of outcomes and targets, which ought to reflect an amalgam of scientific and community experiences and take into account the knowledge and expertise of regional natural resource management organisations’ (p6).

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 255 (continued)

- ‘There could be changes to the program design which would improve efficiency further such as:
 - establishing mechanisms to ensure more consistency and continual improvement in the performance of regional natural resource management organisations’ (p7).
- 2. The overarching strategic objectives for the new Caring for our Country program have drawn on the feedback received from stakeholders during the Review. The five year priorities will be developed following targeted consultations with stakeholders and will include scientific advice where appropriate.
- 3. All levels of Landcare representation have been invited to provide input to developing the detailed outcomes and priorities for the new program through the consultation process. Peak Landcare organisations at national and jurisdictional-levels, will be invited to face-to-face consultation meetings and Landcare groups will have the opportunity to provide feedback online or through contact with regionally-based staff.
- 4. No.
- 5. N/A.
- 6. The content of the report is determined by the Department of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities and it’s ministerially appointed State of the Environment Committee. The five year period it will report on is expected to include outcomes from Caring for our Country, where relevant.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 256

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Weeds of National Significance

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. Are all states participating in the new Weeds of National Significance program?
2. If not, which states are not participating and what are the consequences of a lack of national participation in this program?
3. When and how will management committees be selected for the WoNS groups?
4. Have there been any reviews of the WoNS program.
5. If so:
 - a. what did the review cost?
 - b. who did the review?
 - c. who managed the consultancy?
 - d. is the review a public document and where can it be found?
 - e. how are the results being used?

Answer:

1. All states and territories agreed to the listing of twelve additional Weeds of National Significance earlier this year and are participating in the coordinated management of these weeds according to their jurisdictional budgets and priorities.
2. Not applicable.
3. This is a matter for state and territory governments.
4. No.
5. Not applicable.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 257

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Australian Weeds Committee

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator COLBECK asked:

1. What is the annual cost of running the Australian Weeds Committee?
2. Has the value of this committee been assessed through an independent review?
3. If so, what were the outcomes?

Answer:

1. Provision of administrative, policy and technical services approximate 0.5 FTE (EL1), 0.1 FTE (EL2) plus minimal allowance for travel costs on an annual basis.
2. No.
3. Not applicable.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 278

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Australian Feral Camel Management Project

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

1. I refer you to written question on notice 116; the department provided a figure of \$212 per head to kill camels using a fully absorbed cost accounting basis the Australian Feral Camel Management Project.
 - a. How many camels killed is this based on?
 - b. Did that include contributions from the State and Territory Governments?
 - c. Of the states contributions, how much has been spent to date?
2. Based solely on the Commonwealth's financial contribution for the first 2 years of \$10.6m and culling 36 340 camels this works out to be \$291.69 per head (based on figures provided during discussion at February estimates). If the States and Territories contributions over the 2 years are included the figure then rises to \$418.55 per head (this doesn't include WA's contribution as this is uncosted)
 - a. Can the significant differences in the cost per head to cull the camels be explained?
3. Has the department assessed any fluctuations in the dingo/wild dog populations in the area where the camels are being culled?
4. If none, what are the estimated/projected population fluctuation of wild dogs and dingoes in the camel cull areas?
5. Is the Department doing any research on the increase of other feral animal populations impacted by the camel cull?
6. If so, under what programme and how is it being funded? What is this costing?
7. Does the Department plan on reviewing the effectiveness of the Ninti One project at any time throughout the programmes life?
8. With reference to page 47 of the Caring for our Country Report on the Review of the Caring for our Country Initiative: "Another successful example of a project being undertaken by a directly sourced delivery agent is the \$19 million Feral Camel Management Project... A project manager was directly sourced for the project and has enlisted 19 project partners...positive outcomes resulting from projects funded using this investment approach demonstrate that this investment approach has been an effective and flexible mechanism for investing in natural resource management."
 - a. Only 36 000 camels have been culled in the first two years of a four year program that planned to cull 350 000. Would you call only achieving roughly 10 % of your target a good outcome?

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 278 (continued)

9. Provide the expressions of interest/application for funding documents and the MERI (reporting) documents for the Australian Feral Camel Management Program
10. What is the size of the land owned by the Commonwealth or any Commonwealth agency that Ninti One is undertaking the camel cull on? What is this a percentage of the total amount of land Ninti One is operating over?
11. In an open letter to Yasir Khan from Al Jazeera (23 May 2012), Ninti One state:
“The form of feral camel removal is ultimately determined by the landholders themselves; it is not a Ninti One decision.”
 - a. As 42 % of the feral camel range is vacant Crown land, the Commonwealth is a major landholder in this project. Has the Commonwealth stipulated aerial culling as its preferred method of camel removal?
 - b. If so, why?
 - c. Does the Department have copies of the agreements between Ninti One and the landholders regarding their preferred method of camel cull? If so please provide these (or one if they are the same)
12. Provide a list of organisations, individuals, businesses and government agencies who are on the AFCMP Steering Committee
13. Can any individual or organisation join the AFCMP Steering Committee?
14. If not, what criteria have to be met to be on the Steering Committee?
15. In their open letter Ninti One state, “Ninti One has had numerous discussions with commercial use proponents about AFCMP activities and how industry can engage with landholders”
 - a. Which commercial use proponents have Ninti One had discussions with?
 - b. Has the Department put any conditions on the funding Ninti One has received from the Department that would prevent it from supporting a commercial operator through a freight, logistics or holding subsidy?
16. Does the Ninti One operation meet Standard Operating Procedure (CAM002) for the aerial shooting of feral camels?
17. If not, does it meet another Standard Operating Procedure and if so, which one?
18. If the Ninti One operation does not comply with a Standard Operating Procedure, why not?
19. What is the impact on this programme of the South Australian Government completing their funding of National Feral Camel Action Plan in Aboriginal lands and rangelands of \$1.1 m (as stated in the 2012 Budget)?

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 278 (continued)

Answer:

1 a) The \$212 figure was based on 50 000 camels removed – the reported camel removal figures had increased from the 36 340 advised at the February 2012 Additional Estimates hearing.

b) No

c) We have no information on state and territory expenditure – the question should be directed to the relevant jurisdictions.

2 a) Yes – please refer to the answer to Question 1.

3 No

4 The department does not have any evidence to suggest that the culling of feral camels through the Caring for our Country project is leading, or would lead, to an explosion in the dingo/wild dog population. Culling operations are planned to avoid providing a continuous supply of carrion in any one locality.

5 No.

6 Not applicable.

7 Yes.

8 a. The primary objective of the project is the mitigation of the damage to environmental, economic and social assets and amenity caused by feral camels through a reduction in their density in and around key environmental assets. The project is on track to report end-of-project feral camel densities at or below target levels at around 50 per cent of the priority environmental assets, and significant density reductions for the remaining priority environmental assets, subject to continuation of favourable weather conditions.

The project has achieved acceptable outcomes at this stage of the project in terms of immediate environmental gains and laying the foundations for on-going coordinated feral camel management to protect a range of community assets and values.

The ‘number of camels removed’ is not a formal Target within the terms of the Funding Agreement between the Australian Government and Ninti One Ltd. Nonetheless, the number of camels removed in Year 1 was well in excess of expectations. Both commercial and non-commercial removal operations in Year 2 were severely affected by the unseasonal and extended wet weather that affected both the mobbing behaviour of the camels and the ability on project partners to undertake removal operations, and project efforts were directed towards developing the capacity of Indigenous people to manage feral camels on their lands.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 278 (continued)

- 9 The initial Expression of Interest from Ninti One Ltd., the approved project application, and the approved Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement Plan are attached (Attachment A, Attachment B, Attachment C respectively).
- 10 No substantive parcels of land owned by the Commonwealth have been subject to camel culling operations under this project. There has been no camel culling under the Caring for our Country project on either of the two areas managed or controlled by the Commonwealth.
- 11 a. Please refer to the answer to Question 10. The Crown Lands referred to are state and Northern Territory Crown Lands, not Commonwealth lands. The Australian Government has not stipulated aerial culling as the preferred method of camel removal.
b. Not applicable.
c. No.
- 12 Independent Chair-Mr Roger Smith
Members
-Australian Government (represented by the nominee of the Australian Government Land and Coasts)
-Animal welfare interests (represented by the nominee of the RSPCA)
-Commercial camel industry interests (represented by the nominee of the Australian Camel Industry Association)
-Indigenous interests/Traditional Owners (represented by the nominees of the Central Lands Council, the Kimberly Lands Council, the Western Desert Lands Aboriginal Council, the Kimberley Lands Council, Anangu Pitjantjatjara Yankunytjatjara Executive Board, and the Ngaanyatjarra Council Inc.)
-Northern Territory Government (represented by the nominee of the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, the Arts and Sport)
-Pastoral industry interests (represented by the nominee of the Northern Territory Cattlemans Association)
-Queensland Government (represented by the nominee of the Department of National Parks, Recreation, Sport and Racing)
-Regional natural resource management bodies (represented by the nominee of the Rangelands Alliance)
-South Australian Government (represented by the nominee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources)
-Western Australian Government (represented by the nominee of the Department of Agriculture)
-The nominee of the Vertebrate Pests Committee
-Individuals and businesses are neither represented on, nor have membership of, the project Steering Committee.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 278 (continued)

13 No.

14 The Funding Deed for the project requires that Ninti One Ltd. maintain a steering committee for the Project that includes:

- representatives from relevant State and Northern Territory agencies;
- representatives from the engagement partners, including Aboriginal partners; and
- a representative of the Vertebrate Pests Committee.

Ninti One Ltd. has the discretion to invite additional members.

15 a. Refer to the response to QoN 82 from Budget Estimates hearings May 2012.

- b. The Caring for our Country 2009–10 Business Plan advises that funding will not be provided for “direct subsidisation of commercial activities, business start-up or where the primary purpose is commercial gain”. Ninti One Ltd. is bound by this.

16 The model Standard Operating Procedures for the Aerial Shooting of Camels (CAM002) was developed by officers of the NSW Department of Primary Industries under the authority of the Vertebrate Pests Committee. This model Standard Operating Procedures is for guidance only.

Under the terms of the Funding Agreement, Ninti One Ltd was obliged to develop standard operating procedures for aerial culling operations and to bind all relevant project partners and service providers to compliance with these. The project’s standard operating procedures for the aerial shooting of camels are derived from the model *Standard Operating Procedures for the Aerial Shooting of Camels* (CAM002).

17 Please refer to the answer to Question 16.

18 Not applicable.

19 We understand that the relevant South Australian agency has some additional funds at its disposal and will remain active in feral camel management in the rangelands and on Indigenous lands in South Australia in 2012–13, and will be working with Ninti One Ltd. and with interstate colleagues as appropriate.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 279

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Report on the Review of the Caring for our Country initiative

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

With reference to page 48 of the *Report on the Review of the Caring for our Country Initiative*:

“They (community groups) see no evidence that the departments tap into the recommendations and suggestions made by grantees in their project reports. They believe reports should be made back to the community so that they can be assured that the information is being used and that outcomes are being achieved...Many of these issues have been addressed in the last 12 months and continuous improvement is taking place.”

1. What is the Department doing to ensure that stakeholder feedback/suggestions/criticisms are taken on board and responded to in a transparent, concise and timely manner as the Caring for our Country program continues? Do you have any examples?

Answer:

Stakeholder feedback to improve the delivery of Caring for our Country has been sought and incorporated since the initiative commenced in 2008.

Every Caring for our Country project report is reviewed by Australian Government Land and Coast project managers, with particular emphasis placed on the *Lessons Learned* section of the reporting template. Project managers are encouraged to identify key issues from these reports that may be impacting on the ability of a project to deliver on agreed outcomes.

Some improvements to the program that have been made as a result of feedback include: reducing red-tape by reducing unnecessary levels of detail on application forms and funding deeds; and introduction of the Community Action Grants and Regional Landcare Facilitators.

Cumulative progress against each of the initiative’s five-year outcomes is reported back to the community through the annual report cards. The report cards are compiled using data and other information submitted by proponents in their six-monthly progress reports.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 279 (continued)

In addition, departmental project managers develop case studies to highlight successful project outcomes and innovative practices to share findings and best practice with the broader community. Examples of projects highlighted in this way include:

- *A collaborative approach to improving land protection outcomes for erosion prone soils on Eyre Peninsula*
- *Development of best management practices for no-till cropping systems in the high rainfall zone of Victoria*
- *Building profitable NRM outcomes with perennial pastures on beef and sheep farms*
- *Anindilyakwa Rangers working to protect Groote Eyelandt archipelago's unique natural resources and cultural values*

These case studies have been included on the Caring for our Country website at www.nrm.gov.au.

Over 2 000 other publications can be accessed from the Caring for our Country website, including reports, trial results and supporting information gathered from Caring for our Country projects. By making these reports publicly available, Caring for our Country has enabled new projects to build on the lessons learned from previous investment in natural resource management.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 280

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Caring for our Country – conflict of interest

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

1. Do organisations have a requirement to report conflicts of interest - Is there a requirement for associations to report to you if grant funds are going to be paid to committee members of said associations in remuneration for work done by the member for or on behalf of the association?
2. If this is the case, please provide all circumstances where this has occurred for South Australian based projects that have been awarded funding since and including the 2008-2009 financial year.

Answer:

1. Under the Caring for our Country 2012–13 Business Plan, applicants were required to declare that to the best of their knowledge, there are no real or likely to be perceived conflicts of interest contained in or associated with their project.

Where the Commonwealth becomes aware that conflicts of interest may exist in a project, special conditions can be incorporated into funding deeds. Special conditions can deal with grantee and third party conflicts of interest, and can oblige grantees to seek approval from the Commonwealth before engaging specified personnel.

Organisations are generally not required to report conflicts of interest to the Commonwealth. It is expected that organisations that are funded to undertake Caring for our Country business have the appropriate governance arrangements in place.

2. N/A

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 281

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Caring for our Country – National Partnership on Caring for our Country

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Budget Paper No. 3 (p 104) provides \$17.3m in 2011-12 and 2012-13 for South Australia on the National Partnership on Caring for our Country.

1. Can the Department outline who will receive this funding (State and/or Local Government – if Local Government, which ones)?
2. What will this funding be used for?
3. Is this additional funding or is out of the original funding allocation for Caring for our Country?

Answer:

1. The eight Regional Natural Resource Management Boards in South Australia are State Government statutory authorities and will receive funding from the department. They are
 - Adelaide and Mount Lofty Ranges Natural Resource Management Board
 - South Australian Murray Darling Basin Natural Resource Management Board
 - South East Natural Resource Management Board
 - Alinytjara Wilurara Natural Resource Management Board
 - Kangaroo Island Natural Resource Management Board
 - South Australian Arid Lands Natural Resource Management Board
 - Eyre Peninsula Natural Resource Management Board
 - Northern and Yorke Natural Resource Management Board
2. Funding supports a range of activities to deliver and report against identified Caring for our Country targets that may include:
 - supporting strategic projects that, for example, address landscape scale natural resource management priorities within the region
 - providing support for community groups to undertake local projects through for example, devolved grants or provision of facilitation and coordination services

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 281 (continued)

- assisting local communities including farmers, environmental, Indigenous, Landcare and Coastcare groups to access knowledge and skills to sustainably manage natural resources by providing, for example, information training
 - undertaking communication activities to increase broader community engagement in and understanding of natural resource management
 - adopting rigorous monitoring and evaluation processes to support continuous improvement
 - delivering timely and accurate reporting on the achievement of milestones and outcomes of projects
3. The eight South Australian Natural Resource Management Boards are funded from the original allocation for Caring for our Country.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 282

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: South Australian Natural Resource Management Boards
Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

1. Can the department please provide the Regional Investment Strategy, Expressions of Interest documents for 2011/12 for the SA NRM Boards?

Answer:

1. Documents provided (Attachments 1-8).

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 284

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Caring for our Country – Quantitative reporting

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

1. In response to written question on notice 37 from February Estimates, the DAFF states that Caring for our Country targets are quantitative targets. Does the Department agree that it is therefore reasonable to expect a quantitative figure to show that the target has been met?

2. Taking one example, and not intentionally picking on any NRM Board in particular, but the Northern and Yorke NRM Board in South Australia had an approved objective to:

Undertake one project to manage 10,800 Ha of native habitat on the Yappala Ranges Indigenous Protected Area, to reduce critical threats to biodiversity and enhance the condition, connectivity and resilience of habitats and landscapes.

They have reported to have achieved 100 per cent of this scheduled milestone/output.

In order to claim that they have achieved this, they held 1 workshop, assessed water points and fences, designed a trapping program and met with landholders. How does the department know that any of those 10 800 hectares are being managed differently?

The activities they undertook may have been useful and worthwhile but are not a quantitative result that matches the quantitative target.

3. This 10 800 hectares the N&Y NRM Board are claiming to have better managed is meant to be contributing to the broader Caring for our Country target. How can the DAFF accurately assess that the management of this land has been improved when it has only held a few workshops and without knowing if the land managers have indeed changed their practices?

Answer:

1. The Department of Agriculture, fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) does expect quantitative and qualitative reporting for each Caring for our Country project.

In turn, the Australian Government produces an annual report card which highlights the quantitative and qualitative achievement against the Caring for our Country five year outcomes. This includes a summary of achievements for a particular year and overall progress since the program commenced in 2008.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 284 (continued)

2. The achievement of the objective in the Northern and Yorke NRM Board example is not due until 30 June 2012. A range of activities are expected, including: raising the capacity of Aboriginal community members in the Yappala Ranges Indigenous Protected Area to undertake on-ground activities; removal of priority infestations of Boxthorn and other pest animal refuges over 2 700 hectares; trapping and removal of feral goats over the 10 800 hectares and; undertaking fox and feral cat control over the 10 800 hectares.

Increased capacity is being achieved through weed and pest animal control workshops. The first workshop was conducted in November 2011 and the second workshop is planned to be delivered by November 2012.

As part of the agreed reporting process, DAFF will be seeking a written account of the extent and nature of activities undertaken and confirmation that the 10 800 hectares have been managed differently, as agreed.

3. A Monitoring, Evaluation, Reporting and Improvement (MERI) plan is negotiated and agreed with the grant recipient at the commencement of the project. The MERI plan identifies the target rationale, activities, assumptions, risks and the strategies that will be used by the grantee to deliver on agreed targets. It also defines the process that the grantee will use to monitor project progress, including the type of information that will be provided by the grantee in their reporting.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 285

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Caring for our Country: core operating expenses

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

1. How does the DAFF monitor that only 10 per cent of base level funding is spent on organisational core operating expenses?
2. With regard to surplus base-level funds, how often do NRM Boards apply to use these on alternative activities? How much is used on alternate activities as a percentage of base level funds expended?

Answers:

1. All regional bodies are required to report regularly on both activities achieved and funds used. They provide an annual financial project report that is either completed by an independent auditor or a copy of their fully audited financials supporting specific project acquittal which is authorised by the Chief Executive Officer (or equivalent) and the Chief Finance Officer .
2. In the event that regional bodies have achieved their specified Caring for our Country targets they may apply to use any surplus funding towards achieving more of the same target or another target. Surplus funding is only available for alternative activities that address a Caring for our Country target. Approval from the appropriate Caring for our Country delegate is required before conducting this work.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 286

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Australian Landcare Council

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

1. In relation to research commissioned by (Australian) Landcare (Council) at Meeting 51 (13-14 February 2012), how did DAFF come to the decision that this research was missing or necessary?
2. A quick search brought up several pieces of research that seem very similar to the research that has been commissioned by (Australian) Landcare (Council). Can the Landcare Council briefly review the three papers below and outline why these papers don't answer Landcare's questions about Indigenous involvement in NRM? The three papers:
 - Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research published working paper No.60 in 2009 called – "Social Benefits of Aboriginal Engagement in Natural Resource Management" written by J. Hunt, J.C. Altman & K. May
 - Toni Bauman and Dermot Smyth 2007, "Indigenous Partnerships in Protected Area Management in Australia: Three case studies" The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies
 - J. Hunt Working Paper No. 75/2010 for Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research "Looking After Country in New South Wales: Two Case Studies of Socioeconomic Benefits for Aboriginal People"
3. On the 16th of November 2010 in the Australian Landcare Council Annual Report, the Minister asked the council to investigate on six Landcare and NRM matters and on 30 June 2011 asked them to report on one additional matter.
 - a. Has the Minister received this advice? If not when does the Minister anticipate receiving it?
 - b. Is it publicly available?
 - c. What has it been used for?
4. With regard to the Australian Landcare Council Update Meeting 51 (Canberra, 13-14 February 2012), the ALC appointed a consultant to identify successes and barriers that have been identified in association with Indigenous land management in Australia.
 - a. What is the cost associated with this?
 - b. What was the consultant's brief? Can this be provided?
 - c. When is the consultant due to report back?

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 286 (continued)

5. At the Australian Landcare Council Update Meeting 51 (Canberra, 13-14 February 2012), consultant was engaged to produce a report illustrating the multiple benefits and outcomes of NRM and Landcare.
 - a. What is the cost associated with this?
 - b. What was the consultant's brief? Can this be provided?
 - c. When is the consultant due to report back?

6. Australian Landcare Council members attended the NZ Landcare Conference.
 - a. What was the cost to send these members? Please provide a breakdown of costs
 - b. How many went?
 - c. What was learnt, gained or achieved during this visit?
 - d. What are the deliverables?

Answer:

1. The Australian Landcare Council (the council) determined to undertake research projects to assist in the provision of ministerial advice on:
 - Arrangements for better engaging Indigenous people in natural resources management (NRM)
 - The role Landcare can play in improving the resilience of regional and remote communities, particularly in the face of natural disasters.

Through its current members' skill set and experience the council determined that while there has been research in these areas there was not an obvious single report that brought together relevant learnings and information from across Australia. The council commissioned two research projects to collate information on:

 - The successes and barriers associated with Indigenous Land Management in Australia, and
 - Multiple benefits from natural resource management and Landcare.

2. The reports identified by Senator Edwards are included in the research project's bibliographic data-base which currently includes 504 papers. The three papers identified do not provide an assessment of the full "diversity, scope and extent" of Indigenous land management in Australia, nor an up-to-date assessment of the published information about barriers and success factors. The papers are being considered with many other sources in the drafting of the consultant's report.

3. a) Minister Ludwig was provided with advice on the seven key NRM and Landcare priorities in May 2011.
b) No.
c) The council's advice to Australian Government Ministers is provided to their respective departments to assist with the formulation of policy and program design.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 286 (continued)

4. a) \$65 907 (GST incl).
b) The Terms of Reference for the project are available on the council's webpage.
c) The final report is scheduled to be delivered by 29 June 2012.
5. a) The approved budget for this project is \$69 500 (GST incl).
b) The Terms of Reference for the project is available on the council's webpage.
c) It is expected that the final report will be finalised by the end of October 2012.
6. a) \$25 792.35 (including GST where applicable)

Flights	\$ 11 166.75
Registration	\$ 1 768.80
Travel Allowance and Expenses	\$ 2 516.13
Accommodation	\$ 2 240.67
Sitting fees	\$ 8 100.00
Total	\$ 25 792.35

- b) 4
- c) Key findings from attendance at the conference are highlighted in the participants' report found on the council's webpage.
- d) The conference experience and learnings by members will contribute to the development of the council's advice including:
- o Understanding alternative arrangements for engaging broader stakeholders groups, such as the Land and Water Forum which brings together a wide range of viewpoints to develop a common direction for land use and freshwater management in New Zealand and to provide advice to the Government. Stakeholders participating in the forum include the agri-business sector, Maori interests, environmentalists, power companies, tourism and recreation, and community representatives with central and local government observers
 - o Members will seek to maintain contact and share information with a range of key individuals. For example the co-governance model that has been established for the
 - o Waikato River is an example from New Zealand that may inform existing or new models for engaging a wide range of stakeholders in Australia.
 - o Members will also investigate the possibility of continuing the exchange of information with New Zealanders on issues or examples relevant to Landcare in Australia.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 291

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Landcare

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator MCKENZIE asked:

- a. How is the \$8.4 million for facilitators across 56 Landcare expected to be spent?
- b. What are the expected costs/wages of each facilitator?
- c. How is the \$1.3 million to deliver “training workshops, field days, forums, road shows and info sessions” going to be allocated?
- d. Will every Landcare area receive funds?
- e. What will the criteria be?

Answer:

- a. The Australian Government has committed \$8.4 million to fund a full time equivalent Regional Landcare Facilitator in each of the 56 natural resource management regions across Australia. Each Regional Landcare Facilitator host organisation receives funding of up to \$150 000 per year to be spent on facilitator salary and on-costs, office and service overheads, travel, training and conference attendance, host organisation administration costs and operational costs.
- b. The expected cost of each facilitator is up to \$150 000 per year. The salary is determined by each host organisation but is typically between \$60 000 and \$100 000 per year.
- c. Of the \$1.3 million, \$840 000 has been allocated to allow each natural resource management (NRM) region to access \$15 000 in 2012–13 for Regional Landcare Facilitators (RLFs) to undertake a range of regionally focused communication activities, including workshops, information sessions, farm visits, field days and providing communications material, to deliver Carbon Farming Initiative (CFI) information to farmers and land managers. Under these grants, RLFs are required to carry out at least three communications activities to disseminate and/or arrange the delivery/distribution of information on the CFI.

The remaining funding will be used to develop, produce and distribute communications materials on the CFI, provide ongoing up-skilling of the RLFs and for the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry to host an annual forum for RLFs to share their experiences and knowledge.

- d. All existing host organisations of RLFs are eligible for funding.

All existing RLF host organisations have been offered a grant for funding to participate in the CFI Communications Program. As of 15 June 2012, 52 of the 56 NRM host organisations have accepted a grant.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 291 (continued)

- e. The CFI Communications Program grant guidelines that explain the criteria for the funding were released in December 2011
(www.daff.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0012/2101413/grant-program-guidelines.pdf).

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 292

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Caring for Country

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator MCKENZIE asked:

There's an amount of \$583 000 for Vic DSE under Caring for our Country grants.

- a. What exactly does this project involve? Please provide more detail than available in the project overview.
- b. What do the livestock grazing actions involve? Do they include any research?
- c. How is this livestock grazing made possible?
- d. When is this project running/due to finish?

What will the outcomes of the project inform?

Answer:

The project in question appears to be application no OC12-00502 "Strengthening ecological resilience in North East Victoria" submitted by the Victorian Department of Sustainability and Environment for funding of \$583 000 (GST inclusive) in the 2011–12 grants funding round.

This project was announced by Minister Burke on 8 February 2012 however the offer of funding was declined by the applicant.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 304

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Weed management funding

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator NASH asked:

At the time funding was announced for this program in 2010 Minister Joe Ludwig stated '*Weeds are one of the most significant land degradation challenges facing rural Australia, with a cost to the economy estimated at about \$4 billion a year*'. According to budget papers the program cost \$4 million to operate in 2011-12. Given the estimated cost to our economy of \$4 billion per year can you explain why funding at a cost of \$4 million per year was not considered a worthwhile investment?

Answer:

The National Weeds and Productivity Research Program was a \$15.3 million measure over four years that concluded on 30 June 2012. The Australian Government remains committed to supporting weed research. Government investment will continue at different levels and in different ways through CSIRO, Rural Research and Development Corporations and agricultural Cooperative Research Centres (CRCs) such as the National Plant Biosecurity CRC. Decisions on individual measures are taken in the context of the government's overall responsibilities and commitments.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 308

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Australian Feral Camel Management Program

Proof Hansard page: Written

Senator EDWARDS asked:

1.
 - a. What is the Department's most recent estimate of the feral camel population in Australia?
 - b. Where is this figure sourced from? What methodology has been used to calculate this figure?
 - c. What is the current recruitment rate, how many units extra per annum are going into the population?
2.
 - a. What is the calculated cost damage to the Australian economy of the feral camel population?
 - b. What is the calculated cost damage to the rural populations in regional areas?
3. Has the Department calculated the number of camels that need to be culled each year in order to maintain a constant manageable number? If so, how many camels need to be culled each year in order to maintain the camel population?
4.
 - a. Outline Ninti One's role and responsibilities with regard to the Australian Feral Management Program.
 - b. What was Ninti One's original brief/scope?
5.
 - a. Does Ninti One have other sources of income?
 - b. Does Ninti One receive any federal funding aside from the funding it has received for the AFCMP?
6. Of the camels that have been removed thus far, how many have been:
 - mustered (detail who has mustered them, where they have been relocated to and for what purpose)
 - exported (through the live export trade and to which countries)
 - shot (how many have been aurally shot and by who or how many have been shot from the ground and by who)?
 - shot from aerial platforms (by who)If possible break down the method by which the camels were removed on a State/Territory basis
7. Of the 70 000 camels that have been removed thus far (based on figures provided at Budget Estimates, on Tuesday 22 May 2012), how many have been removed by:
 - Northern Territory Parks and Wildlife
 - South Australian Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 308 (continued)

- A federal agency or an employee of a federal agency
 - Any individual or company contracted by either a state, territory or federal government (specify the individual or company as appropriate)
 - Any other private contractor
8. If there were camels removed by a private contractor either directly or indirectly engaged by Ninti One or the Department, what was the cost per head quoted by the private contractor?
 9. If there were no camels removed by private contractors, why haven't any private contractors been engaged to date?
 10. Has Ninti One provided funds to any government agency/department? If so, which department/agency and for what purpose?
 11.
 - a. Does the Department have any contractual arrangement with Ninti One? If so what is it?
 - b. Is the Department aware of any contractual arrangement Ninti One has with another government agency/department? If so with whom and for what purpose?
 12. How many private contractor tenders have been issued, since the commencement of Ninti One management not including Rural Solutions singular tender?
 13. How many private proposals have Ninti One received for aerial shooting? How many private proposals has the Department received for aerial shooting?
 14. How many validation shoots have been conducted? What was the duration and cost of the validation shoots and the results?
 15. What is the cost of the Judas project, if any?
 16. How much funding has been allocated to research under the AFCMP?
 17. How much funding has been allocated to administration under the AFCMP?
 18. What is the actual cost of administration to date:
To the Department
To Ninti One
 19.
 - a. How many persons work in administrating the project by State and under Ninti One?
 - b. What are their areas of responsibility?

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 308 (continued)

20. a. Has the department investigated the carbon abatement opportunity of culling camels?
 - b. Has the department estimated the approximate value per camel in relation to its carbon abatement potential?
 - c. Has the department had any discussions with any company about the carbon abatement opportunity of the camel cull?
21. a. Has Biosecurity been involved in the AFCMP?
 - b. If so, what has its role been?

Answer:

1. a. The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre estimated the feral camel population to be of the order of 953 000 in 2008
(refer: 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 from: www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/resource/DKCRC-Report-47-Managing-the-impacts-of-feral-camels-in-Australia_A-new-way-of-doing-business.pdf).
 - b. The estimate was derived from a statistical analysis of aerial survey data; technically, a Krigging interpolation of the known aerial survey population density distribution.
 - c. The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre estimated an annual rate of increase of 10 per cent per year. On this basis, there would be an additional 100 000 camels per annum.
2. a. and b. The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre has, on the basis of surveys of affected land owners/managers, estimated the economic costs of feral camels to be of the order of \$10 million per annum. The net cost of feral camels to the Australian economy has not been estimated.
3. No. The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre has recommended that feral camels be managed to a long-term target density of 0.1–0.2 camels/km² in order to mitigate broad scale negative impacts on infrastructure and on plant species that are highly susceptible to camel browsing. The Australian Government's priority under the Caring for our Country program is to manage the density of feral camels in and around priority environmental assets.
4. a. Ninti One Ltd. was the successful applicant for a grant for the delivery of the Caring for our Country Feral Camel Management Project. As such, they are responsible for the management and delivery of the project. The primary objective of the project is managing the impacts of feral camel populations already established in the landscape through a reduction in their densities in and around priority environmental assets.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 308 (continued)

Ninti One Ltd. is required to undertake the following activities in delivering the Caring for our Country Feral Camel Management Project:

- (i) camel control/removal;
 - (ii) engagement with land managers (including pastoralists and Indigenous people) to increase their awareness of the adverse impacts of feral camels, to assist them to develop on-going camel management strategies, and undertake camel removal actions; and
 - (iii) project performance monitoring and reporting.
- b. The Caring for our Country Business Plan 2009–10 invited Expressions of Interest or Project Proposals against a range of Five-year Outcomes and associated Targets (refer Caring for our Country Business Plan 2009–10 , available from: www.nrm.gov.au/funding/business-plan/previous-plans.html).

The principal Target for feral camels was:

To protect the identified refuges for biodiversity in northern and remote Australia that are under threat from camels, by reducing the density of the camel populations in the surrounding areas to less than 0.1 animal per km² over the next two years.

5. a. Yes, as a not-for-profit organisation, Ninti One undertakes work for a variety of clients to build opportunities for people in remote Australia.
- b. Yes.
6. Of the camels removed to date:
- Over 4 000 feral camels have been mustered under the Caring for our Country project to date. Mustering ceased when the Peterborough abattoir was no longer available to process camels and with the onset of the extended period of wet weather. With the recent recommencement of camel processing at Peterborough abattoir, significant mustering activity under the project has resumed and the current rate of removal through mustering is expected to increase.
 - No camels were exported through this project.
 - Approximately 60 000 feral camels have been removed through aerial-based culling. It is a State/Territory government requirement that this form of removal is conducted by accredited government marksmen. The helicopters and pilots are provided by private contractors. A further 10 500 feral camels have been removed through ground-based culling to supply the commercial petmeat trade. This involved allowing a private contractor to work on Aboriginal lands.
- State/Territory government project partners contribute their own funds and in-kind contributions in addition to the Commonwealth funds in order to participate in the projects and achieve their outcomes as determined under their own requirements. Consequently their consent is required for the release of a State/Territory breakdown of the methods by which camels were removed. This information is not available at this time.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 308 (continued)

7. At the time that the 70 000 camel removal figure was quoted:
 - the Northern Territory government had removed, and facilitated the removal of, 24 703 camels under the project;
 - the South Australian government had removed, and facilitated the removal of, 7 252 camels under the project;
 - federal agencies or employees of federal agencies removed no camels under the project;
 - individuals or companies contracted by either a state, territory or federal government removed no camels under the project (apart from use of private helicopters and pilots to support aerial shooting operations);
 - some Aboriginal organisations involved in the project have allowed access to their lands by private petmeating and mustering teams – approximately 10 500 camels have been removed for the petmeat trade, and approximately 4 000 mustered for sale for human consumption.

8. Neither the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) nor Ninti One Ltd. have engaged any private contractors to remove camels. All feral camels removed by private contractors have been by arrangement with the relevant land owner.

9. Not applicable – private contractors have not been involved in camel removal under the project.

10. Ninti One Ltd. has provided Caring for our Country Feral Camel Management Project funds to state/territory agencies, including
 - the Northern Territory the Department of Natural Resources, Environment, The Arts and Sport;
 - the South Australian Department of Primary Industries and Regions; and
 - the Western Australian Department of Agriculture; and
 - the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Servicefor feral camel removal and skills development activities. The Department has no knowledge of any financial arrangements that Ninti One Ltd. may have with state/territory agencies outside of the Caring for our Country Feral Camel Management Project.

11. a. Yes – a Funding Deed that defines the contractual relationship between the Australian Government and Ninti One Ltd. for the delivery of the Feral Camel Management Project.
b. Ninti One Ltd. is contracted by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education to manage the Remote Economic Participation Cooperative Research Centre. We are not aware of any contractual relationship that Ninti One Ltd. has with state/territory government agencies or departments, outside of the Caring for our Country Feral Camel Management Project.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 308 (continued)

12. Ninti One Ltd. has not run a tender round as part of its management of the project. Some project partners have run tender rounds, mainly to obtain aerial services (to support aerial culling and aerial survey operations) and to test a 'Market-Based Instrument' approach to feral camel management.
13. Ninti One Ltd. does not contract services for aerial culling. Those services are procured by the State/Territory agencies that are project partners.
14. There have been five verification runs of aerial culling, and these typically run for two days and cost around \$5 000 each. These verifications found that the humaneness of aerial removal was acceptable in all instances. The humaneness of mustering operations will similarly be subject to assessment at mustering, holding and transport stages.
15. The Caring for our Country Feral Camel Management Project deployed tracking collars on around 50 camels at a direct average deployment cost of around \$5 000 per camel. The monitoring costs over the next 12 months will be around \$15 000 for all transmitting collars.
16. None.
17. Please refer to the answer to the Question on Notice SRM04 from Additional Estimates February 2010 ([Attachment A](#)).
18.
 - a. The estimated cost to the departments of administration of the project is approximately \$200 000 over three years.
 - b. Around \$2 million has been allocated by Ninti One Ltd. to administration to date
19.
 - a. Ninti One Ltd. has 2.35 FTE involved in administration of the project.
 - b. Areas of responsibility of Ninti One Ltd. staff involved in administration of the project include: strategic guidance on project direction and governance; organisation and management of project meetings; contract and financial management; project reporting; and communication.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 308 (continued)

20. a. The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre canvassed carbon emission abatement opportunities associated with camel removal.
(refer: 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 from: www.desertknowledgecrc.com.au/resource/DKCRC-Report-47-Managing-the-impacts-of-feral-camels-in-Australia_A-new-way-of-doing-business.pdf).
- b. The Desert Knowledge Cooperative Research Centre estimated the 'cost' of carbon emissions from feral camels at \$13.87 million per year, assuming each camel emits 0.97 t of CO₂ per year, a value of \$15 per ton of CO₂ emitted and a total population of 953 000 camels. This \$13.87 million per year is a hypothetical figure as there is no regulated market – voluntary or mandated – for carbon emission abatement by removing feral camels.
- c. Yes; however in the absence of an approved methodology for calculating and verifying the abatement, such discussions were only exploratory.
21. a. Relevant staff within DAFF Biosecurity were consulted in developing the project design.
- b. As the primary objective of the project is managing the impacts of feral camel populations already established in the landscape, the DAFF Biosecurity functions of pre-border and border security and export regulation/quality assurance are marginal to the project as the project neither imports nor exports camels.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

ATTACHMENT A

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.

Please provide an estimation of hours spent on QON response for each officer involved.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

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.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Budget Estimates May 2012
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 313

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division
Topic: Review of the Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch
Proof Hansard page: 51-52 (22/05/2012)

Senator COLBECK asked:

Senator COLBECK: What about resourcing the process? What are you expecting to have to spend on the process?

Mr Thompson: I do not have the details of the work plan in front of me. We have a couple of staff working on it and we will be applying some additional funds to have some work done by ABARES and perhaps CSIRO, some consultancies or a couple of pieces of small research—literature research in many cases.

Senator COLBECK: Would you be looking to do some stuff through FRDC?

Mr Neil: We already are. We have a grant through FRDC to do some work at the moment.

Senator COLBECK: They are doing a project for you?

Mr Neil: Exactly. They are funding us to do some preliminary work.

Senator COLBECK: What is the value of that project?

Mr Neil: It is \$150 000. I need to confirm that for you. I would have to check.

Senator COLBECK: Could you come back to us on that? What are the specifics of that particular project?

Mr Neil: I do not have them with me. I can certainly get them for you.

Answer:

The Australian Government, through the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, has provided \$75 000 in tactical research funding for the project 'Review and analysis to assist the review of the Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch - Phase 1'. The project will be undertaken by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry and Australian Bureau of Agricultural and Resource Economics and Sciences as part of the review of the Commonwealth Policy on Fisheries Bycatch.

The aim of the project is to:

1. Assess the robustness and applicability of risk based approaches to bycatch management for species or groups of species, taking into account their biological status, data availability and other factors.
2. Evaluate the efficacy and appropriateness of reference points and structured decision rules in meeting the legislative and policy objectives for some bycatch species and/or groups.
3. Initially assess approaches to incorporating and addressing the potential cumulative impacts of fisheries' interactions with bycatch.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 315

Division/Agency: Sustainable Resource Management Division

Topic: Wild dog populations and funding

Proof Hansard page: 37 (22/05/2012)

Senator EDWARDS asked:

Senator EDWARDS: Has the department assessed the dingo wild dog populations in the area where the camels are being culled from a point of view of population explosion?

Mr Thompson: We will have to take that on notice, Senator. I am not aware of any particular study on that. It may well have done something through the CRC on invasive animals.

Senator EDWARDS: Is the provision of plentiful food resources creating another problem in the explosion of the wild dog population, which is in turn creating another pressure from a budgetary point of view, because we have now announced a wild dog reduction program? Is that right?

Mr Thompson: The Commonwealth is not funding a wild dog reduction program. Some states are, I think.

Dr O'Connell: You might be looking at South Australia.

Senator EDWARDS: Is that contributing? To rid ourselves of one environmental problem, we are creating another?

Dr O'Connell: I think it would be speculative, to be honest, at the moment to say—

Senator EDWARDS: Take it on notice. I am sure somebody has done some work. I do not expect you guys to answer that here and now. Can you also confirm that the Commonwealth is not providing funding to the wild dog eradication program or control program?

Answer:

No, the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (DAFF) has not assessed the dingo wild dog populations in the area where the camels are being culled. There is no evidence to suggest that the culling of feral camels through the Caring for our Country project is leading, or would lead, to an explosion in the dingo/wild dog population.

Anecdotal reports from Queensland, where environment agency staff are monitoring the breakdown of camel carcasses with fixed cameras and site-visits, is that they have observed minimal use of the carcasses by wild dogs.

There is no evidence to suggest that the situation would be any different in the more arid areas, where the more intensive camel culling operations are undertaken. Culling operations are, however, planned to avoid providing a continuous supply of carrion in any one locality.

All culling operations are undertaken with the explicit consent of the designated land managers and there is a low level of concern shown by local pastoral, Indigenous and conservation interests.

Rural and Regional Affairs and Transport Committee

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

Budget Estimates May 2012

Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry

Question: 315 (continued)

The Australian Government is not funding a substantive wild dog reduction program. However it has provided funding under the Caring for our Country initiative over the 2008–09 to 2012–13 period for strategic on-ground management of wild dogs. Such funding includes:

- \$104 600 in Community Action Grants for projects that have a significant component of wild dog management.
- \$100 000 in an Open Call Grant through the Business Plan.

In addition, at least six Queensland regional bodies have made investments in wild dog control through their base-line funding stream.

None of this funding has gone to wild dog control activities in areas where there have been significant feral camel culling operations.

DAFF has provided \$197 700 in funding between 2009–10 and 2011–12 for a National Wild Dog Management Facilitator through the Australian Pest Animal Research Program and the Invasive Animals Cooperative Research Centre, to promote and build capacity in developing and implementing strategic management approaches to manage the impact of wild dogs, however there is no operational component to this investment.