

**Australia's National Parks, Conservation Reserves and Marine Protected
Areas Senate Inquiry
Brisbane Hearing 21 April 2006**

Further information in relation to the Queensland Government submission and Hearing transcript:

1. To clarify references throughout the Hearing for ranger numbers, the following information is offered:

At 30 June 2001, QPWS employed 472 permanent rangers. 140 extra permanent rangers were recruited over the two years to June 2003, completing the Government's 2001 election commitment to employ 30 percent more permanent rangers.

Currently, occupied permanent ranger positions within QPWS exceeds 620, however there are periods when pending recruitment actions, staff on leave without pay, or staff on secondment may result in this number being lower. In addition, temporary and casual staff are employed as needed to support service delivery, usually on project-based work.

Rangers represent the majority of the QPWS workforce with terrestrial and marine managed areas in Queensland being staffed by more than 560 permanent ranger staff, with an estimated 480 of these rangers employed on activities focussed specifically on the protected area estate. Other permanent ranger positions provide conservation services and wildlife management off the QPWS managed estate.

Staff are located at around 130 locations, with more than 300 additional permanent (non-ranger) staff assisting with technical support, administration and management.

2. ECITA 9 - (clarify comment)

Comments: Senator RONALDSON – *Taking into account the updated information about the ranger numbers, how much has the national park estate increased since 2000?*

Mr Feely - *Since 2000, 7.5 million hectares.*

Senator RONALDSON - *Since 1998?*

Mr Feely - *Since 1998, we have added 780,000 hectares.*

Clarification: The total Protected Area Estate administered by the Queensland Parks and Wildlife in December 2005 was 7,749,536 hectares. The estate has increased by approximately 667,000 hectares since 2000 and 761,000 hectares since 1998.

3. ECITA 16 – (clarify comment)

Comment: Mr Feely - *We got \$1.5 million in 2004, \$2.7 in 2005 and \$4.25 million in 2006 for maintenance of roads in the wet tropics.*

Clarification: QPWS received a funding investment of \$1.5 million in 2004, \$2.7 million in 2005 and \$4.25 million in 2006 for the maintenance of roads and infrastructure, however this was not specific to the Wet Tropics area. \$1.5 million of this allocation was specifically for enhanced visitor facilities and roads in the Wet Tropics.

4. ECITA 17 – (clarify comment)

Comment: Mr Feely – *On dedicated projects. We spend more in our day-to-day business, but we have a dedicated set of projects that come to around \$4.5 million a year.*

Clarification: Funding for pest plant and animal management is provided as part of overall funding for QPWS estate management, and in excess of \$4.5 million will be spent in 2005-06 on this function, with \$1.5 million tied to specific projects targeted at Weeds of National Significance and Class 1 pests under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002*.

5. ECITA 19 – (further information)

Comment: CHAIR—On the weeds thing again: it might be outside parks and wildlife—and perhaps you could take this on notice—but is the state government doing more on the preventative side of things? You keep spending endless buckets of money trying to eradicate weeds whilst they are continually being sold through nurseries and elsewhere. It is similar with domestic animals and the desexing of cats and dogs, just to give an example. Are there specific things being done on that prescriptive, preventative side of things?

Information: Invasive species are a threat to the native biodiversity of Queensland and are an ongoing cost to agriculture, grazing and individuals and agencies with responsibility for land management. Weeds alone are estimated to cost Queensland around \$500 million every year.

The Australian Quarantine and Inspection Service is responsible for ensuring that no new species with the potential to become invasive species enter Australia. The management of existing weeds and the prevention of the introduction of new invasive species is addressed in key environmental and agricultural policies for the State and Federal governments.

In Queensland, landowners including Local Government and State agencies are required to control declared pest plants, including a statutory

requirement under the *Land Protection (Pest and Stock Route Management) Act 2002* to prepare pest management plans.

Management plans are prepared to help ensure that finite public resources are managed in an efficient and effective manner. Most importantly, they focus resources on the state's worst pests, where public expenditure has the potential to yield the greatest returns on investment.

Declared pest plants cannot be kept or sold without a permit granted by Department of Natural Resources, Mine and Water under specific conditions.

A copy of the Queensland Parks and Wildlife Pest Management Plan is attached for further information (Attachment 1).

6. ECITA 20 – (further information)

Comment: Senator Moore – *Where do we fit with money in Queensland in terms of salaries? If I am a ranger grade 3—or whatever the right term is—and we had been sharing resources with the Northern Territory, is it advantageous financially for someone to come to Queensland?*

Information: The following table lists the annual base wage and salary rates for ranger employees in Queensland. It does not include entitlements paid for superannuation, penalty rates, overtime, locality or other allowances.

Environmental Protection Agency			
Pay rates as at 20 May 2006			
Position Title	Class	Level	Base Annual Wage/Salary
Senior Ranger	A05	(4)	61,066
		(3)	59,441
		(2)	57,815
		(1)	56,185
Ranger in Charge or Ranger	007	(3)	58,616
		(2)	57,247
		(1)	55,877
Ranger in Charge or Ranger	006	(Q)	54,476
		(3)	53,312
		(2)	51,969
		(1)	50,612
Ranger in Charge or Ranger	005	(Q)	49,597
		(4)	48,481
		(3)	47,007
		(2)	45,533
		(1)	44,064
Ranger	004	(Q)	44,048
		(4)	42,932
		(3)	41,664
		(2)	40,380
		(1)	39,102
Ranger	003	(Q)	38,517
		(4)	37,435
		(3)	36,569
		(2)	35,731
		(1)	34,935
Ranger	002	(Q)	34,841
		(4)	34,320
		(3)	33,294
		(2)	32,267
		(1)	31,260

7. ECITA 23 – (clarify comment)

Comment: Mr Feely - *Having said that, that is the basis of the international target, as opposed to our statewide ones or the national target as part of the NRS.*

Clarification: The acquisitions are undertaken on the basis of the National Reserve System Program targets, not referenced to international targets.