

ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

QUESTIONS PRIOR TO HEARING

Department of Parks and Wildlife

Hon Lynn MacLaren MLC asked:

- 1) With regard to the table titled 'Service Summary' on page 536 and given continuing concerns for the protection of WA's biodiversity, habitats and ecological communities, what is the explanation for the cutting of funding to this service area from actual funding of \$80,009,000 in 2014-15, to \$72,780,000 in 2016-17?

Answer: There has been a net reduction in overall budget allocation to the department during this period which has resulted in budget adjustments to programs and services within the department. It should be noted that the majority of the budget reductions occurred in 2015-16 and the budgets for 2016-17 and across the forward estimates period are stable.

- 2) In regard to the table titled 'Services and Key Efficiency Indicators' on page 537, and in particular table 2 titled 'Conserving Habitats, Species and Ecological Communities,' please provide a list of the specific programs provided through this service area in each year including 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Answer: Service 2: Conserving Habitats, Species and Ecological Communities includes a broad range of programs that may either be specific to this outcome, or part of other programs for which this outcome is also achieved. These include programs related to:

- *appropriate legislative and policy frameworks;*
- *establishing and managing the conservation reserve system;*
- *conserving and managing species and ecological communities;*
- *sustainable use of natural resources;*
- *reducing impacts of key threatening processes;*
- *scientific investigations to improve biodiversity knowledge and wildlife management;*
- *collecting, storing and managing information and data; and*
- *improving public and stakeholder awareness, understanding and support.*

More detail of the programs within this Service are provided in the department's Annual Report and Yearbook.

- a) Please include with this answer the regions where each program was rolled out.

Answer: Programs delivered under Service 2 are implemented throughout all Parks and Wildlife regions and through centrally-based specialist branches and programs.

- b) Please provide a list of the number of FTE's employed in each program in each of the above years.

Answer: As staff work across multiple projects, it is not feasible to detail the FTE allocation to each program undertaken.

- c) Also in relation to Table 2, what is the reason for the reduction in Average Cost per hectare of Wildlife Habitat between 2014-15 and subsequent years?

Answer: The reduction in average cost per hectare is due to the reduction in the expenditure against this Service while the area of land being managed has remained relatively constant.

- 3) In regards to table 3 on page 537, titled '3. Conservation Partnerships,' please provide a list of the specific programs provided through this service area in each year, including 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17.

Answer: A large number and wide range of externally funded projects are delivered through Service 3. While more detail is provided in the department's Yearbook, project include:

- *Projects delivered under the Western Australian Biodiversity Institute and the Kimberley Marine Research Node of the Western Australian Marine Science Institution;*
- *Dirk Hartog Island National Park Ecological Restoration project;*
- *Operation Rangelands Restoration at Matuwa (Lorna Glen);*
- *Recovery actions benefiting threatened fauna including bilby, northern quoll, sandhill dunnart, southern marsupial mole, Carnaby's cockatoo, malleefowl and olive python;*
- *Marine mammal surveys on the Pilbara coast;*
- *Survey and monitoring of marine turtles, impacts of light, marine debris and climate change on these species in the Pilbara and Kimberley regions;*
- *Biological surveys of 50 Pilbara island nature reserves and the northern Great Victoria Desert.*
- *Investigating the impacts of fire regimes and fire mosaics on threatened birds and mammals in the Kimberley;*
- *Translocations to establish new populations, fencing, fire management, weed and herbivore control contributing to recovery of 99 species of threatened flora;*
- *Banksia woodland restoration on the Swan Coastal Plain; and*
- *Project Dieback that has identified the top 100 priority protection areas.*

- a) Please include with this answer the regions where each program was rolled out.

Answer: Programs delivered under Service 3 are implemented throughout all Parks and Wildlife regions and through centrally-based specialist branches and programs.

- b) Please provide a list of the number of FTEs employed in each program in each of the above years.

Answer: As staff work across multiple projects, it is not feasible to detail the FTE allocation to each program undertaken.

ESTIMATES AND FINANCIAL OPERATIONS COMMITTEE

QUESTIONS PRIOR TO HEARING

Department of Parks and Wildlife

Hon Robin Chapple MLC asked:

1) The Government announced \$22 million for the creation and management of new marine and national parks in the Kimberley in the budget, can the Minister provide:

a) a breakdown of which parks they are funding;

Answer: The funding is for the following marine and national parks in the Kimberley:

- *North Kimberley Marine Park;*
- *Lalang-garram / Horizontal Falls Marine Park;*
- *North Lalang-garram Marine Park;*
- *Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park;*
- *Oomeday National Park (at Horizontal Falls); and*
- *Kimberley National Park.*

b) how much is for management; and

Answer: All of the funding is for the joint management of the parks except for the item referred to in 1c) below.

c) how much is for creating parks?

Answer: An amount of \$30,000 has been allocated for the creation of the Yawuru Nagulagun / Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

With respect to one of these parks, the North Kimberley, between the 7th and 9th November 2015, a series of stories were published with tourism operators calling for a ban on gillnets in the remote North Kimberley after footage was released of a dead crocodile in a barramundi gillnet. (<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/nov/10/crocodile-found-drowned-in-kimberley-river-prompts-calls-for-ban-on-gillnets>). To date, the Government has not responded to these calls.

2) Can the Minister please advise:

a) The percentage of area of the draft North Kimberley Marine Park in which the gillnet fishery operates?

Answer: The licence area for the Kimberley Gillnet and Barramundi Fishery extends over the entire proposed North Kimberley Marine Park. Operators fish in different areas within the licence area depending on fishing conditions.

b) The percentage of the draft North Kimberley Marine Park in which the gillnet fishery operates that has been impacted by marine sanctuary zones?

Answer: The area of proposed sanctuary zone in the draft joint management plan is 21 per cent.

- c) The percentage of area of the draft North Kimberley Marine Park in which the gillnet fishery operates that has been impacted by special purpose zones?

Answer: The area of proposed special purpose zone in the draft joint management plan is 14 per cent.

- d) The number of sanctuary zones in the draft North Kimberley Marine Park?

Answer: There are eight proposed sanctuary zones identified in the draft joint management plan.

- e) The number of sanctuary zones in the draft North Kimberley Marine Park that occur within areas that the gillnet fishery operates?

Answer: The licence area for the Kimberley Gillnet and Barramundi Fishery extends over all of the proposed sanctuary zones.

The Government has announced ongoing funding for management of the proposed Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay Marine Park as a line item in the budget. With respect to this proposed marine park:

- 3) In QoN 3775 the Minister advised that former MPRA member Jeff Cooper did have a registered conflict of interest around the Roebuck Bay Marine Park given his role at the Broome Fishing Club, an organisation that has actively spoken against sanctuary zoning in the Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

- a) Can the Minister advise how that conflict was managed?

Answer: Jeff Cooper declared his membership of the Broome Fishing Club and the Roebuck Bay Working Group on the Marine Parks and Reserves Authority (MPRA) Annual General Declaration of Potential Conflict of Interest in 2013. Further to that, at the 18 September 2014 meeting of the MPRA, at item 1.3 Declaration of Conflict of Interest, Jeff Cooper 'advised that any discussions regarding the proposed Roebuck Bay Marine Park must take into account his interests and affiliations with the Broome Fishing Club and the Roebuck Bay Working Group as well as his association with commercial and recreational operators in the area.'

- b) Did Jeff Cooper sit on decision making meetings on the advice that the MPRA gave on the Roebuck Bay Marine Park?

Answer: Yes. The potential conflict of interest was known to members and managed appropriately. Members provided their input to the MPRA advice from their knowledge and experience but did not act as advocates on behalf of their interests.

- 4) In QoN 3775 the Minister advised that former MPRA member Jeff Cooper was appointed for his local knowledge and recreational fishing expertise. Given the acknowledged conflict of interest, can the Minister please advise to what extent Jeff Cooper's advice was relied upon in the MPRA coming up with the recommendation to proceed with a draft marine park that did not include a marine sanctuary zone?

Answer: *As a former member of the MPRA, Jeff Cooper's advice on all matters before the Authority was weighted equally with that of other members.*

5) With respect to the public submission period for the draft Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay Marine Park can the Minister please advise:

a) How many public submissions were received?

Answer: *Fifteen thousand three hundred and four (15,304) public submissions. Of these, 99.3 per cent (or 15,188) were based on proforma content that used largely the same text and were submitted via conservation organisation online platforms. Most of the submissions received were from people living interstate in Australia or overseas, with 12.3 per cent coming from Western Australia.*

b) How many supported the proposed plan without a marine sanctuary zone?

Answer: *Of the 14857 submissions that commented on zoning:*

- *6 supported the proposed zoning scheme without a marine sanctuary;*
- *8 submissions did not support the proposed zoning scheme and specifically made a comment to express their objection to the inclusion of a sanctuary zone; and*
- *14843 submissions supported the inclusion of a marine sanctuary zone.*
- *A further 251 submissions (including 244 proformas) supported the proposal without commenting on zoning.*

c) How many called for one or more marine sanctuary zones to be included in the final zoning plan?

Answer: *Fourteen thousand eight hundred and forty three (14,843) which largely reflects the proforma submissions via conservation organisation online platforms.*

d) How many submissions were from Broome?

Answer: *One hundred and thirteen, of which 78 were based on proformas submitted via conservation organisations.*

e) How many of the submissions from Broome supported one or more marine sanctuary zones?

Answer: *Seventy six, of which 67 were received via conservation organisations.*

f) Of those who supported one or more marine sanctuary zones, how many identified as recreational fishers?

Answer: *Twenty four submitters identified as Broome residents and recreational fishers who supported one or more sanctuary zones. All of these submissions were received via conservation organisations.*

g) The Minister would be aware that 18 tourism businesses wrote to him supporting a marine sanctuary zone prior to the release of the draft marine park plan.

- i) In addition, how many submissions were received from tourism operators, organisations or businesses?

Answer: Four. Of these, two made no specific comment on sanctuary zones, one supported the zoning scheme without a sanctuary zone and one supported a sanctuary zone.

- ii) How many of these were from Broome?

Answer: Four.

- h) The Minister would be aware that 32 marine scientists wrote a statement to him supporting marine sanctuaries in Roebuck Bay prior to the release of the draft plan

- i) In addition, how many submissions were received from scientists or science based organisations?

Answer: Six.

- ii) Which science organisations were these?

Answer:

- *Western Australian Museum*
- *Murdoch University Cetacean Research Unit*
- *Centre for Marine Futures (The University of Western Australia)*
- *Broome Bird Observatory*
- *Global Flyway Network*
- *Australian Marine Sciences Association WA*

One submission of particular importance comes from the Australian Marine Science Association, the peak organization for Marine Science in Australia. This submission is available to the public and states:

AMSA WA suggests the absence of no-take sanctuary zones in the Yawuru Nagulagun Marine Park Draft Indicative Joint Management Plan will directly impact on the achievability of a number of strategic goals as outlined in the plan. AMSA WA endorses the comprehensive, adequate and representative (CAR) planning approach for protection of Australia's marine biodiversity. AMSA WA would like to encourage a more encompassing systematic planning, management and review process guided by the CAR principles with respect to the inclusion and location of no-take sanctuary zones within the Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park.

- 6) Can the Minister advise what steps have been taken since the submission period to address the inadequacies in the planning process identified by the Australian Marine Science Association?

Answer: There have been no inadequacies in the planning process. The Australian Marine Science Association submission is being considered along with all submissions received in the preparation of the final plan.

In its submission the Australian Marine Science Association also notes that:

The proposed Yawuru Nagulagun Marine Park management plan states that scientific research needs: “access to representative areas free of major human influences “ (p.72). However, the lack of no-take sanctuary zones within the proposed management does not ensure access to such areas.

- 7) Has the Minister sought independent scientific advice to address the concerns raised in the submissions process?

Answer: Issues raised in the submissions are still being considered in the preparation of the final plan.

- 8) Can the Minister advise how the management plan will meet its own objectives to ensure access to representative area free of major human influences in the absence of a marine sanctuary zone?

Answer: The management plan will meet its objectives through implementation of the strategies identified in the plan.

In its submission the Australian Marine Science Association also notes that:

The lack of any marine sanctuary zones within the Yawuru Nagulagun Marine Park is a fundamental and critical flaw in the plan. Without marine sanctuary zones it will be difficult to design and implement sound scientific studies that assess the performance of the plan and the impacts of harvest. It is also unlikely that the marine park will meet the stated outcomes of the plan, or the purpose prescribed in the CALM Act 1984 to ‘ensure that the management of the park is consistent with the proper conservation and restoration of the natural environment and the protection of indigenous flora and fauna.

- 9) Can the Minister advise how he is addressing these concerns raised by Australia’s leading marine science association that the draft Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay Marine Park, if enacted, would not meet the prescribed purpose of creating marine parks under the CALM Act 1984?

Answer: The management arrangements for the proposed Yawuru Nagulagun/Roebuck Bay Marine Park meets the prescribed purpose of marine parks as stated in the Conservation and Land Management Act 1984.

- 10) Can the Minister advise what projections of recreational fishing growth and catch rates in Roebuck Bay were used in the decision to allow recreational fishing in all of the proposed Yawuru Nagulagun Roebuck Bay?

Answer: The proposed Yawuru Nagulagan Roebuck Bay Marine Park is created for multiple use and aims to protect the cultural, ecological and social values of the area, while recognising the wide variety of different user groups. The draft zoning scheme recognises that recreational fishing is an important and highly valued use of Roebuck Bay. The draft marine park management plan includes actions to assess impacts of human activities on targeted finfish and invertebrates within the proposed marine park and implement management strategies to mitigate any impacts as appropriate.

11) Has the potential impact of proposed marina or boating facilities in Broome on fishing rates been taken into consideration in the decision not to include a sanctuary zone in Roebuck Bay?

Answer: *Yes.*

12) Can the Minister advise the estimated catch of threadfin salmon by commercial gillnet operators and by recreational fishers prior to the removal of gillnets from Roebuck Bay?

Answer: The total catch from the Kimberley Gillnet and Barramundi Fishery (KGBF) from Roebuck Bay prior to the removal of gillnets from the Bay was in the order of 60 tonnes per year. Approximately 80 per cent of the KGBF catch in Roebuck Bay was made up of threadfin salmon species (king threadfin and blue threadfin). The remaining catch was made up of barramundi, tripletail and black jewfish.

The Department of Fisheries does not have total recreational catch data for the Roebuck Bay area.

13) Can the Minister advise of any other marine parks in Western Australia that do not have marine sanctuary zones?

Answer: *Walpole and Nornalup Inlets Marine Park and Swan Estuary Marine Park.*

14) Which of these parks with no sanctuary zones are in the ocean and which are in river or estuarine environments?

Answer: *Both of these marine parks are in river or estuarine environments.*