

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND WILDLIFE — NORTHERN QUOLL WORKSHOP

1658. Hon Lynn MacLaren to the Minister for Mental Health representing the Minister for Environment:

For the one day workshop conducted by the Department of Parks and Wildlife on 30 July 2013 on Northern Quoll, with the purpose to determine the highest-priority research needs to ensure survival of viable populations of Northern Quolls, I ask:

- (a) does the Department of Parks and Wildlife propose to provide the participants of that workshop with an annual report on its achievements in implementing the agreed actions;
- (b) what were the actions agreed to by the participants at that workshop;
- (c) what was the dollar value of offset funds under control of the Department of Parks and Wildlife on 29 July 2014 that related to Northern Quolls;
- (d) what offset funds were expended between 30 July 2013 and 29 July 2014 on Northern Quoll projects;
- (e) of the offset funds in (d), how much and on what projects were these funds expended;
- (f) against each of the actions agreed to by the workshop participants, what has been specifically achieved between 30 July 2013 and 29 July 2014 on Northern Quoll projects;
- (g) what research reports or other publications indicating outcomes have been published between 30 July 2013 and 29 July 2014 that relate to the agreed actions for Northern Quolls;
- (h) has the Department of Parks and Wildlife received any applications for funds from the offset funds allocated to Northern Quolls;
- (i) if yes to (h), what was the nature of this or these applications and was this or these projects funded; and
- (j) if no to (i), why not?

Hon Helen Morton replied:

- (a) No. An annual report on northern quoll research activities supported by offset funds has been produced and is available to the public upon request. The Department will provide annual progress reports of research activities as stipulated in the Memoranda of Understanding executed with the companies providing offset funds for the northern quoll.
- (b) Actions agreed to by workshop participants for the northern quoll were:
 - (i) Prepare workshop outputs.
 - (ii) Distribute preliminary workshop outputs.
 - (iii) Scope and distribute research priorities.
 - (iv) Release of a revised and endorsed northern quoll research plan.
 - (v) Publish a peer-reviewed paper.
 - (vi) Look for opportunities to progress agreed research priorities, which were:
 - (1) Clean-up northern quoll records on NatureMap;
 - (2) Develop uniform survey and monitoring guidelines;
 - (3a) Better understand habitat requirements;
 - (3b) Better understand biology, ecology and distribution;
 - (4a) Better understand real threats;
 - (4b) Better understand predator interactions;
 - (4c) Better understand threats from cane toads; and
 - (4d) Better understand artificial habitats.
- (c) \$512 501, comprising \$312 501 in the Pilbara Northern Quoll Offset Trust and \$200 000 in the Kimberley Northern Quoll Offset Trust. Note that the Kimberley Northern Quoll Offset Trust is a separate entity and is not linked to the Pilbara northern quoll research plan.
- (d) \$263 722 from the Pilbara Northern Quoll Offset Trust and \$198 078 from the Kimberley Northern Quoll Trust.

- (e) The Pilbara Northern Quoll offset expenditure was on development of a survey and monitoring program (Project 2) and initiation of the Pilbara northern quoll monitoring program (Project 4), identified in the 2010–2015 Northern Quoll Project Plan developed by the Commonwealth Government and Parks and Wildlife. The Kimberley Northern Quoll offset expenditure was used to implement northern quoll recovery actions, particularly those relating to biosecurity and conservation of Kimberley island populations, as agreed with Mt Gibson Mining which provided the offset funds.
- (f) Progress against each of the actions is:
- (i) Workshop outputs have been prepared. A bibliography is being compiled.
 - (ii) Workshop outputs are publically available. An interim bibliography can be provided on request.
 - (iii) No progress to date.
 - (iv) No progress to date.
 - (v) A paper is in preparation and will be forwarded to workshop participants for feedback in November 2014.
 - (vi) Progress has continued on research projects associated with the northern quoll, including:
 - development of uniform survey and monitoring guidelines; and
 - establishment of the region-wide northern quoll monitoring program and subsequent sampling to inform distribution, habitat requirements, biology and ecology.
- (g) One annual progress report on research activities associated with the Northern Quoll was published. A guideline detailing survey and monitoring methods for northern quoll and the capture of northern quoll habitat and vital attribute data was prepared and distributed.
- (h) The Department has received three applications for support for projects to be funded from the northern quoll offset funds.
- (i) **Proposal 1** Submitted by: Terrestrial Ecosystems Title: Northern Quoll Research Plan
Project focus: Develop uniform survey and monitoring guidelines;
Better understand habitat requirements; and
Better understand biology and ecology.
Budget: \$350 000
- Proposal 2**
Submitted by: Edith Cowan University
Title: Refining predictive models for improved conservation of the endangered northern quoll in the Pilbara (Post-Doctoral research).
Project focus: Review modelling tool available to match point data:
Trial and verify modelling outputs using existing products;
Develop or acquire additional spatial layers to improved fidelity of predictive modelling.
Budget: \$50 000
- Proposal 3**
Submitted by: University of Queensland
Title: Halting decline of the endangered northern quoll in the Pilbara: population status, prey availability and predator impact (PhD project).
Project focus: Monitoring of demography and population vital attributes;
Determine preferred prey and subsequently monitor prey population dynamics; and
Investigate impacts of predators on both northern quoll and their preferred prey.
Budget: \$15 000 over three years
Proposals 2 and 3 were funded.
- (j) Proposal 1 was not supported for the following reasons:

1. The development of uniform survey and monitoring guidelines and establishment of a region-wide northern quoll monitoring program to better understand the animal's distribution and ecology are already being undertaken.
2. While the estimation of field metabolic rates and water turnover rates in northern quoll would be of interest, it was not considered essential for the management of northern quoll in the Pilbara and, therefore, was not regarded as a priority research activity.