

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 332

asked on Wednesday, 12 March 2008

MR LEE ASKED THE MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER AND MINISTER ASSISTING THE PREMIER IN NORTH QUEENSLAND (MR WALLACE)—

QUESTION:

As Indigenous wild rivers rangers have been recently employed by his department—

Will he detail (a) the work these rangers will undertake and (b) where they will be located?

ANSWER:

- (a) The Department of Natural Resources and Water has now contracted the employment of 10 Wild River Rangers to work with landholders, communities and traditional owners to protect and promote the new wild river systems in the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cape York. The program not only provides protection for the world-class natural values of the area but also creates much-needed full time jobs in remote Indigenous communities.

These locally employed rangers work with elders to preserve wetlands and ecosystems of high biodiversity or cultural significance. Their role is to: record traditional stories, local species and habitats; look after visitor management; and manage weeds, feral animals, fire and other threats to the river systems.

The skills these rangers develop will be passed on to the next generation and will ensure the Cape and Gulf's unique ecologies are better managed and preserved. Being locally employed, the rangers already have close links with the traditional owners of the country they will be caring for.

In total 20 wild river rangers will be appointed.

- (b) Three rangers are currently employed full time at the Pormpuraaw Land and Sea Centre, one ranger is employed full time operating out of the Kowanyama Aboriginal Land and Natural Resource Management Office and six rangers are employed by the Carpentaria Land Council working in the Settlement and Gregory river catchments, based in Doomadgee and Burketown.

A further six rangers will soon be employed: three in Mapoon, and three near Lockhart River. The remaining rangers will be appointed to various areas after negotiation with local Indigenous people.