

QUESTION ON NOTICE

No. 392

asked on Thursday, 24 March 2011

MR JOHNSON ASKED THE MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (MS JONES)—

QUESTION:

Will the Minister move quickly to appoint representatives of the traditional land owners, the Wangkamurra people, and representatives of stakeholders south of Longreach (especially organic producers) to her advisory panel on the proposed Wild Rivers Declaration of the Cooper?

ANSWER:

I'm happy to advise the member that the Wangkumarra people (who are members of the Georgina Diamantina Cooper Aboriginal Group) has two representatives on the advisory panel.

The role of these two members is to represent the Traditional Owner groups from across the basin, including the views of the Wangkamarra people. In addition, the department has, and will continue to, directly engaged with Wangkamurra Traditional Owners and other Traditional Owners from across the basin as part of the consultation process.

In relation to the representation of stakeholders from south of Longreach, a number of the advisory panel members are from the lower part of the basin. These particular members of the panel are well placed to represent the lower part of the Cooper Creek Basin. Similarly, a number of the stakeholder groups represented on the panel, act for, and on behalf of, their members who reside in that part of the basin. Organic producers' concerns can be represented by AgForce and Desert Channels Queensland.

The Lake Eyre Basin Wild Rivers Advisory Panel was formed in response to a request by Lake Eyre Basin stakeholders, that a panel be formed to provide advice to the Minister on wild river matters pertaining to the Lake Eyre Basin. This was to build on the positive and constructive consultation processes carried out by the Department of Environment and Resource Management in 2009 and 2010.

In mid-2010, the previous Minister, in considering previous advice from a range of stakeholder groups including the Remote Area Planning and Development Board (RAPAD) and AgForce Queensland, agreed to the formation of an advisory panel to be comprised of the following key stakeholder organisations/sectors from across the Lake Eyre Basin:

- Local governments (including north west, south west and the central west areas);

- AgForce Queensland;
- Desert Channels Queensland;
- Indigenous stakeholders (Georgina Diamantina Cooper Aboriginal Group);
- Cooper Creek Catchment Committee;
- Georgina-Diamantina Catchment Committee;
- Western Rivers Alliance;
- the resources sector (mining, gas and petroleum);
- the Lake Eyre Basin – Community Advisory Committee; and
- the Lake Eyre Basin – Scientific Advisory Panel.

The advisory panel was formed, based on sector representation that provided broad geographical representation. It must be noted that the panel is not Cooper Creek Basin specific but is for the whole of the Lake Eyre Basin.

We are keen to ensure that the Lake Eyre Basin Wild Rivers Advisory Panel does provide a representative voice for the area and, to this extent, I have written to the panel seeking their advice about whether representation is adequate.