

Date	12 September, 2007	Database	Senate Hansard
Questioner	Siewert, Sen Rachel (AG, Western Australia, Opposition)	Responder	Abetz, Sen Eric (Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation, LP, Tasmania)
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Context	Questions Without Notice	Size	5Kb

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE

Heritage: Preservation

Senator SIEWERT (2.49 p.m.)—My question is to the Minister representing the Minister for the Environment and Water Resources, Senator Abetz. My question relates to the application by the Wong-Goo-Tt-Oo Native Title Group under sections 9 and 10 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act for both an emergency declaration over Pluto area B on the Burrup and to have the area declared a significant Aboriginal area. When does the minister intend to make a decision relating to the application? Will the area be protected while the minister is making a decision?

Senator ABETZ—In flicking through the briefs that I have been given, I did not come across one that was headed Pluto area B, so I indicate to the senator that undoubtedly, because she has a keen interest in the matter, I will seek advice from my colleague, the relevant minister, and will come back with an answer for her.

Senator SIEWERT—Mr President, I thank the minister for that and ask a supplementary question. I am disappointed that the department does not think that the Burrup is significant enough to provide a brief on. I ask him then to take a question on notice. Is the minister aware that the WA EPA has given permission for preliminary works to be undertaken on Pluto area B and that this could start any day? Will the minister ensure that any work that is undertaken does not affect cultural material on Pluto area B until after his deliberation in respect of sections 9 and 10 applications?

Senator ABETZ—I should not have been surprised that the honourable senator would ask me about Pluto because the Greens spend most of their time in outer space. Having said that, I will seriously take the supplementary question on notice and get back to her with an answer in relation to that as well.

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Size	3Kb		

QUESTIONS WITHOUT NOTICE: ADDITIONAL ANSWERS

Heritage: Preservation

Senator ABETZ (Tasmania—Minister for Fisheries, Forestry and Conservation) (3.01 p.m.)—I have an answer for Senator Siewert in relation to the matter that she raised during question time. Woodside's proposed Pluto project, including onshore and offshore construction, was referred under the EPBC Act. In deciding whether or not to approve the project, the minister will take into account any conditions placed on the project by the Western Australian environment minister.

The minister has recently received applications for both emergency and long-term protection under sections 9 and 10 of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Heritage Protection Act in relation to site B on the Burrup, part of the Woodside Pluto gas project. The minister will of course give careful consideration to their application according to law. In the case of the section 10 application for long-term protection, this will include considering a report from an independent person on the matters required under the act.