

From: [Media](#)
To: s22
Cc: [Media](#)
Subject: RE: illegal land clearing - federal approval breach [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Thursday, 23 November 2017 3:16:45 PM

Hi s22

Draft responses for the ABC.

- The Queensland Government is the primary regulator for land clearing in Queensland.
- The Australian Government's role in regulating land clearing in Queensland is limited to regulating instances where land clearing is likely to significantly impact defined matters of national environmental significance such as listed threatened species or the Great Barrier Reef.
- Actions which are likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance, which may include land clearing proposals, must be referred to the Department of the Environment and Energy for approval under the EPBC Act.
- The Department monitors compliance with, and detects potential contraventions of, the EPBC Act by analysing information from sources such as the general public, industry, non-government organisations, other government agencies, and our compliance monitoring activity.
- The Department of the Environment and Energy is actively examining certain allegations regarding land clearing in north Queensland. As such, it would not be appropriate for the Minister to comment.

Cheers

s22

From: s22
Sent: Thursday, 23 November 2017 12:04 PM
To: Media <Media@environment.gov.au>
Cc: s22 @environment.gov.au; s22 @environment.gov.au
Subject: FW: illegal land clearing - federal approval breach [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Team

Can I please get some draft responses to these questions ASAP. This is quite urgent from my point of view.

Cheers

s22

From: George Roberts [<mailto:Roberts.George@abc.net.au>]
Sent: Thursday, 23 November 2017 11:33 AM
To: s22 @environment.gov.au>
Cc: s22 @environment.gov.au>
Subject: RE: illegal land clearing - federal approval breach

Hi s22

Here are the questions:

What is the government doing to stop illegal land clearing?

Satellite images and drone footage show clearing has gone ahead on Wombinoo Station, even though the Federal Government has not given the required approval. What is the department doing about this?

Given this is the third station in two years suspected of illegal land clearing, are tougher laws, sanctions or action needed?

Experts say this kind of clearing must stop because koalas get killed and maimed in the process, which has no regard for animal welfare. What does the Minister think of this?

Thanks s22

Regards,

George

From: s22 [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@environment.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@environment.gov.au)>
Sent: Wednesday, 22 November 2017 6:12 PM
To: George Roberts <Roberts.George@abc.net.au>
Cc: s22 [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@environment.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@environment.gov.au)>
Subject: Re: illegal land clearing - federal approval breach

Hi George

Sorry for the delay in coming back to you. Been one of those days.

We can't really do an interview as the Department is looking into some allegations and it wouldn't be appropriate for us to do an interview. But to help you out happy to take some questions in writing and look at see how we can respond.

Cheers

s22

s22

Office of The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP
Minister for the Environment and Energy | Federal Member for Kooyong

E: s22 [redacted] <[\[redacted\]@environment.gov.au](mailto:[redacted]@environment.gov.au)>

T: [+612 6277 7920](tel:+61262777920)

M: [+612 6277 7920](tel:+61262777920)

On 22 Nov 2017, at 10:47 am, George Roberts <Roberts.George@abc.net.au> wrote:

Hello **s22**

Please could I make a request to interview the Environment Minister about some alleged illegal land clearing in North Queensland, in breach of federal approval requirements.

I understand lawyers on behalf of the Wilderness Society have written to the Minister about the alleged illegal clearing on Wombinoo Station. We also have footage and pictures of the areas cleared last month.

The Federal Government is yet to make a decision about whether Wombinoo Station is approved to clear some of this area, despite an environmental assessment conducted in 2016.

Can we please arrange an interview with the minister?

Regards,

George Roberts

[<image001.gif>](#) George Roberts
Journalist, ABC News Queensland

P +61 **s47F** E
M +61

[<image002.jpg>](#)

-

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From: [Media](#)
To: s22
Cc: [Media](#)
Subject: RE: illegal land clearing - federal approval breach [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Thursday, 23 November 2017 2:45:33 PM

Hi s22 – apologies for the delay. The response has been drafted but is awaiting sign off from the AS, who is in a high level meeting we can't interrupt. I'm pushing hard.

Cheers

s22

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To: Media <Media@environment.gov.au>
Cc: s22 @environment.gov.au; s22 @environment.gov.au
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E: s22 [redacted] <s22@environment.gov.au>
T: [+612 6277 7920](tel:+61262777920)
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P +6 **s47F** E
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[<image002.jpg>](#)

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From: s22
To:
Cc: [Media](#)
Subject: From the media log - George Roberts via the MO (ABC Radio) [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Wednesday, 6 December 2017 11:07:59 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)
[image002.png](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image004.jpg](#)
[image005.jpg](#)
[image006.jpg](#)

Hi s22,

Please find below the media log entry for the response to George Roberts from the ABC:

Medialog: George Roberts via MO

Title	George Roberts via MO
Comments	
Media Type	ABC Radio
Topic	Alleged illegal land clearing on Wombinoo Station, North Queensland
Date of Enquiry	23/11/2017
Media Outlet	
ABC Radio	ABC Radio - QLD
Other	
Regional/Community	
Specialist Media	
TV - Commercial	
Question and Response	<p>Hi s22</p> <p>Draft responses for the ABC.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Queensland Government is the primary regulator for land clearing in Queensland.• The Australian Government's role in regulating land clearing in Queensland is limited to regulating instances where land clearing is likely to significantly impact defined matters of national environmental significance such as listed threatened species or the Great Barrier Reef.• Actions which are likely to have a significant impact on matters of national environmental significance, which may include land clearing proposals, must be referred to the Department of the Environment and Energy for approval under the EPBC Act.• The Department monitors compliance with, and detects potential contraventions of, the EPBC Act by analysing information from sources such as the general public, industry, non-government organisations, other government agencies, and our compliance

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To: Media <Media@environment.gov.au>

Cc: s22 <[redacted]@environment.gov.au>;

s22 <[redacted]@environment.gov.au>

Subject: FW: illegal land clearing - federal approval breach

[SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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s22

Office of The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP

Minister for the Environment and Energy | Federal Member for Kooyong

E: s22 [@environment.gov.au](mailto:s22@environment.gov.au)

T: +612 6277 7920

M: s22

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George Roberts

<image001.gif>

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Journalist, ABC News Queensland

P s47F
M
E

<image002.jpg>

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Divisions	Environment Standards Division
Responder	s22 <input type="checkbox"/>
Divisional Approver(s)	Collins, Monica <input type="checkbox"/>

Regards,

s22 **Media**
Strategic Communications

Communications, Innovation and Partnership Branch
Department of the Environment and Energy

P: 02 6274 s22
[@environment.gov.au](#)

Note to media: Unless otherwise agreed, the information contained in this email is for background and is not for attribution.



The Department of the Environment acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

From: s22
To: [Media](#)
Cc: s22
Subject: RE: Wombinoo [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Wednesday, 6 December 2017 5:50:17 PM
Attachments: [image001.jpg](#)
[image002.jpg](#)
[image003.jpg](#)
[image004.jpg](#)

Yes please, thanks.

From: Media
Sent: Wednesday, 6 December 2017 5:49 PM
To: s22 @environment.gov.au>
Cc: s22 @environment.gov.au>; Media <Media@environment.gov.au>
Subject: Wombinoo [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Hi s22

The line area/Monica Collins have said the response is fine. Would you like me to provide this to George Roberts, ABC?

Regards,

s22 | **Media**
Media and Strategic Communications
Communications, Innovation and Partnership Branch
Department of the Environment and Energy
P: 02 6274 s22
[@environment.gov.au](#)

Note to media: Unless otherwise agreed, the information contained in this email is for background and is not for attribution.



The Department of the Environment acknowledges the traditional owners of country throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures and to their elders both past and present.

From: s22
Sent: Wednesday, 6 December 2017 12:26 PM
To: Media <Media@environment.gov.au>
Subject: [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1WfXVH_oUP3CE506Vu3YnGfv12KS36C0C3bFAs_aXJeY/edit?usp=sharing

s22

Office of The Hon. Josh Frydenberg MP

Minister for the Environment and Energy | Federal Member for Kooyong

E: **s22** [@environment.gov.au](mailto:s22@environment.gov.au)

T: +612 6277 7920

M: +**s22**

Draft as: 12:24pm Last edited by s22

The following can be attributed to a spokesperson for the Department of Environment and Energy:

- The Department has never taken compliance action against Wombinoo Station.
- In 2016 the Department assessed Wombinoo Station along with 53 other properties that held high value agricultural permits issued by the Queensland Government to determine if the EPBC Act would apply to land clearing associated with these permits. The Department assessment at that time found that no investigation or compliance action was needed.
- Allegations of illegal land clearing, made against Wombinoo Station by the Wilderness Society and reported by the ABC on 23 November 2017, were looked at by the Department and dismissed as unfounded. Consequently no investigation or compliance action was needed.
- The Department believes that no land clearing has commenced in relation to EPBC referral 2017/7903



Contact Officer: s22
Telephone: (02) 6274 s22

Our reference: s22
Email: s22@environment.gov.au

Mr Warren Jonsson

s47F

By post and email to s47F

Dear Mr Jonsson

***Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act 1999
Wombinoo Station, Gunnawarra, Queensland***

I am writing to you about enquiries undertaken by the Department of the Environment and Energy (the Department) relating to the clearing of approximately 560 hectares of remnant vegetation on Wombinoo Station, Gunnawarra. As you are aware this clearing occurred prior to the submission of referral EPBC 2017/7903.

Following consideration of information available to the Department, I formally advise you that no further compliance action will be taken for the initial clearing and this enquiry is now completed.

Outcome of August 2017 site inspection

s37(2)(b)

s37(2)(b)

I encourage you to discuss any additional proposed land clearing with assessment officer s22 on (02) 6274s22 or by email to s22@environment.gov.au to ensure you remain compliant with the Act.

Further Information

If you require further information or clarification about the matters raised in this letter, please contact s22 on 02 6274s22, or by email to s22@environment.gov.au.

Yours sincerely

s22

Director
Compliance Section
5 October 2017

From: Media
 To: Prati, Ema
 Cc: Hefernan, Rob; Evans, Jo; Knudson, Dean; Cahill, Matt; Media; 222 ; Bacon, Rachel; 222
 Subject: Daily communication report 7 December 2017 [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
 Date: Thursday, 7 December 2017 5:40:20 PM
 Attachments: Minister Frydenberg & Mr Entsch - Joint Media Release - Innovative metho...pdf
 image001.jpg
 image002.jpg
 image003.jpg
 image004.jpg

MEDIA ENQUIRIES				
Enquiry	Questions	Draft response provided to MO	SES clearance	Final response provided to journalist
George Roberts, ABC News	<p>1 CAN YOU PLEASE CLARIFY WHETHER YOUR INVESTIGATION OF WOMBINOOS STATION RELATED TO CLEARING CONDUCTED IN 2015/2016 OR CLEARING ALLEGEDLY UNDERTAKEN IN 2017?</p> <p>2 WHEN DID THIS INVESTIGATION CONCLUDE?</p> <p>3 GIVEN THE MINISTER'S OFFICE INFORMED THE ABC ON THE 22ND AND 23RD OF NOVEMBER, THAT WOMBINOOS STATION WAS BEING INVESTIGATED BY THE DEPARTMENT, WHEN WAS THE MINISTER INFORMED THAT INVESTIGATION HAD BEEN COMPLETED?</p> <p>4 WHEN WAS THE MINISTER INFORMED OF THE RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATION?</p> <p>5 WHAT WERE THE FINDINGS OF THE INVESTIGATION IN REGARD TO CLEARING OF VEGETATION?</p> <p>6 THE STATEMENT FROM THE DEPARTMENT'S MEDIA TEAM ON MONDAY 27 NOVEMBER STATES THAT "IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DEPARTMENT'S COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY, AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE ALLEGED OFFENCE, NO FURTHER COMPLIANCE ACTION IS WARRANTED."</p> <p>7 IN THE MINISTER'S STATEMENT DATED DEC 4, MR FRYDENBERG SAID "ALLEGATIONS BY THE ABC WERE LOOKED AT BY MY DEPARTMENT AND DISMISSED AS UNFOUNDED."</p> <p>8 DID THE DEPARTMENT'S INVESTIGATION CONCLUDE THAT CLAIMS OF UNAUTHORISED CLEARING AT WOMBINOOS WERE WITHOUT FOUNDATION OR SIMPLY THAT NO COMPLIANCE ACTION WAS WARRANTED?</p> <p>9 THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT REFERS TO "FURTHER" COMPLIANCE ACTION. HAS THERE BEEN PRIOR COMPLIANCE ACTION? IF SO WHEN?</p> <p>10 HAS AN INVESTIGATION BEEN CONDUCTED INTO MATTERS RAISED BY THE ABC IN NEWS REPORTS ABOUT WOMBINOOS STATION BROADCAST IN LATE NOVEMBER 2017? IF SO, WHAT WAS THE OUTCOME OF THAT INVESTIGATION?</p> <p>11 DOES THE ASSERTION IN DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT OF</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Department has never taken compliance action against Wombinoos Station In 2016 the Department assessed Wombinoos Station along with 53 other properties that held high value agricultural permits issued by the Queensland Government to determine if the EPBC Act would apply to land clearing associated with these permits. The Department assessment at that time found that no investigation or compliance action was needed Allegations of illegal land clearing, made against Wombinoos Station by the Wilderness Society and reported by the ABC on 23 November 2017, were looked at by the Department and dismissed as unfounded. Consequently no investigation or compliance action was needed The Department believes that no land clearing has commenced in relation to EPBC referral 2017/7903 	Monica Collins	5:54 pm last night

Remainder of document out-of-scope

From: s22
To: s47F
Cc: s22
Bcc:
Subject: Outcome of enquiries in relation to land clearing at Wombinoo Station [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Thursday, 5 October 2017 3:09:36 PM
Attachments: s37(2)(b)

Dear Mr Jonsson,

Please find attached correspondence from the Department in relation to s37(2)(b)
s37(2)(b) Hard copies will be mailed to you. s37(2)(b)
s37(2)(b)

Kind Regards,

s22

Senior Compliance Officer | Compliance Section

Office of Compliance
Department of the Environment and Energy
GPO Box 787 Canberra ACT 2601
Ph: 02 6274 s22
environment.gov.au