

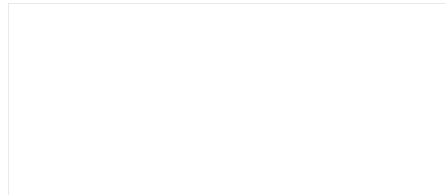
**Question No :** 322

**Question :** Exploration Licences

**Question Date :** 23/11/93

**Member :** Mr EDE

**To :** MINISTER for MINES and ENERGY



1. How many exploration licences covering land held under the Aboriginal Land Rights (Northern Territory) Act have been issued to the end of October in the 1993 calendar year.
2. What was the total land area covered by these licences.
3. What was -
  - (a) the number; and
  - (b) the land area,covered by exploration licences awaiting ministerial consent on 30 September 1993.

**ANSWER**

1. A total of 248 exploration licences have been issued in the Northern Territory from 1 January 1993 until 30 October 1993 and of these 9 only are on Aboriginal land, all within the Central Land Council area and none within the Northern Land Council area.
2. The total area for all exploration licences granted during this period was 69 327 km<sup>2</sup> of which only 7158 km<sup>2</sup> were on Aboriginal land.
3. If the question relates to the number of exploration licences awaiting Northern Territory minister's consent to the applicant entering into negotiations with a land council the answers are -
  - (a) 58; and
  - (b) 25 620 km<sup>2</sup>.

The time to process such applications varies between 3 and 5 months and those pending in general relate to recent

applications.

However, if the question relates to the Northern Territory minister's consent to approve the grant of the exploration licence following negotiations with a land council, then the answers to question 3 are -

(a) 10; and

(b) 11 340 km<sup>2</sup>.

This compares with the 120 licences still under consideration by the land councils, some of which have been under consideration in excess of 10 years.

The time to process such grants varies between 3 and 5 months. In view of the Stockdale Case, the minister is required to check the validity of all agreements before issuing the licence. Of the 10 pending, 9 are considered to be invalid, while the 10th is under review by the Department of Law.